

Tidbits from an MIT Aussie
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Organizations & contacts

- Australia and New Zealand “ANZAC” club. Join the email list
- Harvard Australian and New Zealand club
- ANZACC: chamber of commerce
- YAPA
- ANZtech
- Australian consul general in NYC
- Australian embassy in DC

Events to look out for

- Half-baked ideas seminars
- ANZ club pub nights & get togethers
- ANZACC watering hole evenings
- Touch football and cricket games

Housing

MIT contact: <http://web.mit.edu/housing/index.html>

On-campus (Graduate)

- Ashdown is most social and friendly accommodation but you do have to share a room. Being so close to campus is good and bad...it is tough to get breathing space.
- Tang is convenient yet about 10 minutes walk from the main campus. Great views of the river but the tall apartment block makes it difficult to meet people other than those on your immediate floor.
- Edgerton is relatively modern and is convenient to campus and close to supermarkets and good eating. The social scene tends to be better than Tang.
- Green hall is women only. Shared dorm room setup.
- Sidney-Pacific and NW30 are new and I don't know much about them. I hear they are pretty good though.

Off-campus

- I have really enjoyed living off campus as it gives you a chance to get away from uni and unwind. It's also good to surround yourself with everyday life I think.
- Cambridge tends to be quite expensive for housing and the areas immediately around MIT and Harvard square in particular are extortionate. The corridor along Massachusetts Ave is becoming more expensive too.
- The MIT housing office does hold some off-campus apartments that tend to be cheaper but you need to be snappy to get on the wait list – well worth it though
- Best neighbourhoods for off-campus accommodation in my opinion: Porter Square, Davis Square, Union Square. Other cool areas a little further from MIT: Brookline, Coolidge corner

- Average rents for a 3-bedroom apartment (typically one floor of a triple level house) are around \$700/month. Utilities (gas, electricity etc.) generally average about \$60 - \$100 depending on season. A tip in the winter is to buy plastic window wrap from hardware store to insulate the window cavity – this saves many \$ in your winter heating bill.

Transport

- From the airport
- The T
- Buses
- Taxis
- Car
- Bike (minuteman trail)
- Bus to NYC (Chinatown)

Communication

- Phone cards (Mr Falafel)
- MIT phone plan
- Cell phones
- Internet phone

When first arrive

- Social security number (Davis square)
- Register with embassy
- See ISO, and student services center
- Sign up for an Athena account so you can get email and use computer network
- Join COOP for discount stationary and stuff for school
- Liquor/drivers license. ID

Taxes

- MIT seminars
- 1040NR-EZ
- Resident/non-resident
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Food

- Keep an eye out for “Boston’s Best” recommendations and booklets. Here are some favourites:
- Italian: Must go to the North End (Green line to Government center or Haymarket). I recommend Dom’s restaurant and Mike’s pastries is legendary for its canolies – feel your arteries gain weight as you eat them!
- Seafood: Legal Seafood is a Boston staple (Aquarium, Kendall square and many other locations). The clam chowder is a (tasty) staple but the fish is well cooked too.

- Vietnamese: Pho Pasteur is a local chain that has very good food that is prepared astonishingly rapidly. Allston is cheapest, Harvard square is a little more expensive and the Chinatown incarnation is most expensive all essentially for the same (delightful) menu. Noodle soups are a highlight. The Elephant walk (Brookline, Porter Square) is more upmarket and has a fine vietnamese and French menu.
- Mexican: Annas Taqueria belongs among the wonders of the World (Porter square, Davis Square). Exceptional burritos prepared in front of you at light speed and super cheap. Do not be put off by the long line out the door – it shuffles through in a matter of a minute or two. A wonder in efficiency, only three keywords are needed to prompt a preparation frenzy. Try this combination for a nice meal...’super/carnitas/hot sauce’. Nod to jalapenos at your own risk.
- Indian: You can’t go wrong with Gourmet India (Kenmore Square) and Bombay Club (Harvard square). I recommend Malai Kofta as a nice vegetarian treat. Diva’s at Davis square is also very nice.
- Chinese: Wandering through Chinatown can be hit and miss but you are bound to come across some good meals in this district (Orange line or Boylston stop on Green line).
- Malaysian: Penang in Harvard Square and also Chinatown have very nice meals but not necessarily a liquor license.
- Japanese: Porter exchange (porter square) is mini-Tokyo. Lots of Japanese shops, groceries, noodle bars and some nice sushi. Check out Bluefin for nice sushi at a good price. Ginza in Chinatown is very nice too.
- Thai: Tamarind House between Harvard and Porter square is a nice little restaurant for Thai and Malaysian.
- Australian(?): Check out ‘The Outback’ with some American friends sometime. Kitsch has found a new and alarming level at this “Genuine Aussie Steakhouse” chain. Watch out for the tacky stuffed kangaroo at the front door, Foster’s signs everywhere, and the illustrious “Prime Minister’s Prime Rib” and “Alice Spring Chicken” dishes. The “bloomin onion” (a crowd pleaser here) is simply hideous but worth a laugh. Haute cuisine indeed. It is worth asking about Australian beer though, most of the time they will say “oh, we have Foster’s!” but I once had the joy of finding a Cooper’s Pale Ale at an Outback in Indiana. Well worth a laugh but insanity will surely kick in on multiple visits.
- Various: For something different go to ‘Marche’ on the lower level of the Prudential Building. ‘The Pourhouse’ pub on Boylston Street has half-price burgers on Saturdays. ‘The Village Smokehouse’ in Brookline has excellent ribs and southern US food in general.
- MIT: The cheapest way to eat at MIT is at the Food trucks scattered around the streets surrounding canvas. It sounds dodgy, looks dodgy, yet tastes OK and is cheap. The trucks on Mass ave outside the main entrance are pretty good (Mr Falafel and a Chinese truck). The MIT dining hall tends to be expensive for average food. The Crepes and the Bagels eateries are pretty good but a little pricey for numerous visits. LaVerde’s is good for subs and sandwiches but tends to be a little extortionate due to their access to a captive student market.

- Lunches: The Wrap on mass Ave near Berklee college of music has really nice lunch wraps and burritos and excellent smoothies. Bartley's in Harvard square has great burgers and shakes but the eating space is a little tight and tables are mess-hall style.
- Breakfasts: Rosebuds (Davis square) and Sound Bites (Ball Square, Somerville) have tremendous diner style breakfasts but beware the wrath of the 'soup-kitchen-nazi' if you overstay your tabletime. Johnny's Diner on Mass Ave near Harvard square has a wonderful breakfast and lunch menu.
- Coffee & cafes: Café culture is unfortunately pretty thin on the ground in Boston but it is possible to find good cafes and some decent coffee with a bit of patience. Here are some decent options: Au Bon Pain (2 in Kendall Square and most other places in Boston). Tealux has a wonderful variety of teas (try Masala Chai). For something different visit

Groceries

- Star market. International aisle. Bachelor's baked beans at Porter square.
- Bread & circus for a treat
- Wine and cheese cask and cardullo's for deli, cheese and good wine
- No alcohol on in shops sold Sundays. Aussie wine selections at Kappy's (Medford),

Money to burn

- Che Henry
- Top of the hub (Pru)
- Newbury street
- La la roq

Weather

- Winter. Get a good coat but layer up. Good gloves, scarf, beanie. Solid sole shoes. Good thick jeans. Tunnels at MIT.
- Summer: it gets bloody hot and humid. AC is pushing it for only a couple of weeks of extreme heat but a fan is a good investment (~\$30). Be sure to pack shorts when coming to Boston just in case!
- JPLicks and Ben & Jerry's on Newbury street for ice cream. Watch out for free ice cream day at start of spring.

Shopping

- Galeria (bus and walking)
- Watertown mall
- Book stores: Wordsmith's (H.Sq), Borders (City)
- Music: Newbury books and comics (HS), second hand – Nuggets, HSq

Nightlife

- Landsdown street
- North station area

- Mass ave
- Boylston Street

Pubs

- The Burren
- The field
- The Black Rose
- People's republic
- Plough and stars
- The cellar
- Shays
- Redline
- Crossroads
- Kendall cafe
- Miracle of science
- The good life
- Muddy charles and Thirsty Ear
- Characters
- Asgard (stay away from bangers and mash)
- Whiskeys
- Rock Bottom
- Temple Bar
- Bukowski's (Near Hynes convention center)

Cocktails

- Casablanca
- Cambridge common
- Top of the hub
- Temple Bar
- Redline
- Newbury street
- The B-side lounge

Cool neighbourhoods to check out

- Harvard square
- Brookline
- Coolidge corner
- Newbury Street

Music

- The Paradise Rock club
- The Middle East
- TT the bear's
- Avalon

- Kendall cafe

Sport

- MIT Scuba
- IM sport
- Skiing. Boston ski bus
- Red Sox and Fenway park (scalper tickets & obscured seating)
- The Fleet center: Boston Celtics, Boston Bruins (and big music shows)

Movies

- Mainstream flicks: Loews Harvard square and also at Fresh Pond, Fenway 13, Loews Boston Common.
- Independent and art-house: Check out Kendall square cinema, Coolidge corner cinema and the Brattle theatre (Harvard square) for independent and foreign movies.
- MIT has a student club (LSC) that puts on pretty good movie nights for ultra cheap. Worth checking out (<http://lsc.mit.edu/>)
- Good site to check movie schedules/locations is <http://ae.boston.com/movies/search/>

Cultural

- MFA
- Blue man group
- Half-price tix at Copley and Quincy market
- Alvin Ailey
- Mary Stewart Gardner museum
- Theatre district
- MIT museum
- Natural history museum Harvard

Showing off the city

- Freedom trail
- Trolley tour and duck tour
- Prudential and Hancock buildings
- Boston common
- Quincy market, fanieul hall
- Back bay and beacon hill
- Cheers bar (ugh)
- Red Sox

Looking around

- Cape Cod. Woods Hole. Martha's vineyard & Nantucket. Chatham. Ptown.
- Rhode island: providence, Newport and millionaires row, Narragansett beach, block island

- New Hampshire: hiking in white mountains, skiing, cheap alcohol at the state liquor barns
- Maine: Isle au haute and national park
- Massachusetts: Minuteman trail. Six flags NE. Salem (Halloween freak show), cape cod,

Health

- MIT medical. MIT premium is worth it.
- MGH
- NEMC
- Mt Auburn
- Longwood medical area
- Some tips: always carry blue-cross/blue shield card. Check with doctor and call insurance company to make sure any test are covered before having it done so you don't get hit with a bill.

Goodies from home

- homesick.com.au
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MIT tips

- Free food
- Orange tour (<http://www-tech.mit.edu/V112/N35/orange.35n.html>)
- Check out student groups as much as you can
- Environment interest: LFEE, SFGS, save, AGS
- Look outside of department for interesting subjects
- IAP is interesting but generally better to take time off to spend more time in Oz.
- Reuse/resell email list: <http://web.mit.edu/~pocky/Public/reuse.txt>
- Learn to sail for free

Trivia & random

- Harvard bridge story & smoots
- MIT hacks
- Citgo sign
- Bed sizes are different. A twin bed is a single bed – beware when buying sheets!