



Guides

for the journey at
**Nazarbayev
University**



53, Kabanbay batyr Ave.,
Astana

Welcome to Nazarbayev University!



Dear Student,

The Department of Internationalization at Nazarbayev University extend a warm welcome to you on behalf of the whole university community. Our objective is to facilitate a seamless transfer to a novel setting, enabling you to engage in your academic pursuits at NU fully.

We are certain you have many questions regarding the upcoming stages of your relocation to Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan. To assist you in commencing your voyage to NU, we have compiled essential details regarding the university, campus life, Astana city, and the country as a whole. This guide is intended to assist you in preparing for your impending journey. It contains helpful advice on everything from packing your bags to applying for your visa; therefore, ensure you carefully read each section.

We sincerely hope that this guidebook proves to be beneficial to you. Rest assured that we remain consistently prepared to offer our utmost support and assistance.

Department of Internationalization





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Climate

Kazakhstan is a country with a continental expanse and is characterised by huge climatic differences. Astana has a sharply continental climate with cold, long winters and hot and moderately dry summers featuring occasional brief rain showers. In fact, -35°C is usual for winter in Astana. However, due to dryness and wind, it feels like -45°C. +35°C is usual for summer in Astana. The highest temperature ever observed in Astana during the summer is +45°C. Astana has the following average day-time temperatures:

Month	Day	Night
January	-11°C	-18°C
February	-9°C	-18°C
March	-2°C	-10°C
April	12°C	2°C
May	20°C	9°C
June	25°C	14°C
July	26°C	15°C
August	25°C	14°C
September	18°C	8°C
October	9°C	2°C
November	-2°C	-8°C
December	-9°C	-15°C

Clothing

A variety of seasonal clothing is required to live comfortably in Astana year-round. Light clothing, including sweaters and rainwear for spring, summer, and autumn, will be needed. For winter warm inner clothing and heavy outerwear are necessary. All that you need for winter is available for purchase here in Kazakhstan, but it may be far more expensive than you can find in your home country, and it may not be available in your sizes (anything larger than medium can be hard to find): very warm, preferably down-filled winter jacket with a hood, winter boots, scarf, mittens/gloves, long johns/undershirts, winter hat.

General information

Electricity



The electricity voltage is 220 Volts in Kazakhstan. If your electronics are of another type, you may want to consider bringing converters or adaptors.

Internet:

Wi-Fi is available in most public places. In addition to this, Nazarbayev University students can use free Wi-Fi throughout the campus.

Mobile services:

the SIM card itself is quite inexpensive and a small balance is almost always included in the price. Then you switch to the tariff you need. Tariffs are different, information about them will be provided to you at the points of sale of SIM cards, and they will also help you switch from one option to another. Normally, all the tariffs include 25-30 GB of internet, unlimited on-net calls, 300-500 minutes with other operators (inside the country), and 20-50 minutes of international calls.

Route planner:

2GIS is the best map app for Kazakhstan and especially Astana; it has more accurate information on public transportation and shop business hours, reviews, etc. compared to Google Maps.

Laws in Kazakhstan



Laws may be different from those in your country. This especially applies to the use of alcohol and tobacco.

- It is prohibited to drink alcohol in public places except bars or public catering organizations where it is allowed to sell alcohol. It is prohibited to appear drunk in public.
- Sale of alcoholic spirits in Kazakhstan by volume at 30% and stronger is prohibited between 9:00 PM and noon the next day. A similar ban on the sale of low-alcohol beverages (e.g., beer and wine) is from 11:00 PM to 8:00 AM. However, you may still drink alcohol in restaurants, cafes and bars.
- It is not allowed to make noise and disturb your neighbors after 11 PM until 6 AM. You may be fined for disturbing your neighbors during this period.
- It is prohibited to smoke in public places, except for designated areas.
- Gambling is illegal, except for specially designated locations: Burabay and Kapchagai.
- It is prohibited for individuals under 21 years of age to purchase alcohol.



Taxi

can be hailed using apps, most often in cities. You can pay by cash but only for short distances; you can also pay by credit/debit card through the app or by asking for the Kaspi number of the taxi driver. Ticket prices fluctuate, usually most expensive during rush hour and night time. The most common apps in Astana are Yandex Go and inDriver (English available).

Buses

Public transport in Kazakhstan is reliable, inexpensive and safe. Operational hours of most buses are from 6:30 AM to 11.00 PM.

Food and drinks

Large grocery stores such as Galmart at Mega Silk Way can offer most of the products you will use in the country. However, Indian, Thai, African, and Latin American restaurants and ingredient stores are quite rare. Kazakhstan's food is not very spicy. Vegetarian/vegan/gluten-free foods ARE available, but not common and may be difficult to find in restaurants. Tea and coffee are the most common drinks in Kazakhstan. You can also buy soft drinks such as fizzy drinks, mineral water and beer. Tap water should not be drunk.

Money

The currency unit is the Kazakhstani Tenge (KZT). The exchange rate for 1 USD is about 477 KZT (August 2024). However, Kazakhstan is quite a cashless society. Most people have credit/debit cards and most places, including restaurants and stores, accept Kaspi App payments by phone number or QR codes. Because people do not use cash often, sometimes you might have trouble getting change back.





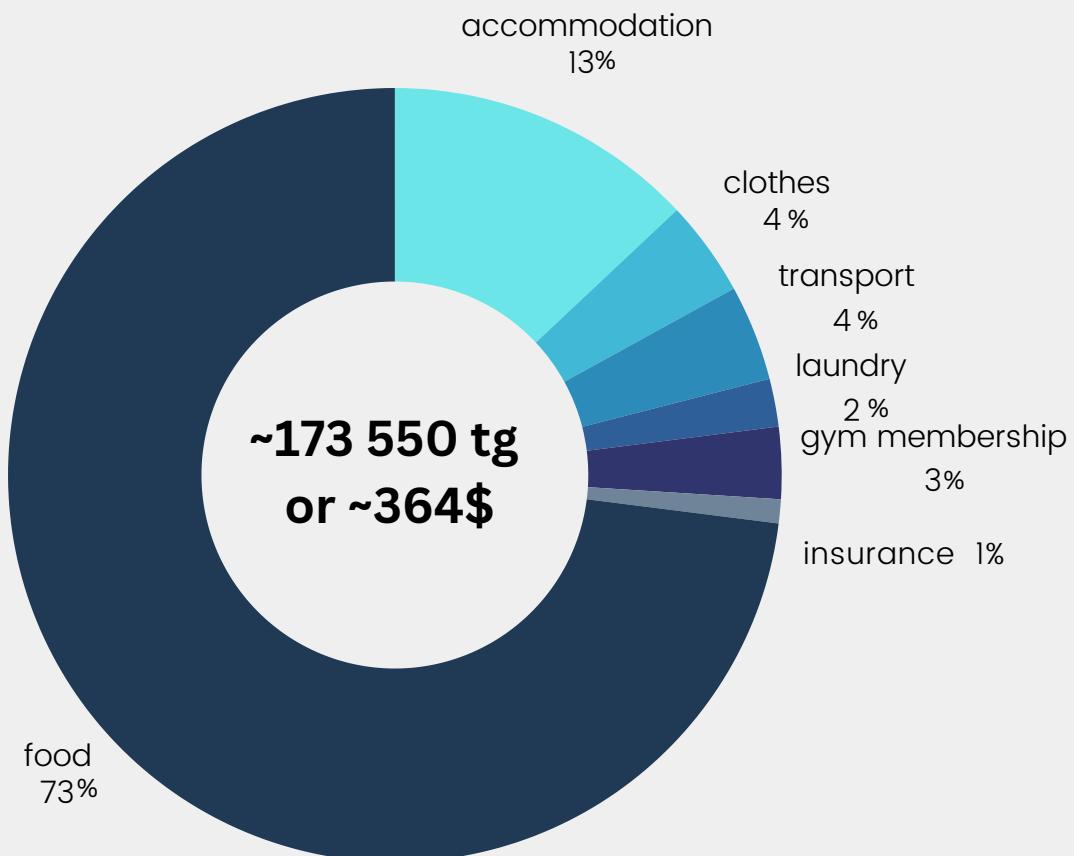
Credit cards

Kazakhstan's banking system complies with most international standards. Credit/debit cards are commonly used for transactions. You can pay with international credit cards (Visa, MasterCard or American Express) almost everywhere. Below you can see the process and necessary documents, to set up your bank account and get your card.

- Step 1: Obtain a valid student visa C-9.
- Step 2: Obtain an Individual Identification Number (the OISSS team will help you to arrange the document).
- Step 3: Fill out the application form for setting up an account and wait for your card to be issued. It usually takes around 10 business days.

Estimated monthly costs

- food ~ 126 000 tg/month
- accommodation ~ 22.000 tg/m
- clothes ~ 7.000 tg/m
- transport ~ 7.500 tg/m
- laundry ~ 3.800 tg/m
- gym - 5.000 tg/m
- insurance - 2250 tg/m



*these expenses are borne by students and/or their parents



The cost of living can vary greatly depending on your lifestyle, budget and spending habits.

We recommend bringing between 400-500 USD minimum to cover your personal expenses during the first two months (August-September) while you receive your first stipend in October. This amount will be enough to cover first-hand necessities such as getting kitchen appliances for cooking at the dormitories, buying winter clothes, covering daily food expenses, for buying a SIM and transportation card, laundry services, and internet services.

In case you are not receiving a stipend, we suggest a part of the extra 500 USD to cover first-hand necessities during the months of August and September, to have in your bank account a minimum of 300-400 USD every month for your living expenses.

Dormitory prices:

- 1 bed in double rooms: 1310 KZT/day (~163 750 KZT/semester);
- 1 bed in triple rooms: 900 KZT/day (~112 500 KZT/semester);
- 1 bed in quadrooms: 610 KZT/day (~76 250 KZT/semester).

The total sum for the semester is calculated based on the average number of days in the semester –125 days—but the exact number of days may vary depending on the program's academic calendar.

These are estimated lower and upper costs of living while being a student in Astana.



Expenditure	Monthly Costs: Lower range (in KZT)	Monthly Costs: Upper range (in KZT)
Accommodation on campus	~ 18.300 tg	~ 40.600 tg
Food	~ 60.000 tg	~ 150.000 tg
Mobile phone	~ 2.500 tg	~ 6.500 tg
Laundry	~ 2.000 tg	~ 4.000 tg
Stationery, photocopying	~ 1.000 tg	~ 5.000 tg
Transportation	~ 1.000 tg	~ 10.000 tg
Total	~ 84.800 tg	~ 216.100 tg



Other things to do before leaving home:



Medical: We recommend you arrange a medical check-up to make sure you are fit and fine avoiding needing to take time off from your studies. You will be also asked to provide the [Health Background Form](#) to the University Healthcare Department (student.health@nu.edu.kz) to ensure you have all the required vaccinations and tests.

Police Check: It may also be helpful to get a check from any other country you are currently living in, as sometimes getting these after you leave can be problematic.



Public and National holidays in Kazakhstan



January 1-2	New Year
January 7	Orthodox Christmas
March 8	International Women's Day
March 21-23	Nauryz Holiday
May 1	Kazakhstan's People Solidarity Holiday
May 7	Defenders' Day
May 9	Victory Day
July 6	Capital city Day
August 30	Constitution Day
October 25	Republic Day
First day of Qurban Ait	Shifts each year according to the Muslim calendar

Tips for your safe travel

EXPLORE THE DESTINATION COUNTRY



You should:

- Check means of transportation and your accommodation;
- Look at climate, traditional food, and cultural norms;
- Explore your destination university and prepare beyond the sightseeing.

You have to:

- Comply with the host country's entry requirements, laws, and university regulations.

REVIEW MEDICAL INSURANCE POLICIES AND VISIT A DOCTOR BEFORE DEPARTURE

You need:

- To get medical insurance;
- To be sure to travel with prescriptions in the original container clearly marked;
- To prepare a first-aid kit (it is necessary to clarify whether their use is allowed in the country of the planned stay);
- To get vaccinated in advance from diseases, if it is required;
- To take a medical examination at least six weeks before departure, especially dentist and COVID related;
- To bring an extra pair of eyeglasses (and the prescription).

CHECK VISA AND PASSPORT VALIDITY

- Check the expiration date of your passport for having more than 6 months at minimum;
- Clarify your visa type (single or multiple);
- Digest the current information about entry and exit requirements (possibilities/restrictions to travel during your abroad studying);
- Learn the procedures – police, immigration registration, and work permit;
- Carry a spare copy of your passport in a separate location (when a passport is stolen, having the number will expedite procedures for a replacement at the Consulate).

Tips for your safe travel



ENSURE THE FINANCIAL ACCESS

- Take some cash for the first time before you get a local debit card;
- Be careful with your credit/debit cards* and cash, have a couple of bank cards, and beware of identity theft.

*A new trend for parents is to open a joint bank account with you before travel. Both account holders may be issued a debit card which works like a credit card, even in overseas locations. This setup allows parents to provide the opportunity to add funds quickly in case of an emergency.

REGISTER WITH THE EMBASSY YOUR NATION IN THE COUNTRY YOU WILL VISIT

If a pandemic or natural disaster is looming, the Embassy can contact you via the registration data for evacuation and emergency notification. Embassy workers can help faster and communicate with loved ones at home when the traveller is already in the system.

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS – KNOW THE PHASES OF CULTURE SHOCK

What to do if you bump into culture shock? “Culture shock” happens usually after a period of enjoying the novelty of the new culture. After a while, it’s common to

- want to go home;
- become critical of the culture or the reasons they are there in the first place, and feel all the things they feel when you are stressed – fatigue, eating too much or too little, general crankiness.

You should relieve stress by eating sensibly, getting enough sleep, exercising, and getting information through a host national who can talk about the cultural differences they are seeing.



ENSURE AT LEAST TWO ALTERNATE FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

Please check with the provider before departure to verify the international calling plan and make sure to purchase an international calling card for backup

REACH OUT TO STUDENTS WHO WERE/ARE ABROAD FOR ADVICE BEFOREHAND

Usually, universities have student societies in different social networks. So, you could contact experienced students to ask about accommodation, food, etc. Learn basic language phrases and think globally but act locally for safety contacts. Saying “please” and “thank you” go a long way no matter where you visit, but being able to ask for directions if lost, and communicating “help” to emergency workers really can make a difference. Learn basic language phrases. Students are better performing when they have integrated into the community.

BEFORE YOUR TRAVEL DO NOT FORGET

PASSPORT AND DOCUMENTS	
VISA, TICKET	
MEDICAL INSURANCE	
CASH AND DEBIT/CREDIT CARDS	
ELECTRONIC DEVICES, CHARGERS AND ADAPTERS	
MAP AND CONTACTS	





Useful contact from the Department of Internationalization

Mobility matters

Mobility matters

Magzhan Kurmashev
Phone: +7 (7172) 70-91-56
Mobile phone: +7 777 305 26 77
E-mail:
magzhan.kurmashev@nu.edu.kz
mobility@nu.edu.kz

Alina Ni
Phone: +7 (7172) 70-45-02
Mobile phone: +7 705 220 90 59
E-mail:
alina.ni@nu.edu.kz
mobility@nu.edu.kz

CheckList

before departure

- Things you want to think of when packing your luggage.
- Travel documents
- Passport
- Copies of the Passport and Visa
- Flight ticket
- Important travel items
 - Passport
 - Phone, laptop, electrical converter (or purchase one upon arrival)
 - Sufficient clothing
 - Cash or/and credit card
 - Sufficient amount of finance (Average monthly cost of living from \$250 to \$500)
 - Inform OISSS at oiss@nu.edu.kz about arrival time
- Arrange your medical documents
 - Health Background Form ([Instruction how to fill the Form](#))
 - Health Insurance (if applicable)
 - Testing for cholera (if applicable)



Arrival



Please check that you have the correct travel documents with you and just to be safe, make a copy of all travel documents! If you lose them you can be helped more quickly if you have copies with you!

Visa-free entry

International students who are citizens of the countries indicated below can enter the Republic of Kazakhstan on the visa-free basis:

- Russia
- Kyrgyzstan
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Tajikistan
- Uzbekistan
- Belarus

Visa Obtainment

International students with a country of citizenship that is not listed above need a Student visa (C9) to come to Kazakhstan. This type of visa is given for a period of one year and allows you to make multiple entries to Kazakhstan. Visa shall be renewed each year.

How to apply for a Letter of Invitation

Step 1

The Office of International Scholars and Students Services (OISSS) will be assisting you in issuing the Letter of Invitation (LOI) for your Visa. Once the LOI is ready, its copy will be emailed to you.

To obtain a Letter of Invitation (LOI) the following documents should be submitted by the international students to the OISSS:

- NU Visa Support Invitation Form;
- Copy of passport (first page);
- Apostilled/Legalized Marriage and Birth Certificates (if applicable).

Step 2

Upon receiving the invitation letter, the applicant must personally submit all required documentation to the Kazakh Embassy/Consulate where the visa will be obtained in person. Ensure that all personal information is accurate. If there are any discrepancies between the information on the letter of invitation and the passport, or if you identify any other inaccuracies, please notify Makhabat Kassenova at makhabat.kassenova@nu.edu.kz We advice double-checking the list of required documents posted on the official website of the respective Kazakh Embassy/Consulate.



The following documents are normally required for the visa application:

- Copy of the visa invitation letter;
- Passport (valid for at least six months beyond the visa validity and containing a minimum of two blank pages for visa stamping);
- Copy of the main page of the national passport;
- Completed visa application form;
- One color photo (3.5cm x 4.5cm);
- Multiple visa fee (200 USD per person).

The processing time for visa issuance is estimated to be five (5) business days. Please note that additional documents may be requested at the discretion of the Consulate.

IMPORTANT:

- Ø Once you have received your KZ visas, please send scanned copies of your passport and visa to makhabat.kassenova@nu.edu.kz.
- Ø Upon your arrival in Kazakhstan, please visit our office in Block 1, room 1.207, 2nd floor, within three (3) days to complete the registration process with the Migration Police.



Accommodation

Accommodation on campus is provided for all international students on a paid basis once they have received their acceptance letter and submitted their application for the Dormitory accommodation.

For any questions regarding the accommodation please contact Department of Student Services: student_housing@nu.edu.kz.

The choices of accommodation for international students are the following:

For single students:

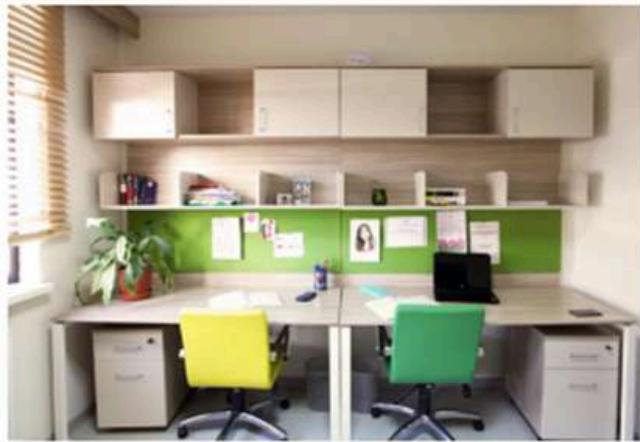
- Bachelor and Master Programme students: Double occupancy in a dormitory room with two beds.
- PhD and Residency Programme students: Triple occupancy in a dormitory apartment.

For married students:

- Family students (conformed of a student and a spouse) can apply for single occupancy in a dormitory room with two beds
- Family students (conformed of a student and a spouse) can apply for single occupancy in a dormitory room with two beds. Family students with children can apply for accommodation in one-bedroom or studio apartments on a competitive basis. Therefore, if you are interested in this type of accommodation, we strongly suggest you notify student_housing@nu.edu.kz in advance before your arrival to Kazakhstan to be informed about the application procedure, and check the availability of apartments during the semester.

Some prices are available on page 9.

Accommodation



Dormitory rooms are equipped with beds, desks and chairs, and wardrobes. However, you will need to bring or buy your linen and towels and other personal items you think would be necessary for you.

Cooking

Each floor in your dormitory is equipped with a kitchen that can be accessed by the residents living on that specific floor. Each kitchen is equipped with two fridges, two freezers, two cookers, two ovens, cupboards and drawers where you can leave your food and dishes.

For cooking, please note that students should buy their own kitchen appliances upon arrival. If you would like to receive recommendations on where to buy them in the city at affordable prices, don't hesitate to contact our Members of Buddy program, international students, who will provide you with tips and show you around the stores or markets in the city upon request during the weekends.

Laundry Facilities

At the beginning of the semester, students have to pay for the laundry services for the term in advance. Each block has its own schedule for receiving and passing the bed inventories. The Department of Student Services (DSS) will inform students about the schedules.



Transfer

Please make sure to inform OISSS about your arrival details at least one week prior to your arrival. Please send your arrival details (including your flight number, airline, arrival time and your departure airport) to oiss@nu.edu.kz

The OISSS team will be there to meet you in the arrival hall: please look out for a sign with your name and/or our Nazarbayev University logo after you have gone through customs. We will then accompany you to the University Campus and help you to check in

We wish you a safe trip to Astana

Useful links at NU.



- **NU Academics**
- **NU Schools**
- **NU Campus**
- **Video about NU**
- **Students about NU**
- **Student Life**
- **Studying and Living in Kazakhstan**
- **Career and Advising Centre**
- **Healthcare**
- **Office of the Registrar**
- **Academic Calendar**
- **Course Schedules by Schools**
- **Course List with requirements**
- **Final Examination Schedule**
- **Library**

Useful links at NU.



- **School of Engineering and Digital Sciences**
- **School of Sciences and Humanities**
- **School of Mining and Geosciences**
- **School of Medicine**
- **Graduate School of Public Policy**
- **Graduate School of Education**
- **Graduate School of Business**