

Unofficial Guide to Life in



Chambana

Chambana, aka Champaign-Urbana (hereafter 'C' and 'U'), is a great place to live, work and study once you know the ropes. Fortunately, the Graduate Employees' Organization (GEO), the union for Teaching and Graduate Assistants at the University of Illinois, is here to help. We've compiled this handy introduction to life at the University and all around town. Want to know how to get a study carrel in the library? How to navigate the University's health coverage? Information about housing and landlords and lords? Where to take care of that mountain of dirty clothes? How to get to the airport? Where on earth you can get a decent coffee or a nice, stiff drink? Look inside...

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Welcome to Champaign!

Are you new in town? Need a recommendation for a place to grab a bite, wash your clothes, or just hang out – the GEO’s Guide to Champaign is here! The Guide includes information on community happenings, housing, and graduate life here at the University of Illinois and Champaign-Urbana.

The Graduate Employees’ Organization (GEO) is the democratically-run union for Teaching and Graduate Assistants at the University of Illinois. For over 20 years the GEO has worked to improve the lives of graduate employees and their families.

In 2009, we struck for two days before signing our third labor agreement with UIUC. This agreement includes secured tuition waivers for graduate employees with 25-67% assistantships, an increase in the minimum graduate employee wages, fee waivers, a health insurance subsidy increasing to 75% by the third year, and many workplace protections for teaching and graduate assistants.

In 2018, we struck again, this time for 2 weeks, to secure our fifth collective bargaining agreement with UIUC. Our current contract includes tuition waiver and fee waiver protection for graduate employees with 25-67% assistantships, guaranteed raises to the minimum wages for the first 3 years with the opportunity to bargain higher wages for years 4 and 5, a health

insurance subsidy of 87%, protection for employees requiring leave for immigration proceedings, sick leave, parental leave, and work accommodations for nursing/pumping employees.

In order to maintain these benefits in the future, your union needs your support, especially since we will bargain for wages this year. Drop by the GEO office (first floor of the McKinley Foundation at 809 S. 5th Street, Champaign) to find out how YOU can get involved in your union.

Additionally, you can visit the GEO website for updates on GEO events at www.uiucgeo.org. You can also follow us on Facebook (@uigeo and @geosolcomm), Instagram (@geo_uiuc), and Twitter (@geo_uiuc), or contact us via email (geo@uigeo.org).

Schoolness

Campus Groups & Organizations

A complete list of **registered student organizations (RSOs)** is available online at

<http://union.illinois.edu/get-involved/office-of-registered-organizations>.

International student organizations can be found at <http://iss.illinois.edu/involved/rso.html>.

Specific organizations that may be of interest to union members include:

- Asian Pacific American Graduate Students Organization
- Black Graduate Student Association
- Graduate and Professional Students of Color
- Indian Graduate Student Association
- Progressive Librarians Guild
- Graduate Organization of Latina and Latino Students

Campus Labor Coalition

Champaign-Urbana is a labor town, and the GEO is proud to stand in solidarity with a number of other campus labor unions and organizations that together make up the Campus Labor Coalition. We're at our strongest when we stand together to demand better conditions for ALL workers on campus. You can easily show your support by following the other members of the CLC on social media! "United we bargain, divided we beg!"

AFSCME Local 698

The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Local 698 represents a wide range of campus employees, including instrument makers, laboratory mechanics, farmers, herders, animal caretakers, library specialists, theatrical stitchers, garage attendants and mechanics, aircraft mechanics, crash rescue specialists, nurses, nurse practitioners, medical technicians, histologists and radiographers.

Website: <https://sites.google.com/site/local698afscme/>

AFSCME Local 3700

The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Local 3700 represents campus clerical workers.

Website: <http://www.afscme3700.org/>

Association of Academic Professionals

The AAP represents visiting academic professionals at UIUC.

Website: <https://aapillinois.wordpress.com/>

Campus Faculty Association

While not unionized, the campus faculty association are an organization of tenure-track faculty on campus.

Website: <https://cfaillinois.org/>

FB: @CampusFacultyAssociation

Twitter: @campusfac

NTFC Local 6546

The Non-Tenured Faculty Coalition represents non-tenured and adjunct faculty, and successfully went on strike in the spring of 2016 to secure their first contract.

Website: <http://www.local6546.org/>

FB: @ntfclocal6546 Twitter: @ntfclocal6546

SEIU Local 73

The Service Employees' International Union represents dining and building service workers. In 2017, their extensive organizing efforts won them a three-year contract with guaranteed raises each year.

FB: @SEIUChapter119

Undergrad-Grad Alliance

The UGA is dedicated to improving the lives of undergraduate workers at UIUC by building relationships between undergraduates, graduates, and faculty.

FB: @uga.uiuc

Immigration Resources

UIUC provides resources for undocumented students, DACA students, and those affected by the executive orders here <http://open.illinois.edu/>. Another great resource, if you are undocumented or have DACA is La Casa Cultural Latina (lacasa@illinois.edu). A local community organization focusing on immigrant rights is CU Immigration Forum (<http://immigration-forum.blogspot.com/>), which also lists resources available such as legal services. The University YMCA's New American Welcome Center is also a great place to reach out for help (<https://universityymca.org/welcome/>) on where to find community resources and legal assistance. For the first time ever the New American Welcome Center can offer legal assistance, so make sure to check them out. Another resource for affordable quality legal assistance, is the Immigration Project (<http://www.immigrationproject.org/>).

Books

There are two large bookstores that stock all the course texts: the **Illini Union Bookstore** [IUB] (809 S. Wright, C.) and **T.I.S. College Bookstore**

(707 S. Sixth, C.). IUB has the advantage of being the university store, which means you can deduct everything you buy there from your taxes! IUB also gives a portion of its proceeds back to the students in the form of cultural programming, while T.I.S. sends its profit to its corporate headquarters. Another option, if you plan ahead, is requesting textbooks from the library or buying used textbooks online--this can save a ton of money.

In addition to the two academic bookstores, there is one independent bookseller in town. **Jane Addams** (208 N. Neil, C.) is a good off-campus new and used bookstore and is a great place to browse. Jane Addams specializes in women's studies and is also particularly good at locating out-of-print materials. If you're into browsing, collecting, or just accumulating used books, both the **Urbana Free Library** and the **Champaign Public Library** (see Libraries and Study Carrels, below) hold relatively frequent library book sales.

Student IDs

Your student ID is your passport to everything the university offers. A combination ID, library card, bus pass, and gym membership, the I-Card will be distributed at a student ID center in the Illini Union and at the IUB (see 'Bookstores') during the first week of classes. If you lose your card at any time, go to the permanent ID center in the Illini Union Bookstore office.

Discounts

Discounts are a great benefit to signing your GEO membership. Every GEO member is also a member of our larger unions—the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) and American Federation of Teachers (AFT)—and are eligible for many discounts. You should receive an AFT card in the mail after you sign your GEO membership

card. When you register it online you can get discounts on hotels, rental cars, etc. You can find all of the savings at <http://www.aft.org/benefits>.

IFT members now save 15 percent (previously 10 percent) off the regular monthly rate for individual and family wireless cell phone plans with AT&T, the nation's only unionized wireless company. Members receive additional savings on cell phones and accessories, as well. For more information call 800-897-7046 and reference FAN number 3508840 or visit Union Privilege online at <http://www.unionplus.org>.

As a student, you also get iPerks, which are discounts offered to people with a valid unexpired University of Illinois ID (I-Card). You can find the discounts here: <https://www.icardperks.uillinois.edu/cms/One.aspx?portalId=830098&pageId=837975>

Taxes

Taxes are confusing, so here are a few resources to help out with them! International students are advised to use a program provided by ISSS called glacier tax prep. Here are some resources provided by ISSS: <http://iss.illinois.edu/publications/resources/incometax.html>.

TACS illinois (one of the UIUC RSOs) provide free tax filing consulting (<https://illinois.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/tacs>). To contact them email them at illinoistacs@gmail.com.

We also provide a free Tax Workshop in the Spring so keep an eye out for that in the Spring semester, but also feel free to email us at geo@uigeo.org for questions and the date and location of the workshop.

Computing

Because course registration is available only online, you need to setup your Enterprise account as soon as possible (<https://apps.uillinois.edu/selfservice/>). **Tech Services** manages email accounts and maintains a helpful web site (<https://techservices.illinois.edu/>). Here, you can find out more about account services, server space, free or discounted software, wireless on campus, dialing in from off-campus, computing labs, etc. Furthermore, Tech Services has a help desk in room 1420 of the Digital Computing Lab (1304 W. Springfield, U.).

Library and Study Carrels

Graduate students have access to all libraries and stacks at the university, with borrowing privileges of approximately three and a half months for most books. Overdue fees for most books are usually waived when you return the materials, but check for music, videos, and special items. Information on the university library is available at <http://library.illinois.edu>. The **Urbana and Champaign public libraries** (urbanafreelibrary.org and champaign.org) are also excellent. The Champaign Public Library has been renovated and allows its meeting rooms to be reserved by non-profit orgs.

Grad students are also able to obtain study carrels, located in the stacks of the main library. Register for a carrel in the circulation office, on the 2nd floor of the main library.

Disability Services

DRES (Disability Resources and Educational Services) is the campus office that specifically serves students with physical or learning

disabilities. For more information on the services available visit <http://disability.illinois.edu/> or call 217-333-1970.

On-Campus Recreation

If you want to exercise your body instead of your brain, UIUC has multiple options, both indoor and outdoor. A complete list of facilities can be found on the **Campus Recreation** website (www.campusrec.illinois.edu).

The **Activities and Recreation Center (ARC)** is the university's renovated complex, housing several gyms, racquetball/handball/volleyball courts, pools, an indoor track, weight rooms, stair-masters, a climbing wall, and more! Another great facility is **Campus Recreation Center East (CRCE)**, which has state of the art equipment, weights, a pool, a hot tub, and a water slide! The **University of Illinois Ice Arena** is open for ice skating and broomball through the academic year. Bowling, billiards, and video games are available, for a fee, in the basement of the **Illini Union**. The local **salsa dancing** scene is especially active; for up-to-date information, keep an eye out for flyers. The Urbana Dance Company (<https://www.urbandancecompany.com/>) also offers classes in a variety of dances, such as salsa, merengue, bachata, cumbia, belly dancing and more. Champaign is also known for its **Capoeira Club** (<https://illinois.collegiatelink.net/organization/capoeiraclubatuiuc>) and yoga centers. The **Yoga Intitute of Champaign-Urbana** (www.yoga-cu.com) draws teachers from around the world. There is also the **Living Yoga Center** on 1st St in Champaign (livingyogacenter.net). There is also **Amara Yoga** in Urbana (amarayoga.com). If you are interested in climbing, there is also Urbana Boulders, an indoor bouldering gym (<http://www.urbanaboulders.com/>). They have day passes as well as

monthly and annual passes, and you can rent shoes and chalk there. If you are interested in aerial arts and pole dancing check out Defy Gravity (<https://www.defygravitycu.com/>) and make sure to ask for the student discount!

Around Champaign

Public Transportation

The flat terrain and relatively compact size of Champaign make biking an option most of the year. Combined with the award-winning bus system, doing without a car is a real possibility. As a U of I student, flash your I-Card to ride on any bus in town--a student fee that you pay by default covers your fare, so you might as well take advantage of it. Keep in mind that some buses run more frequently than others and some close down early in the evening, though a night-time **Safe Rides** (<https://www.cumtd.com/riding/saferides>) service is available. Something to keep in mind is that the Safe Rides service region is limited. Information about the bus service can be found at the **Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District** (CUMTD) web site (www.cumtd.com).

Getting a bike/Repairing your bike

The inconvenience and scarcity of campus parking is another reason to bike. For good deals on bicycles and bicycle repair visit **The Bike Project**, a volunteer-run non-profit cooperative. With two locations, one on campus (608 E. Pennsylvania Ave., C.) and one in downtown Urbana (202 S. Broadway, U., IMC basement), The Bike Project offers a friendly DIY environment for your bike repair needs. You can become a member by either volunteering for 8 hours or by paying the \$30 annual membership fee. As a member you will have access to

the space and all of the tools during the open hours at either of the two locations. There are volunteer mechanics present during the open hours in case you have questions or need help with your bike repair.. Apart from repairing your personal bike, you can join their Build-a-Bike program. Build-a-Bike program allows you to refurbish a bike for your own use. You can choose from the available assortment of donated bikes, and volunteer mechanics will help you learn the skills to get your bike road-worthy and eventually purchase it for an affordable price. The Bike Project also offers refurbished bikes for sale. These are donated bikes that have been repaired by volunteer mechanics and have passed safety inspection. Purchasing a refurbished bike comes with a one-year membership. Check out The Bike Project website for more information at <http://thebikeproject.org>.

There are also several bike shops in CU area. For more information visit <https://bike.illinois.edu/resources/where-to-get-a-bicycle/>.

Driving

Both campus and local authorities heavily police meters. For an annual fee you purchase a pass to park on a large lot at the edge of campus and ride a shuttle bus to the central campus. Information about the shuttle pass and other options is available from the **Parking Division** (<https://parking.illinois.edu/>). At the same office you can purchase a cash key, an easy way to pay meters on campus and in both Champaign and Urbana. Many lots on campus are free after 5pm or on weekends, like the lots in the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts and the Main Library lot, but others are 24-hrs so carefully read signs posted at the entrance to the lot before you park.

By car, C-U is about two hours from Indianapolis, two and a half hours from Chicago, three hours from St. Louis, and 6 1/2 hours from Memphis. Transportation options for Chicago include **Amtrak** and

Greyhound. Reserve early to take advantage of the cheap rates. Commuter airline service is located at Willard Airport though it is sometimes cheaper to fly from Bloomington, IL, Chicago, Indianapolis or St. Louis. To get to Willard, you can call a cab. Another great option is **Peoria Charter** (<https://peoriacharter.com/>), which includes service to O'Hare and Midway. Burlington Trailways is another way to get to Indianapolis (<https://burlingtontrailways.com/>). They drop off downtown. The Go Express bus is an inexpensive way to get between the Indy airport and downtown Indy and pickup at the Omni Severin is a block from the downtown Indy bus terminal (https://goexpresstravel.com/indy_express).

Auto Repair

We all know that needing to get something repaired on your car sucks, especially if you don't know any reliable mechanics. Fortunately, we can provide a few contacts, which have been passed down by GEO members themselves. For general auto repairs, we recommend **Joe's Automotive Repair**, located on 24 E Marshall St., C. Another great place is **Peter B's Automotive**, located on 509 N Lierman Ave, U.

Newspapers, Radio, and TV

Both the local daily newspaper, the **News-Gazette**, and the free, student paper, the **Daily Illini** offer versions of local and world events. You be the judge of the quality. Champaign-Urbana has a surprisingly thriving local alternative media scene--one mainstay is the **Independent Media Center** (202 S. Broadway, U), which publishes **The Public I**, a free newspaper and monthly analysis, and distributes a number of zines and newsletters for free or a small donation. For international newspapers and magazines, try the library.

Radio in Champaign-Urbana is not quite as consolidated as in other parts of the country, and it's still possible to hear locally produced content and real live DJs. **WILL**, the University's public broadcasting empire, offers an NPR affiliate with good local programming on AM580; a classical station at 90.9 FM; and a PBS television station. The **WHHP** 98.3 FM, based in a house in Farmer City, IL, plays bluegrass, old timey music, and alt country, but the real radio gems are **WEFT 90.1 FM** and **WRFU 104.5 FM**. WEFT is a 20+ year old community radio station, meaning that everyone you hear on air is a volunteer. Schedules can be found at www.weft.org. WRFU is a newer low-power community station broadcasting out of the Independent Media Center in Urbana. We are big fans of WRFU's "**The World Labor Hour**," which broadcasts on Saturdays from the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center and regularly covers GEO and labor issues. You can listen at **104.5 FM** and online, and their past shows are archived online (<http://wrfu.net>).

For R&B and Gospel, try **WBCP 1580 AM**. Cookie-cutter easy listening, country, top 40, oldies, and talk radio stations round out the dial, with the student-oriented 'modern rock' station at **107.1 FM**. For a Spanish language radio station check out **1460 AM**.

With the exception of **WILL-TV**, which produces and broadcasts interesting documentaries as well as the usual PBS fare, broadcast TV is a wasteland.

Local Websites and Blogs

Chambana Moms, Online resource geared towards family but with helpful area info for all! (<http://chambanamoms.com>)

Eat CU, collection of menus and specials for the majority of Champaign restaurants and online delivery service (<http://www.eatcu.com>).

Campustowns.com posts events specific to the campus community and also features articles written by UIUC students (www.campustowns.com)

Smile Politely, independent online magazine that focuses on local music, restaurants and events (<http://www.smilepolitely.com>).

The Daily Illini, the student newspaper of UIUC (dailyillini.com)

Community Involvement

While it may feel like you're only briefly passing through Champaign-Urbana as a graduate student, it's likely that you'll live here for several years. Getting involved with the community is a grounding and rewarding experience. The GEO Solidarity Committee collaborates with community activists in the **Campus Labor Coalition** and other groups.. Other groups to check out are First Followers (<https://www.firstfollowersreentry.com/>), which is a community based organization that works with formerly incarcerated people and helps them reintegrate into the community, the Education Justice Project (<http://www.educationjustice.net/home/>) is a prison education program at Danville Prison, and the Champaign County Bailout Coalition (<https://champaigncountybailoutcoalition.home.blog/>) which is a non-profit and volunteer-run organization committed to the abolition of money bail as the criterion for determining pretrial release in Champaign County.

For more information about how to get involved with the GEO's Solidarity Committee, please contact solcomm@uigeo.org.

Paychecks and Banking

Payday is but once per month on the 16th. **Your first paycheck won't arrive until September 16th, so plan accordingly**, and your last check will come on May 16th if you work both semesters. Thanks to the hard work of the GEO, university fees are now due after your first payday in September and January. Questions about paychecks can be answered in your main department office. Occasionally, graduate employees have problems with their paychecks. The GEO has effectively dealt with these problems in the past. We're here to help you resolve any wage-related issues, so email GEO at geo@uigeo.org or grievance@uigeo.org or stop by the GEO office on the first floor of the McKinley Foundation (809 S 5th Street, Champaign, in the Geneva Room), with questions.

There are numerous banks on and off campus. The **U of I Employees Credit Union** (www.uiecu.org) offers free checking and savings with no minimum balance. **Busey Bank** (www.busey.com) can open bank accounts for international students that do not have a social security number.

Financial Services

If you have a financial emergency or if your income is below a certain threshold (e.g., 200% of the poverty line), there are public and private financial service providers that can help. Some providers also provide assistance to international students as well.

Public Financial Assistance

Eligibility Misconceptions

Two common misconceptions regarding eligibility for public assistance are

- 1) That it is based on one's annual household income.
 - a) Actually, eligibility for public assistance is based on one's monthly household income. That is, if your pay in the last 30 days is below a certain amount, then you may qualify.
- 2) That all of the public assistance requires you to be a citizen.
 - a) While some programs do require citizenship or residency, not all of them do. We can offer information on several assistance programs which accept applications from non-citizens.

Cautions and Concerns

Accepting government financial assistance can put international students at risk of being declared a "public charge." This would mean that it would be difficult to subsequently apply for a green card. It is therefore recommended that international students message the co-Treasurers at treasurer@uigeo.org before applying for public financial assistance.

- International members may apply for SNAP benefits if they are legal residents or if they have children who are U.S. Citizens. The SNAP benefits are and remain safe to apply for and use until 60 days after new 'public charge' rules announced, which as of this posting has not happened. So qualified international members are 100% recommended to apply for this subsidy if their income qualifies.
<https://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Keep-Getting-the-Help-You-Need-English.pdf>

Any concerns or questions regarding eligibility for, stigmas, or enrollment in public assistance can be directed to our treasurer at: treasurer@uigeo.org. For those interested in helping members to enroll for public assistance, please also message our treasurer.

Public Non-Emergency Financial Assistance

The below programs are for households with below a certain level of monthly income, and do not have hard eligibility limits on a household's existing assets. Those who do not have Summer appointments are eligible for at least one of these programs.

- [ABE Eligibility Screening and Application Portal](#) for SNAP and ACA Adult Group
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Recipients must be a citizen or legal resident
 - Affordable Care Act Adult Group (ACA Adult Group)
 - [Non-citizens may qualify for emergency medical ACA Adult support](#)
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program: **program is seasonal and ends around May 31st, 2019**
 - [Application Instructions](#) (requires being physically present at a Community Action Agency to apply)
 - [Seems to apply only to citizens](#)
- [Child Care Assistance Program \(CCAP\)](#)
 - [Eligibility calculator](#)
 - May be usable year round by some families
 - No mention of immigrant status
- [Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children \(WIC\) Eligibility Screening](#)
 - Immigrant status not mentioned in eligibility criteria

Public Emergency Financial Assistance

In the event of a financial emergency, public assistance can be provided to ensure that emergencies don't have compounding consequences. Below is an explanation of the

jurisdiction of the available emergency public assistance programs and a list of programs.

With the exception of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), emergency assistance is administered by the Townships in Illinois. So if you live in Champaign or Urbana, your access to emergency support depends on what is offered at the Champaign or Cunningham Township, respectively. If you don't live in Champaign or Urbana, you will need to locate your local Township. If you need help determining which Township provides services for your address, please contact our treasurer at treasurer@uigeo.org.

- [For TANF, use the ABE Eligibility Screening and Application Portal](#)
 - Recipients must be a citizen or legal resident
- [Champaign Township](#)
 - Rent Assistance
 - General Assistance-Transitional Assistance
- [Cunningham Township](#)
 - Rent Assistance
 - General Assistance
 - Assistance in enrollment for any other services

Local Food Pantries

The closest food pantry to campus is the Wesley Food Pantry. Their location and hours are listed below:

Wesley United Methodist Church (basement) from 5pm to 7pm on Thursdays

1203 W. Green Street Urbana, IL 61801

- The Wesley Food pantry also has student-only hours from 1pm to 3pm on Mondays

Free Meals on Campus Schedule

The Cultural Centers and Resource Centers offer free lunch Monday through Thursday and every other Friday. There is always a presentation on a topic relevant to the Cultural/Resource Center and food. It's first come first serve so make sure to get there early! For location information and topic information please check [here](#). This website will be updated with the rest of the lunches, so make sure to check again in November.

Dinners are provided on the following days and times:

Monday 5pm-6:30pm : Jubilee Cafe CUCC 805 S. 6th St., Champaign, IL, 61820

Wednesday 6pm-6:45pm: UniPlace Church Community, 403 S. Wright St., Champaign, IL, 61820

For Additional Information or information on other potential options for food assistance, please email our Co-Treasurers at treasurer@uigeo.org.

Parent Resources

For grads who are also parents, here are some resources that you may find useful. You can purchase dependent healthcare through the UIUC student insurance office. Graduate employees covered by the contract will have 25% of the premium waived for one dependent. First, complete a form with United Healthcare and pay the enrollment fee by the specific deadline (<http://si.illinois.edu/>) Given the great cost and limited benefits, the child and partner dependent plans need vast improvements. The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (IDHFS) offers health insurance to all children and their parents if they live in Illinois, including non-residents. The local activist

group Champaign County Health Care Consumers (www.healthcareconsumers.org) can answer many of your questions.

Some additional resources:

- UIUC Child care resource services: <http://ccrs.illinois.edu/>
- UIUC Student-Parents website: <http://odos.illinois.edu/student-parents/>
- This is a link to the child care assistance program: <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30355>

Groceries

There are many grocery stores in Champaign, but the most unique is the **Common Ground Food Co-op** (www.commonground.coop), a member-run natural food store featuring superb produce, located in the Lincoln Square Mall in Urbana. Supermarket chains include **Schnucks** at 200 N. Vine, U. and 109 N. Mattis, C.; varying greatly in quality from location to location is the **County Market** (331 E. Stoughton, C.; 2901 W. Kirby, C.) There is also a natural and organic food store in Champaign called **Harvest Market** (2029 S. Neil St, C). For a decent big box grocery store, try **Meijer** (2401 N. Prospect Ave, C., 2500 S. Philo, U.). Grads with families can look into the WIC food assistance program (www.c-uphd.org/wic.html) to get food coupons. The grocery store on campus is the **County Market** (331 E. Stoughton, C.) that has cheap dining options as well - you can purchase food in the store or the deli and eat it in their coffee shop. The cheapest grocery option, however, is **Aldi**, with two locations in Champaign and Urbana (801 W Interstate Dr, C. and 3102 E University, U.).

Champaign-Urbana has a number of small, specialty markets, including **Strawberry Fields** (306 W. Springfield, U.) and **Common Ground Co-Op** (300 S Broadway Ave #166, U.) for organic and vegetarian foods; , **Art Mart** (1705 S. Prospect Ave, C) for European gourmet specialties; and **Natural Gourmet** (2225 S. Neil, C).

The largest East and South Asian grocery store is Fresh International Market (505 S Neil St, C). Another place you can try for East and South Asian foods is **AmKo** (101 E. Springfield, C.). For East Asian stores you can also try **Far East Market** (105 S 5th Street, C.). There is an Indian grocery called **Annapoorna** (505 S. Neil St #11, C). Also, a Latin American grocery store, **El Progreso**, located at 1017 W Bloomington Rd, Champaign and 510 N Cunningham Ave, Urbana. For Guatemalan products go to **Tienda Guatemala** (408 N. Race St., U). A store specializing in European pastries and bread in town is **Pekara** (116 N. Neil St., C.). For stores specializing in African products check out the Best of Africa’s Food Store (208 W Griggs St., U) and Ashar African Market (510 N Cunningham Ave., U).

Quite a few farms near Champaign-Urbana sell produce, meat, eggs, and cheese directly to consumers. These foods tend to taste better than anything you could buy in a store. From May to November, the city of Urbana hosts an outstanding **Farmer’s Market** in the parking lot of Lincoln Square Mall (300 S. Vine, U.) every Saturday from 7:00 am to noon (rain or shine)--go to buy, go to browse, go to soak up the atmosphere. We also recommend that you check out the **Champaign Farmer’s Market** in downtown Champaign, every Tuesday from 3:30 to 6:30 pm (<http://thelandconnection.org/market>).

Budget Housekeeping and Laundry

Chambana, like most cities, has the normal crowded suburban stripmalls, stores and restaurants on N. Prospect and a usually

crowded and teenager-oriented mall on N. Neil St. However, one need not travel to these busy, often-crowded areas to find affordable household supplies, amenities or entertainment.

Champaign-Urbana has a well-used Craigslist page at chambana.craigslist.org. If you're patient, you can get great deals. For furniture, dishes, and decorating stuffs try the housewares section at the **Salvation Army** (2212 N. Market, C., 502 N. Prospect Ave., C.) or the **Goodwill** location (902 W Anthony, C.). **ReStore** by Habitat for Humanity (119 E. University, C.) also stocks furniture and supplies. We can also donate materials, like clothes, furniture, and electronics to the Salvation Army. There are other used furniture and clothing stores on this block. The **University YMCA** (1001 S. Wright, C.) holds its "[Dump and Run](#)" sale at the beginning of the semester, reselling mountains of everything from furniture to exercise equipment that people donated rather than dumping the previous spring. Prices are rock-bottom and proceeds go to a good cause. For a more hit or miss approach, yard sale season is April to September--bike or drive around off-campus neighborhoods on Saturday mornings starting around 7:30 or 8 am for the best deals, and be prepared for company.

If you have a little more money and a taste for kitsch, try **Furniture Lounge** (11 E University Ave, C.). Other good places for household decorations include **Ten Thousand Villages** (105 N. Walnut, C.), **Art Mart** (1705 S Prospect Ave., C) for art supplies, decorations and some housewares; and **International Galleries** (in Lincoln Square Mall, U.) for posters, framing, and knickknacks. For art supplies and an assortment of paper, yarn, and other materials, check out the very-affordable **I.D.E.A. Store** (125 Lincoln Square Mall, U).

If your home is in need of some basic repair and cleaning, try the locally owned **Do It Best Hardware** (*ask for the student discount!*) (107 W. Springfield, C.). If you're of an ecological persuasion, less toxic cleaning chemicals are sold at the **Common Ground Food Co Op** (Lincoln Square Mall, U.)--although they don't stock mops, sponges, buckets, etc. Recycled home improvement products (paint, brushes, moldings, and lots more) can be bought at the **ReStore** (119 E. University Ave, C). For more intensive renovations, try the **PACA** warehouse (44 E. Washington, C.), which is run by volunteers and resells antique doors, sinks, toilets, furniture, and other parts scavenged from houses before they are demolished, for very good prices.

When you've started wearing your interview clothes to the gym because everything else is dirty, it's time to make the pilgrimage to the Laundromat, if you're not one of the lucky few with on-site facilities. Check out **Courtesy Cleaning** (402 N. Broadway, U.), which has good people watching on Sunday afternoons.

Moving Tips

Moving sucks, but here are a few tips to make it suck less! For truck rentals, U-Haul, Penske, Budget Truck Rental are the available options in town. For local movers try All Things Moving (<http://www.allthingsmovinginc.com/>) or Two Men and a Truck (<https://twomenandatruck.com/movers/il/champaign>). There are other movers, so feel free to research them!

Renting and Housing in C-U

There are many options for renting apartments and houses in C-U, both with small, family run operations and with larger rental companies. The quality and service of the larger rental companies varies *significantly*, so make sure to try to talk to some current

residents first to find out the current scoop on landlady/lords and companies.

If you don't want to live in a larger apartment building, or want to rent from a smaller company, there are a lot of quirky and well located apartments in both Champaign and Urbana, many in funky old houses.

Read below for some suggestions on where to look.

For more information on renting and housing in C-U, you can also check out the **C-U Tenant Union** (217-352-6220) (<http://www.cutenantunion.org/>) and the Off-Campus-Community Living, formerly the **University Tenant Union**, (217-333-0112) (<https://occl.illinois.edu/>), which keeps a record of all complaints against landlady/lords in C-U. Ask to see their list of rental companies without any complaints and call those places to see what's available (<https://tenantunion.illinois.edu/>).

Co-op Living

If you want to live frugally, sustainably, and in a friendly and collaborative environment, look no further!

Members of each of Urbana's co-op houses agree to take part in the upkeep and well-being of their respective houses through cooking, cleaning, and regular in-house communication. All particulars are decided on a house-by-house basis.

The six cooperative houses of West Urbana are all administered by the same landlord. More information can be found at co-opurbana.com/. This network is affiliated with but separate from the Community of Urbana Cooperative Housing (COUCH) network (Harvest and Brooks Houses); couchcooperative.org. If you are vegan

or vegetarian- nightly dinners at Harvest House are 100 % vegan and all shared food in the house is vegetarian or vegan. Email harvestmembership@gmail.com with any questions!

No matter where you rent, we ***HIGHLY RECOMMEND that you purchase renter's insurance and discuss with your landlady/ lord their various liability and recovery policies in the event of a fire or other disaster.*** If you do not have renter's insurance, and are depending on the specific wording of your lease, it is likely that your landlady/lord/rental company will attempt to divest themselves of all liability for your losses.

Hair Care

While we could never provide a comprehensive list of places to get your hair done, here are a few suggestions. For African American styles, try **Locks of Glory** (124 N 1st St., C.), and **Ippatsu Salon** (73 E Chester St, C.) and **Timothy John Salon & Spa** (404 W Green St, U) are favorites for upscale cuts, coloring, and styling. For those looking for a cheaper barber, stop by **Glen's** (602 S. 1st St., C.).

Massage and Acupuncture

Let's face it, as students, we spend much of our time hunched over our books, work, and/or computers. Well, our poor backs can only take so much, and every now and then, it's nice to pamper ourselves with a therapeutic massage! One location is the **Body Therapy Center**, located on 206 N Randolph St, C. It offers student discounts and an additional first-timer discount. They also offer package deals. Check out their website for more information (<http://thebodytherapycenter.com/>).

Another resource is **Urbana Acupuncture** (<http://urbana-acu.tumblr.com/>) that offers a sliding fee scale. They are located in Lincoln Square Mall in Urbana.

Health Care

Graduate students at UIUC pay for two types of healthcare. The *Health Service Fee* covers the primary medical services at the **McKinley Health Center** on campus (1109 S. Lincoln Ave, U. www.mckinley.illinois.edu) and supplies funding for the **University's Counseling Center** (www.couns.illinois.edu). DRES is the campus unit charged with serving students with disabilities (www.disability.illinois.edu). The *Health Insurance fee* covers many healthcare needs not available at the McKinley center, and pays for the health insurance coverage available to graduate employees as a benefit of employment. The GEO has secured a waiver of the *Health Service fee* for graduate employees, as well as an increase in the subsidy (87%), through contract negotiations and a strike, towards the cost of the *Health Insurance fee* (currently \$696/semester for graduate student). In 2002, the GEO also secured Dental and Eye Insurance (www.grad.illinois.edu/current/health.htm) at no extra cost for graduate employees.

Health care on campus can be confusing. For now, think of it this way: as with all of the undergraduate students on campus, you can use the campus (McKinley) health center and pharmacy at little or no cost for many basic medical needs and appointments, but you need to be aware that services and the quality of service at McKinley can vary. You ALSO are provided with subsidized health insurance through your employment contract - this is just like any other employer

subsidized health insurance and is an ENTIRELY SEPARATE entity from McKinley.

There are some serious shortcomings to our current healthcare. The cost of insuring partners and dependents is excessive, but we won a **25% subsidy for one dependent** in our new contract. Summer coverage costs extra and our insurance does not cover the cost of some prescriptions and you are not automatically enrolled in it unless you have certain fellowships or are registered for summer classes, so please make sure to enroll in summer coverage before the due date every May. The formulary at McKinley is reasonably good and provides some discounted products, though they now charge a minimum for all prescriptions (some drugs were previously distributed free of charge)-many drugs continue to cost substantially more, especially drugs related to women's health.

In regards to finding the best price for your more expensive prescriptions, there are several resources available we recommend:

- OptumRx has a prescription look-up and price compare function available through United Healthcare (requires insurance information, <https://www.uhcsr.com/>)
- CompleteCare Pharmacy also offers price compare services (<http://www.completecarepharmacy.net/>)
- GoodRx provides a prescription look-up function along with coupons for various prescriptions (<https://www.goodrx.com/>)

For trans health questions at McKinley there is a Sexuality Educator in the Sexual Health Education Program at McKinley. Call McKinley at 217-333-2700, select the number for Health Education, and request to speak with the Sexuality Educator. Planned Parenthood provides useful services, particularly for women's health and transgender healthcare (www.plannedparenthood.org/illinois) while the local

activist group Champaign County HealthCare Consumers (www.healthcareconsumers.org) can answer many of your questions.

Champaign County Planned Parenthood of Illinois is now offering a program entitled: Transgender Healthcare for Illinois residents that includes hormone therapy. Champaign Planned Parenthood is located on 302 E. Stoughton St., C. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO LIVE IN CHAMPAIGN COUNTY TO RECEIVE SERVICES. Spread the word to anyone who lives downstate. Hormone therapy may include: 1) estrogen medication. Estradiol and progestin preparations. 2) Anti-androgen medications, spironolactone, finasteride, and minoxidil. 3) testosterone medications: testosterone preparations. Hormone Therapy Plan and Ongoing Care Plan Includes: FIRST VISIT INCLUDES: Examination and lab work plus discussion of treatment goals and expectations, side effects, and risks of therapy with an advanced practice nurse and licensed clinical social worker. SECOND VISIT INCLUDES: Review of lab results, and prescription for hormone therapy. THIRD VISIT INCLUDES: Two to four times per year to monitor health, address goals, review medications and update lab testing as needed. OTHER SERVICES OFFERED AT PP: Well person screenings and exams, treatment for infections, contraception and menstruation management, STI testing and treatment, Licensed clinical social work services, community referrals, screening for reproductive cancers, and PrEP for HIV Prevention.

Access to birth control and emergency contraception, as well as reproductive health services including sonograms, is an ongoing issue in C-U. Thanks to the GEO, the McKinley Health Service's efforts to end their sonogram service have been temporarily halted, but the status of women's health services and affordable birth control on campus continues to be tenuous. IUDs are provided through McKinley, and while fully reimbursable, they have to be paid for

up-front prior to the procedure. If you'd like to join in the GEO's efforts to secure affordable women's and other health care, contact the Healthcare Working Group at health@uigeo.org.

Also, please be aware that there are two major hospitals in C-U that are in-network: **Carle Hospital** and OSF Heart of Mary. *If you are seeking access to emergency contraception or contraception of any kind, do NOT go to OSF Heart of Mary, which does not provide contraception of any kind to patients except in certain very limited cases.*

If you have an emergency or need to visit **Carle Hospital** for in-patient or out-patient care, make sure to apply for Carle's Financial Assistance Program (<https://carle.org/billing/financial-assistance>). You may be eligible for significant reduced payments on top of the measly amount our insurance pays. (*Note: You do not have to be a US citizen to apply for this, as long as you have an Illinois ID and live in IL.*)

In Gibson City (around 40 minutes away by car), there is the **Gibson City Area Hospital**, which also has a Financial Assistance Program. This is the Gibson Cares Program, and can similarly help cover expenses not covered by your insurance plan. Further information about this program can be found at <http://www.gibsonhospital.org/>

Avicenna Healthcare Clinic is open on most Sundays from 1:00-4:00pm and provides care for the uninsured or underinsured. More information can be found at <http://www.avicennahealth.org/>.

Frances Nelson Health Center also provides care to uninsured and underinsured, located at 819 Bloomington Road, C, (217) 356-1558, <http://www.promisehealth.org/>

The Champaign County Regional Planning Commission also offers rent and utilities assistance to non-citizens and citizens. Check <https://ccrpc.org/programs/low-income-home-energy-assistance/> to see if you qualify.

Dental and Vision

Thanks to the collective bargaining power of the GEO, graduate students with waiver-generating appointments at UIUC have both dental and vision insurance. Information on both insurance plans can be found on the UIUC graduate college website (<http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/current/dental.htm>, <http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/current/vision.htm>).

You can use the “provider locator” on the insurance company websites (one way to find an in-network dental provider is at <http://www.deltadentalil.com/provider-search/dental/>). The provider locators return results in alphabetical order, so make sure to find reviews of a provider before scheduling an appointment. The best way to find a good provider is to ask other graduate students for a recommendation! For optical care, we recommend **Illini Eyecare** (Green St.) or **Jones Optical** (Neil St.) and for dental care, **Hessel Park Family Dentistry** (Kirby Ave), who also have a referral program that can assist with covering medical bills.

Services covered in the dental insurance include:

- Oral exam: twice per year, no more frequent than every 6 months
- X-rays: two bitewings a year and full-mouth x-rays once in 36-month interval

- Prophylaxis (teeth cleaning): twice per year, but no more frequent than every 6 months

To make a dentist appointment you need the following:

- Your group number: 5436
- Your University Identification Number (UIN).

If you require special or extensive dental care you can opt-in to a more comprehensive plan through UIUC. Contact the student insurance office for more information.

How do I find a dentist?

- Call Delta Dental of Illinois' Customer Service department (7am-7pm CST) or their Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system (available 24/7) at 800-323-1743, <http://www.deltadentalil.com/provider-search/dental/>
- Choose a dentist that participates in Delta Dental PPO network or Delta Dental Premier network. Lower co-payment percentages and Delta Dental PPO dentists accept reduced fees as payment in full, and Delta Dental Premier dentists accept Maximum Plan Allowances (MPA) as payment in full.
- FYI: Out-of-network dentists can charge you for any difference between the MPA and their submitted fee. Payment for Delta Dental Premier dentists and out-of-network dentists is based on Delta Dental's MPA. The is calculated as a percentile of billed fees.

How do I make an appointment?

Call the dental office and make an appointment. At your first appointment, give the dentist:

- Your group number: 5436

- Your University Identification Number (UIN).

Traveling:

If you are outside of the C-U area and require healthcare, there are functions available to find in-network providers:

Go to <https://connect.werally.com/> and type in the zipcode you're traveling in. Follow the select by options from there. The United Healthcare app has a "Find Providers" function. Any facility or provider listed is considered "in-network", but call and confirm they take your "UHC Options PPO" insurance plan.

If you have a question about your insurance plan, you can directly contact United Healthcare by calling: 1-888-224-4883 between the hours of 7am-7pm CST.

If you are outside of the US and require medical assistance, you can call a 24 hour number to find insurance-recommended healthcare providers in your specific country. Call 1-800-527-0218 at any time (listed on back of insurance ID card). For coverage information, call UHCSR Customer Service at 1-888-224-4883. Most situations require that you pay first and then submit a request to student resources for reimbursement.

Healthcare Frequently Asked Questions

1. I have a family here. Should I get them insured? How should I do it?

If you, a family member, or loved one does not have health insurance through their job, you can enroll them in your health insurance plan. If you are a TA/GA, you get 25% of the cost for one dependent covered

by UIUC. First, complete a form and pay the enrollment fee by the specific deadline, found here:

<https://www.uhcsr.com/uhcsrBrochures/Public/EnrollmentCards/2013-1351-2%20Dependent%20EF-v1.pdf>

2. I have a question about health insurance. Who should I contact?

UIUC Student Health Insurance Office, 1109 S. Lincoln Ave, Urbana
[\(http://si.illinois.edu/\)](http://si.illinois.edu/)

Phone: (217) 333-0165, Email: insure@illinois.edu

3. Can I get insured somewhere else? What are my options?

Yes, if you currently have insurance or want to purchase insurance you can select a plan from the insurance marketplace. However, you should waive your student health insurance by filling out an exemption form.

4. Should I keep my insurance ID card with me all the time?

Yes, you can print a copy by logging into the United Healthcare website, the UHCSR app or mailed to you for free by calling **1-888-224-4883**.

5. What should I bring with me when I go to a hospital?

All students should bring an insurance ID card, along with a photo ID, preferably the UIUC student ID card. International students should bring a passport or immigration documentation.

6. What should I tell them about my insurance?

Tell them you are covered under United Healthcare and present to them your ID card.

7. Is there an emergency “insurance” phone number that I can call at anytime?

Call 1-888-224-4883 between the hours of 7am-7pm CST. However, there is no emergency phone number to confirm insurance policy information.

10. What if I am out of the US?

Call 1-800-527-0218 at any time (listed on back of insurance ID card). For coverage information, call UHCSR Customer Service at 1-888-224-4883. Most situations require that you pay first and then submit a request to student resources for reimbursement.

More information for international students can be found here: http://iss.illinois.edu/publications/student_insurance/student_insurance_faq.html

Please feel free to contact the GEO Healthcare Working Group at health@uigeo.org if you have more questions.

Recreation

Champaign and Urbana both have fantastic park systems, with parks and “parklets” scattered all over the two cities. They also offer fitness and general interest classes; check out the web sites of the **Champaign Park District** (<http://www.champaignparkdistrict.com/>) and the **Urbana Park District** (<http://www.urbanaparks.org/>) for more information. There is reciprocity between both park districts, which means if you are a resident of Champaign you can get resident prices at the Urbana Park District and vice versa.

Both park districts and cities co-sponsor major yearly festivals--the downtown **Urbana Sweetcorn Festival** is usually the last weekend of August, while the **Taste of Champaign Urbana** takes place in mid August in Westside Park, and the **Urbana Blues, Brews, and BBQ**

Festival. In the spring, local visual and performing artists strut their stuff during the **Boneyard Arts Festival** in April. Roger Ebert’s internationally recognized **Overlooked Film Festival** draws thousands of film buffs to downtown Champaign’s historic **Virginia Theater** every spring.

If you want to get outdoors, try the **U of I Arboretum** on Lincoln Ave., **Busey Woods** (1505 N. Broadway, U.), **Meadowbrook Park** at the corner of Windsor and Race streets in south Urbana, or head over to Mahomet (16 miles west of Champaign) to **Lake of the Woods**. If you want to exercise your green thumb but don’t have a yard, **Meadowbrook Park** features organic garden plots for rent for the growing season for very reasonable prices. If you have a car and some free time, don’t miss **Allerton Park**, located 30 miles SW of Champaign. It offers gardens, sculptures, and wooded walking and biking trails, and concerts during the summer months. Further afield, **Kickapoo State Park** in Danville (30 minutes east by car), **Homer Lake** (20 minutes southeast by car) and **Turkey Run State Park** in Indiana offer more recreation opportunities. Hiking enthusiasts will need to head up to Wisconsin or down to the **Shawnee National Forest** in Southern Illinois.

Dog owners can take their pet to Urbana’s **Dog Park** (1508 E. Perkins Rd., U.) (<http://www.urbanaparks.org/parks/dog-park-perkins-rd-site/>).

There is also Champaign’s Dog Park called Bark District (5001 Windsor Rd, C,) (<https://champaignparks.com/park/champaign-bark/>).

Theater, films, and video rental

The University’s **Krannert Center for the Performing Arts** (www.krannertcenter.com) presents drama, dance, symphonies, and operas in several theaters. Grads can see internationally renowned

performances ranging from the Moscow Ballet to the avant-garde Cronos Quartet. Often the performances happen during mid-week and cost far less for students with ID's. As might be expected, tickets for these performances sell out quickly, so plan ahead. Local troupes play at the **Station Theater** (223 N. Broadway, U), and at the **Armory Free Theater** (in the Armory Building on campus), and the productions at both can be quite remarkable. Larger local productions, such as musicals, and regional touring companies come to the **Virginia Theater** (203 W. Park, C.).

The **Art Theater** (126 W. Church, www.thecuart.com) features foreign and art films, and serves food and alcohol, plus you get a student discount with your ID. On the weekends check out the Late Night Movies, featuring old classics at a discounted price. The **Virginia Theater** also shows some films, usually for only \$5. There is also the **Harvest Moon Drive-in Theater** in Gibson City (www.harvestmoondrivein.com).

The best place to rent movies in town are from the libraries now that the local movie rental store closed. **The Urbana Free Library** (www.urbanafreelibrary.org; 201 S. Race, U) specializes in foreign and art films, plus it's free, free, free, with a one week rental! **The Champaign Library** (www.champaign.org; 505 S. Randolph St, C) also has a decent selection.

Museums and Art

Chambana also has a few interesting and fun museums to visit on the University of Illinois campus. The **Spurlock Museum** (www.spurlock.illinois.edu) has an impressive and diverse cultural and historical collection that is fun to visit. The **Krannert Art Museum** (www.kam.illinois.edu) has a wide variety of European and American paintings, Incan/Egyptian/Roman/Chinese/African artifacts, and an

interesting glassware collection. A unique characteristic of Champaign is that many local businesses have rotating art exhibits on their walls. You can spend a whole day checking out locally-produced art in restaurants and coffee shops. For children there is also the Orpheum Children’s Science Museum (346 N. Neil St, U) (<https://orpheumkids.com/>).

Music

If you like live music, Champaign has a fairly active scene. U of I’s **Assembly Hall** and **Foellinger Auditorium** book bigger acts (John Mayer, Ben Folds, The Decemberists, The Red Hot Chili Peppers, Lil’ Wayne, T.I., Garth Brooks, the Kiss revival tour, Father John Misty, Eminem, etc.). Tickets are sold to students on a lottery system. The **Krannert Center for the Performing Arts** also features symphonies and other musical and theatrical events, including world class performances by such groups and musicians as the English Concert and Buddy Guy (www.krannertcenter.com).

There are also plenty of smaller venues for punk, folk, jazz, etc. The **Canopy Club** (708 S. Goodwin, U.) often hosts smaller and not-so-small acts (Sleater-Kinney, The Mountain Goats, Asobi Seksu, Reverend Horton Heat, Los Straitjackets). The Canopy Club in particular is a great place to see big names in a more intimate space (Nas, Neutral Milk Hotel, George Clinton and the P-Funk All Stars, Atmosphere, etc.) There is a good mix of local and touring bands, many of which stop in Champaign-Urbana between gigs in Chicago and St. Louis. Options for jazz include Blackbird (119 W Main St, U), the **Iron Post** (120 S. Race, U.).

C-U is also host to some major music festivals, including the **Pygmalion Festival** in September (<http://www.thepygmalionfestival.com/>).

For dancing, try **The Regent Ballroom** (<https://www.regentballroom.com/>) (1406 Regency Dr., S.) which hosts regular dance nights for swing, salsa, and other ballroom dancing styles. Try **Soma** and **Ko-Fusion** for salsa and hip hop on weeknights.

Caffeination

Cafes are, of course, everywhere. On campus, try the funky, locally-owned **Caffe Paradiso** (corner of Lincoln and Nevada). **Espresso Royale** is the most commonly found cafe, with locations in Main Library Tunnel, Champaign, Urbana, and the **Krannert Art Museum**. **Paradiso**, and several **Espresso Royale** locations feature free wireless internet access if you bring your laptop.

Off campus, try **Cafe Kopi** (109 N. Walnut, C.), **Aroma Café** (118 N. Neil, C.), and **Pekara** (116 N. Neil, C.). If you're in Urbana, check out **Cafeteria and Company** (208 W. Main, U). You can also check out the coffee shops in the Schnucks in Urbana and the County Market on 4th and Springfield in Champaign, which offer free wireless as well. These cafes serve coffee, food, specialty alcoholic drinks, and beer as well. Beans are available at a number of locations in the two cities, including a fair selection of organic and fair trade coffees. Urbana residents generally hold **Strawberry Fields'** beans as the best (and the most expensive); organic and fairtrade coffee is available at **Common Ground Food Co-op** as well. You can also check out the **Columbia Roasting Company** (<https://csrcoffee.com/>) in Downtown Champaign. Tea aficionados will certainly do well to check out the

selection of fine loose teas at **Walnut Street Tea Company** (115 S. Walnut Street, C.)

If a more secluded, quiet place is more productive, try **Latte Da** at the Champaign and Urbana public libraries. Both libraries host coffee shops and work areas on the first floor. Check <http://urbanafreelibrary.org/> and <http://www.champaign.org/> for hours.

Wines, Beer, and Spirits

There are several establishments that stock a wide variety of alcoholic beverages. Chambana has a number of **Piccadilly** liquor stores. However, each store has a different inventory of wines, including smaller vintners, so it is possible to find hidden gems. For example, the Piccadilly on 1st and Healy has a **fantastic** selection of wine and craft beer, including a 50% off wine rack that has some wonderful wines for affordable prices. Piccadillys are also reliable places to purchase kegs, and some stores offer tastings of some of their products. But in terms of price, the beer and liquor sections of Schnucks and Meijer are more reasonable.

Friar Tuck's is a supermarket of wines, beer, and liquors in Savoy (1333 Savoy Plaza. S.). They also sell home-brewing equipment, and offer tastings every Saturday. **Binny's** (802 W Town Center Blvd, C.) also offers a wide selection of wine, beer and liquors at all prices. **Art Mart** (1705 S Prospect Ave, C.) and **Sun Singer Wines and Spirits** (1115 W. Windsor Rd., C) carry higher-end wines; however, their staff is extremely knowledgeable and both host affordable, weekly wine and food tastings.

Pets and Petcare

If you're looking to adopt a pet, there are a couple places in town to go. The **Champaign County Humane Society** (1911 East Main Street, U) has a wide variety of animals up for adoption, including cats, dogs, rabbits, guinea pigs, birds, and reptiles. If you're specifically looking for a cat, the **Champaign Area Trap Spay/Neuter and Adoption Program (CATSNAP)** is a foster-based program that holds adoption events in **PetSmart** (Savoy, IL).

Sailfin Pet Shop (720 S. Neil St., C) sells fish (fresh and saltwater), birds, small mammals, reptiles, and tarantulas. They also carry supplies for all of the above animals, including bulk food, at good prices. Check their website for weekly sales. They are the local experts on aquarium care.

For general pet supplies, wild bird feeders/seed, and large animal supplies, check out **PrairieLand Feeds** (303 S. Dunlap St, S). They are a locally-owned store whose prices typically beat the big box stores.

All cats and dogs are required to receive regular rabies vaccines and be registered with the county. Registration is for one or three years, depending on the type of vaccine given. The fee is lower for pets who have been spayed/neutered. You should receive the registration materials from the vet when your pet receives the vaccine.

The University of Illinois' **Veterinary Teaching Hospital** (1008 W Hazelwood Dr, U) provides **24/7 emergency services**. They are also a good source for certain kinds of specialized veterinary care. However, they are expensive for basic care and general checkups. There are several vet offices in town, and most of them attended UofI for their

degree. **Good Friends Animal Hospital** (908 East Main St., U) is a certified Cat Friendly Practice.

Guide to Dining

Breakfast

Courier Cafe (111. N. Race, U) \$ Amazing pancakes and omelets at great prices with great atmosphere. Go later in the day for great burgers, fries, and shakes.

Cracked (619 E. Green St, C) \$ They have great breakfast sandwiches and look out for the food truck.

Le Peep (2209 S. Neil, C) \$-\$\$ One of the best breakfasts in town.

Original House of Pancakes (1909 W. Springfield, C) \$ Enormous portions with loads of cholesterol in tacky decor=great breakfast.

Sammy's Pancake House (1206 N. Mattis Ave, C) \$ Pancakes, diner food, and everything else you need. A grad favorite.

Destihl (301 N. Neil St, C) \$\$ A gastrobrewery in downtown Champaign.

Big Grove (1 E. Main St, C) \$\$\$ You can get bottomless mimosas for Sunday brunch as well as other delicious food!

Chinese

Golden Harbor (505 S. Neil St, C) \$-\$\$\$ Great food and large portions. It's quite expensive if you go on your own, but affordable if you plan to share.

Peking Garden (206 N. Randolph, C) \$-\$\$ Large portions and wide selection.

Mandarin Wok (403 E. Green, C) \$ Best Chinese food in town if you order from the Chinese language menu.

Lai Lai Wok (402 E. Green St., C)\$-\$\$\$ The best Chinese food on Green St.

Indian

Bombay Indian Grill (403 E. Green, C.) \$ Great Indian food on campus. Usually crowded for lunch, but reasonable for dinner.

Himalayan Chimney (134 W. Church St, C) Best Indian restaurant in town!

Koh-i-noor (6 E. Columbia Ave, C) Focuses on North Indian food.

Ambar India (605 S. Wright St, C) Delicious indian food on campus and close to the engineering quad.

Italian

Biaggi's (2235 S. Neil St, C) \$\$-\$\$\$ A good Italian restaurant.

Timpone's (710 S. Goodwin, U) \$\$\$ A good choice for a special occasion. Lunches are more affordable.

Nando Milano Trattoria (204 N Neil St, C) \$\$\$ Great Italian food.

Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese

A-Ri-Rang (607 S. Wright St. C) \$ A longstanding Korean restaurant on campus. Try the Dolsot Bibimbap!

Sakanaya (403 S. Green St, C) \$\$ Decent food, but on the expensive side.

Sushi Kame (132 W. Church St, C) \$\$ Mixed reviews, but affordable.

Bab Plus (700 S Gregory St, U) A Koren restaurant with good food, large portions, and reasonably priced.

Xinh Xinh Cafe (114 N Vine St, U) A Vietnamese restaurant with good pho, which is also reasonably priced.

Thai

Basil Thai (701 S. Gregory, U) \$-\$\$ A good Thai restaurant on campus!

Bangkok Thai (410 E Green St, C) \$ Generous servings and a GEO favorite!

Siam Terrace (212 W. Main, U) \$-\$\$ A hike from campus, but worth the walk. The seasonal mango dessert is highly recommended.

Thara Thai (912 1/2 Bloomington Rd., C) \$\$-\$\$\$ A little further afield but worth the drive.

Mexican

Maize (60 E Green St, Champaign, IL 61820) \$-\$\$ A little off campus but worth the trip for authentic Mexican food made from scratch. There is also a sit down location in downtown Champaign.

Huaraches de Moroleon (805 Philo Rd, Urbana, IL 61801) \$-\$\$ Off campus but so worth the drive for good Mexican food. Offers a

variety of authentic dishes and has a large selection of margaritas and other Mexican cocktails and beers.

El Oasis (510 N Cunningham Ave, Urbana, IL 61802) \$-\$\$\$ Excellent place for Mexican ice cream and snacks.

Dos Reales (1407 N Prospect Ave, Champaign, IL 61820) \$-\$\$\$ A sit-down Mexican restaurant off campus.

Fiesta Cafe (216 S. 1st St, C) \$\$ Decent food and even better margaritas.

La Mixteca (510 N Cunningham Ave #4, U) \$ A new Mexican restaurant in Urbana by El Oasis and El Progreso.

Vegetarian

The **Red Herring Restaurant** (1209 W. Oregon, U) \$ Located right across the street from the Foreign Language Building, serving tasty vegetarian and vegan lunches. Also try the \$8 all-you-can-eat themed dinners on Wednesday nights.

The Dancing Dog Eatery & Juicery (126 W. Main St., U) \$ A popular 100% vegan eatery in downtown Urbana. They do a great brunch on Sundays.

Other Local Gems

Black Dog Smoke & Ale House (320 N Chestnut St. C, 201 Broadway Ave., U)\$\$\$ Delicious BBQ and tasty ales! The Champaign location is bigger and has more seating area.

Caribbean Grill (2135 S. Neil St, C) \$-\$\$\$ Great jerk chicken. Keep an eye out for their food truck!

Hopscotch (802 W. John St, C) \$-\$\$ Cute local bakery. They can even make a few things custom with enough notice!

Pandamonium Donuts (1105 Windsor Rd, C) \$ A popular food truck item, but now they've gotten their own store!!!

Watson's Chicken Shack (211 N. Neil St, C) \$\$ A great place to get Chicken and Waffles. Overall decent menu, a little on the pricey side for fried chicken.

Broadway Food Hall (2732, 401 N Broadway Ave, U) \$-\$\$ Trendy upbeat wide open space with a variety of cuisine; rice bowls, bagels, sandwiches, and drinks.

Late Night

Campus Town: A number of eateries near the university stay open past bar closing time (2 AM), including Manolo's. As with most fast food eaten after last call, caveat emptor.

Perkins (1214 W University, U) \$-\$\$ Family style late night food. Poor late night service and the food is mediocre at best.

Manolo's (1115 W. Oregon St, U) \$-\$\$ Their claim to fame is their New York style pizza and their empanadas. Their pizza is quite popular, but their empanadas get mixed reviews.

Merry-Ann's Diner (701 S. Gregory St. U, 1512 S Neil St. C.) \$ Standard side of the road diner fare. Some love it, others hate it.

Special Occasions and Hot Dates

The Bread Company (706. S Goodwin, U) \$\$-\$\$\$ Good cheeses, pizzas and pastas in relaxed environment. Good for a romantic date when they get the fireplace roaring. They also carry a great beer selection!

Destihl Restaurant (301 N. Neil St., C) \$\$ A gastrobrewery in downtown Champaign.

Ko-Fusion (1 E. Main C) \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ Pricey but the sushi is good, and the place provides a unique atmosphere for this area.

Big Grove Tavern (1 E. Main, C)\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ Upscale tavern sourcing from local farms and artisans.

Silvercreek (402 N Race St, U) \$\$\$\$ A quaint , rustic, and natural wood-and brick restaurant. A perfect place for casual fine dining.

Himalayan Chimney (134 W. Church St, C) Best Indian restaurant in town with an excellent vibe for a nice date or gathering.

Sipyard (204 W Main St., U) The only beer garden in central Illinois and an excellent place to meet.

Sakanaya (403 S. Green St, C) \$\$ Decent food, but on the expensive side.

Siam Terrace (212 W. Main, U) \$-\$\$ The seasonal mango dessert is highly recommended.

Broadway Food Hall (2732, 401 N Broadway Ave, U) \$-\$\$ Trendy upbeat wide open space with a variety of cuisine; rice bowls, bagels, sandwiches, and drinks.

Barrelhouse 34 (34 E Main St., C) There is indoor and outdoor seating. The terrace is an especially nice place to have a drink.

Japan House (2000 S Lincoln Ave., U) (<https://japanhouse.illinois.edu/>) Though not a restaurant, it is a nice place to meet up.

The **Art Theater** (126 W. Church St., C) (<http://www.thearttheater.org/>). A great place to see a movie and meet up.

A Few Good Bars

Blind Pig Brewery (120 N. Neil, C) Great beer selection. 19 taps and 2 hand pulls. Cozy, bustling atmosphere.

Blind Pig Co., "The Piglet" (120 N. Walnut, C) The Blind Pig has a separate location, also in downtown Champaign. This location doesn't boast quite as extensive a beer selection, but it offers beer brewed on-site, an excellent beer garden, and Sunday night specials and trivia.

Barrelhouse 34 (34 E Main St., C) Beautiful bar furnished and built with wood scavenged from old barns in Central IL. Indoor and outdoor seating.

Bunny's Tavern (199 W Water St., U) Primarily catering to bikers, specializes in beer buckets and has a great outdoor patio.

Crane Alley (115 W. Main, U) Best outdoor seating in Urbana, good mix of fancy dishes and classic pub food, and a massive beer selection.

Esquire Lounge (106 N. Walnut, C) A favorite among GEO members. Try the deep-fried broccoli, \$5.25 pitchers of PBR beer or the “house special,” pineapple margaritas.

Iron Post (120 S. Race St., U) Great live music venue and outdoor seating.

Jupiter’s (39 E. Main St, C) Very spacious, nice pool tables, great pizza. On Tuesday there is half-priced pizza for dine-in only, half-price pool all day, and \$1.50 Miller Light and High Life. They have daily specials so make sure to check them out.

Murphy’s Pub (604 E. Green St, C) Best campus bar, decent food, relaxed setting.

Rose Bowl (106 N. Race S., U) Live country music in downtown Urbana.

Seven Saints (32 E. Chester St., C) Good atmosphere. Serving sliders and excellent cheese curds.

Soma Ultralounge (320 N. Neil, C) Decent salsa night on Wednesdays and Saturdays and discount cover charge before 11pm.

Quality (110 N. Neil, C) will always have a good few beers on tap and good mixed drinks. They have darts, board games, and pinball. Indoor and outdoor seating, no food.

The Blackbird (119 W Main St, U) A great place to listen to jazz a dimly lit modern urban rural feel. Check out their schedule for live music!

A Few Unique Things to do in Champaign before You Leave

1. Take the motorcycle-riding course offered by the University. This course is a 20 hour road and classroom course that gives you the "Class M" on your license. They provide the bikes and the helmet. Register early because classes fill up quick. A \$20 deposit will be returned upon completion of the course.

<https://campusce.icc.edu/motorcycle/course/course.aspx?C=3111&pc=223&mc=&sc=>

2. Buy fresh produce, flowers, meet politicians, and buy local crafts at the farmers market in Urbana. The market is outdoors May-November in the parking lot of Lincoln Square Mall. It moves inside Lincoln Square Mall from December-April.

3. Enjoy Urbana's First Fridays. On the first Friday of each month you can find activities, food and drink samples, and open houses in downtown Urbana. First Friday happens year-round.

4. Buy farm fresh eggs and meat from University Farms and the Meat Science Lab. The sales room is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1-5:30 and Fridays from 8-1 and is located at 1503 S. Maryland Ave., Urbana. You can subscribe to "meat mail" to receive information on specials and promotions at <http://ansc.illinois.edu/>

5. Join the Common Ground Co-Op (\$60 a year) located at the Lincoln Square Mall in Urbana. They offer scholarships for those who cannot afford the equity payment. They have fresh vegetables year round, bulk tofu, grains and other health food. See the Groceries section of the Guide for more info.

6. Participate in the annual Christie Clinic Marathon. The race happens every April and includes a kids fun run, 5K, 10K, half-marathon, and full marathon. It ends at the 50 yard line of Memorial Stadium. The course is described as “fast and flat.” If you aren’t a runner you can be involved as one of the hundreds of volunteers required to operate the race.

7. Check out the Cheese Festival in Arthur, IL over Labor Day weekend. The 3-day festival in Amish Country (about 30 minutes from Chambana) features a parade, tractor pull, bands, kids’ activities, and of course lots of cheese!

8. Enjoy the Champaign County Fair’s monster truck show, demolition derby, and fried foods. The fair takes place in late July in Urbana (1302 N. Coler Ave).

9. Join a picket line! Chances are one of the unions on campus and off campus will be on strike at some point during your stay. Show solidarity by walking the picket line.

10. Take in a show at the second-largest planetarium in Illinois - Staerkel Planetarium at Parkland College. Most weekend nights they show full-dome shows and look at that night’s sky. Many shows are child-friendly. Once a month there is a science lecture at the Planetarium, and several times a year they show laser shows set to Pink Floyd’s Dark Side of the Moon and other classics.

11. Join YOUR union (GEO) and help protect the rights and improve the working conditions for all graduate employees (not to mention, meet grads from departments all over campus and have a good time doing it)!



Graduate Employees' Organization

AFT Local 6300, AFL-CIO

McKinley Foundation Building

Geneva Room

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