

YUVA WIKI PAGES

1. Housing

There are some websites on the epfl housing site & you need to go through them regularly & respond to adverts as soon as you see them.

<http://www.unilepfllogement.ch/en/HomePage>

www.easywg.ch

www.students.ch

www.anibis.ch

http://www.unil.ch/sasc/page6173_en.html

www.immoscout24.ch

<http://etudiant.ch/>

<http://www.search.ch/>

<http://www.expatblog.com/en/classifieds/europe/switzerland/lausanne/flatsharehouseshare.html>

<http://www.petitesannonces.ch/>

& other sites given in:

<http://www.google.ch/search?q=lausanne+colocation&ie=utf8&oe=utf8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla%3AenU%3Aofficial&client=firefox-a>

You could also post your date of arrival & departure on the following group & ask for accommodation availability.

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/131925963548733/>

P.s: maybe you have already read through this:

<http://phd.epfl.ch/page19728en.html>

But I must say, u should book the lausanne backpackers hostel if you not finding anything...its always a safe option. & cheap or rather the same price ud pay for a room would be renting later on. but yes you would need to book this pretty much in advance & enquire about the availabilities:

http://lausanneguesthouse.ch/home/home_en.php

The following guide is written by a PhD student. I did my best to make the info more general to all categories of students, still some parts may be more specific to PhDs.

Finding a flat--

The Lausanne-Geneva area is facing the worst ever scarcity of availability of flats in recent times. Working through agencies for finding a flat may easily end up as a nightmare! The general procedure is to look out for availability of flats either from the agency websites or postings on the campus, etc. Visiting a flat in person is mandatory, and making an appointment for visit with the little French you know may be another difficult hurdle in the process! Once you visit the flat, you have to file the application to the respective agency. They will take several weeks to process the applications and it is the major factor for creating lot of uncertainty. You never know whether you have to go for something in hand which you dont like or wait for the agency to take a decision on

the flat you really wished to have! Typically one shortcut here is to make the house current tenant to recommend you to the agency and you can make a deal with him to buy all his furniture! I could find my current flat through an agency only by making an Indian friend not to advertise it publicly and recommend me in person. So the agency didn't have a choice and anyway, my application was more than just enough for them. Of course, sometimes they make public advertising as mandatory and you can be just unlucky in trying this shortcut.

www.fmel.ch offers many student housings. They are for MS students only but phd students can also get for a short duration (3 months). They usually run long waiting lists so its better to apply there right after you are sure you will be coming to Swiss. They ask you to pay advance which you can arrange through your secretary. Its usually the same story with Lecazard, StudHome, PlanetBleu (google for them). <http://logement.epfl.ch/page64674en.html> will be very useful and offer accommodation to PhDs as well. This is the closest residential place to EPFL. Gaspar (EPFL internal website) provides reliable info on available flats which I usually find very helpful.

Other useful links:

1. <http://phd.epfl.ch/page19737en.html>
2. <http://studying.epfl.ch/page-20657-en.html>
3. http://www.unil.ch/sasc/page39822_en.html
4. www.immostreet.ch

If you don't find anything, you can depend on youth hostels also.

5. <http://www.youthhostel.ch/en/hostels/lausanne> (costs 30+chf per day)
6. http://lausanne-guesthouse.ch/home/home_en.php

All the possible ways to find an accommodation in the increasing order of easiness:

1. Colocation: Joining as a roommate in someone else' flat (Rent usually ranges from 400-600chf per month)
2. A room in an independent house through landlords: (this is much much easier than dealing with agencies) (Rent ranges from 400-600chf a month)
3. Look for open ads and then work through agencies. (Rent ranges from 700:singe room-1200chf:double room)

Usual terminology used in housing is:

- 1piece: single room with kitchen and tiolets
- 1.5piece: single room with a very small hall (usually just enough for keeping a table)
- 2 piece: a hall + a bed room
- 2.5 piece: 2 bed rooms + a very small hall

Important :

There is a popular on-line fraud going on exploiting new comers' housing needs. Never make a contract unless you are sure about the address and the persons involved. Never make payments which look suspicious. You have to doubt particularly when the owner says he is in some other country and will send you the key over post. It works this way usually: They send you the flat address, their passport details, then a contract which looks very genuine. They claim they are in a different country and will send a

genuinely looking phone number. They offer to send the keys for the flat through post and make paying 1-2 months rent in advance as mandatory. Once you make the payment (usually to a bank account), they disappear! Even the flat address they claim usually belongs to someone else. So make either your secretary or some of your friends visit the place and make contract in person.

2. To do after reaching swiss:

After reaching swiss- This is very very important.

Some of the suggestions may help you and save lot of money!

Zurich is the favored destination if you are coming from hyd, because most airlines run flights to Zurich and not to Geneva. Of course Geneva is the closest airport to Lausanne. If you want to know about fares- Zurich to Lausanne is 2 and half hours in train and costs 35chf, Geneva to Lausanne costs 12chf and 30mins journey). This price info may be useful to decide whether u wish to fly to Zurich or Geneva. I assume that u fly to Zurich. You follow your co-passengers!! and a train comes to pick you to another building where your immigration check is done and your luggage can be picked. Follow the same gang and you will come out of the airport. Cross the road and continue to the adjacent building where a big shopping complex is situated. The train counter is in 1 floor downstairs and the platform is still one more down. BUY HALF FARE CARD HERE ITSELF WHICH SAVES MORE THAN 30chf RIGHT AWAY. Half fare card costs 150chf per year and if you are a PhD student, you will be reimbursed (epfl issues a new card and u have to surrender the old card to get the money back). Even if u r not a phd, haf fare card is a must, i feel. It gives 50 percent discount on all ur journeys in swiss. You need a photograph to take the card. They issue a temporary card and you have to give your residential address to get the permanent card which is shipped in next 2 weeks. If u do not have any address, you can ask them whether u can give ur friend's address and if yes, give my address!! Mail me for my current address. Buy ticket to Lausanne (if u don't know the pronunciation, give them the spelling!!, because there is another Luzern which sounds almost the same!!). If you want to convey your parents about your safe arrival, you can do so using one of the Swisscom booths around you. You need to have a telephone card to do that. I dont know where you can buy them in Zurich. Now relax peacefully in the train to Lausanne and enjoy two hours of breath taking sceneries!! Bad luck if you come in night or you are too tired and want to sleep! If you are a first time international traveler, i suggest you to pack some food from India which may help you if you are too hungry. Once you arrive in Lausanne, it will be easy to reach your residence if you already did little home work. Try to locate your place on map.search.ch and find out the nearest bus to your place. You have to somehow reach the nearest bus stop of that bus from Lausanne-CFF. Mostly one of the buses from CFF will have a common stop with your required bus.

Probably the very next thing you have to do is get a metro pass for local travel in Lausanne, you need it for daily commute to epfl. You can get it for 58chf per month (580chf per year if you pay at once, initially go for one month only as you may later want to use bicycle for your daily commute). The official counters are there in epfl (epfl-SBB office) and one in Place Chaudreon. I guess you can take it in Lausanne CFF itself (where you got down the train from Zurich). Once you are in epfl, finish off all admin stuff (take

laptop!! find ur office room, meet other fans, get epfl student card,). With in 1 week, you should register yourself with the commune for the work permit. We can discuss about it once you are here.

3. Air Tickets and Currency

Qatar and Emirates airlines run flights to Zurich daily I guess. They also have to and fro tickets with one year validity for return journey. I recommend you to buy that kind of ticket as it is cheap compared to one way tick. I got a Qatar airways tick for 36k INR and Emirates one for 29k to and fro from Hyd. I brought 50K INR worth of USD (getting Euros may be more preferred) party in cash and remaining in traveler cheques. Take a xerox of the cheques and not down the numbers elsewhere too. If you lost them, it is easy to get new ones issued. Take multiple copies of your passport and ticket and other important info and put them at various places of luggage. If you lost them, you will be in a hell! You clearly write down your from and To addresses and contact numbers on ALL the baggages. Some times, they misplace them and it may be easy to track if u do so.

4. Things to buy before coming

The following guide can be a useful reference for your shopping. If you are for phd, almost everything can be purchased in swiss, but obviously for cost reasons purchasing in India is preferred.

1. Leather jacket with cap (it should be able to sustain negative temps also). Palem Leathers, Near Central, Punjagutta is the right place for it. The price is above 3k INR. Ask him specifically for one to be used in negative temps. When I bought mine, he said it would sustain up to -20C and I didn't find any problems with it. A very good one in swiss may cost nearly 100chf to 200chf I guess.
2. Thermals- full hands preferred, of course anything might be fine. Last year, I did not get a chance to use them as the temps were not that low. I bought one in Chermas, Chandana Bros in Ameerpet. Even little costly, buy the woolen ones (they are available in Chermas- Ameerpet ONLY- cost around 1k+ for both shirt and pant). Non-woolen ones are much cheaper, but my exp says they are almost useless.
3. Sufficient number of underwear- u get a chance to wash once per week depending on the available slots for the washing machine
4. Jeans, T- shirts, and normal wear, belt. Since summers are hot (not like in India for sure!!), all wear shorts and T-shirts. Bring few good quality shorts..they are very expensive (30 to 50chf). !
5. Shoes- sports, leather- Socks (Buy few woolen ones for sure--u get them in Chermas, Ameerpet). Normal socks wont suffice for winter.
6. Chappals 1 pair preferred for summer, Slippers too if u can.

7. Blanket (optional if too heavy for luggage..), towels
8. Of course any important clothing stuff that is not mentioned above
9. Get mobile if you have one. Anyway cheap mobiles are really cheaper than india and u can grab one here too. If u bring urs from india, u may find problems with the plugs if it is motorola, Nokia works fine. You can look at wikipedia for the used plug sockets in Swiss. <http://www.m-budget-mobile.ch/> should give you an idea. I brought my moto fone C168 which has 3 pin charger and making it charged was a nightmare for me!! I spent a 10chf for a socket converter and it was useless. Finally with the help of my administrator, I did something!! When I came to india recently, the first thing i did is to grab my bro's Nokia!! Mobile rates can be found on migros.ch, mobilezone.ch
10. Kitchen items
 - a. Pressure cooker MUST for rice or dal (get a prestige 3L one).
 - b. Electric rice cooker can be bought here at almost same or even cheaper prices, if u bring from india, u have to bear additional 15 to 40 chf for the converter!!)
 - c. Some basic utensils which one needs for cooking (ask ur mom!), spoons must small and big, plates, glasses, some stuff for making Tea if ur a tea lover (of course u can manage Tea without them also!)
 - d. All basic food items- masalas, chilli powder and(of course u get all of them in Indian shop here, if u have space in luggage, prefer to bring them)
 - e. Bags- one for laptop (anyway they give one for free if u r a phd!), one for local journeys, one for carrying shopping stuff if u wish
 - f. A cap, umbrella (MUST)..of course, u can buy them here (10chf each)
 - g. Get a good quality headphones for listening to music or calling to india (they r around 10- normal junk ones to 30chf)
 - h. Cold creams, bryl cream (if u r int'd), coconut oil, comb, mirror
 - i. Get a universal adapter if u can find one there, it is around 40chf here.
 - j. TT stuff if u luv the game (u can buy here too but the best is available at cheaper prices in india only)
 - k. Basic tools for repairing bicycles if u want to buy a bicycle here (u may want to of course). U hardly need 2-3 tools to fix the flat tyres, so good idea to bring them from there (including the gum, few tube patches). A basic tool kit costs 15 to 30chf here.

5. Getting Visa

Getting visa- I guess for all south Indians, the only place to get visa is Mumbai swiss consulate in Nariman Point, Mumbai. Check on the swiss embassy website for more details. Before you applying for visa, you should ensure that you received all docs from epfl- the work contract, proof of scholarship, passport (of course). A detailed list of docs can be found towards the end of this article. Perveen Mistry is the point of contact in the embassy and she responds very nicely to all the questions you have. Contact her on mail or phone. Note down the swiss embassy timings given here and check on the embassy website about the official holidays they follow. Sometimes it is closed on the official swiss holidays about which you have no idea- so always check about it on the website. I

had struggled a lot with the timings, When I went to apply of the visa. I started from Pune in a volvo bus but the bus did not drop me in Dadar as told before buying the ticket. I don't remember the place exactly where we got down but it was too far from Nariman point. We took a taxi and called Mistry on the way. She told me clearly not to come for visa on that day as the place is too far and i can not make before 12pm, the closing time!! Somehow i decided to take the chance and asked the driver to leave me near the embassy as quickly as possible. Luckily that drier knows the exact building in the area and somehow he dropped me there. When I was watching Taxi 9211 movie (am I right?) later, the driver's rush on Mumbai roads reminded my experience! Even though i went late, it did not make much difference. "Which university?", they asked and I told "epfl". The lady looked relaxed giving an impression that visa is granted! I filled several forms there and paid the fee (I guess we have to submit a DD for the amount)! They give the passport back to us immediately and in case we get a visa, they inform us so that we have to send them the passport again. Then they return it with visa stamping through courier. I think we have to send a DD for the courier charges as well with the passport. Since all the documents are shipped to swiss for processing (there is no processing done in the consulate itself like US consulates), it takes several weeks to months for getting the visa (even for knowing whether we got the visa or not). I applied for the visa on November 1st and they sent me visa in 3 weeks i guess. But in one of my friend's case, it took nearly 3 months!!

Here are some useful contacts

Embassy in New Delhi

<http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/reps/asia/vind/embnd.html>

Consulate General Mumbai

Address

Consulate General of Switzerland
102 Maker Chambers IV, 10th floor
222, Jamnalal Bajaj Marg
Nariman Point
Mumbai 400 021
India
Phone : 0091 22 22 88 45 63 / 64 / 65

0091 22 22 83 17 38

E-Mail

mum.vertretung@eda.admin.ch

Website

http://www.eda.admin.ch/india_dlh/e/home/consulate.html

Consular district

9 states: Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and also Pondicherry, Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Lakshadweep (UT) et Andaman & Nicobar