

## 10 Tips to make the Most of your College Tour

Applying to college these days can be stressful, time consuming, and competitive. Students are faced with stiff competition, action packed schedules, and life changing decisions. Planning a successful college tour can help your student make better and more informed choices. Making the most of your campus visit can be essential to your student's long term college success.

### **Tip #1: Call Ahead**

Contact the Admissions Office of each college to set up your campus tour. Most colleges prefer about two weeks notice to set up a tour. Ask who will be conducting the tour... an Admissions Counselor or student? Set up appointments to meet with Admissions, Financial Aid, and a Professor or Advisor in the Major you plan to study. Once you finish the guided tour take your own tour! Plan to make time to walk around campus, eat on campus and see other facilities that were not on the tour.

### **Tip #2: Think Green**

Narrow the number of colleges on your list by participating in virtual college tours and college fairs before deciding which colleges to spend your time visiting. Most colleges offer virtual tours now on their Admissions webpage. Consider participating in a virtual College Fair such as CollegeWeekLive.com. This is a way to save time, money, and lessen your carbon footprint!

### **Tip #3: Get Directed**

Many campuses are big and sprawling. Don't waste your time getting lost. If you are renting a car rent a GPS device with it or borrow one from a friend. This is a great time saver and could cut down on travel stress for everyone. Additionally, know where to park on campus. Most colleges will have a campus map you can download on line.

### **Tip #4: Check the Calendar**

Look at the college calendar. If you are visiting a college with a big sports team you may not want to visit during the State Championship! Look at the other events booked for that timeframe. Is it a popular person or a presidential debate! These events can cause traffic, congestion, and make hotel rates climb.

### **Tip #5: Go off Campus**

When you choose a college, you are essentially choosing where you will live for the next 4 years ( or at least 9 months out of the year). Take sometime to go off campus and explore the community. Use public transportation if this will be your primary mode of getting around. Pick up local newspapers and publications. Visit the local points of interests. Visit the local walk-in clinic, dentist, or other services your student may be in need of during the year.

### **Tip #6: Less Frills**

Consider booking hotels with less frills. Since the purpose of your trip is to visit the college campus and see the surrounding community your time in the hotel will be minimal. Look for lower cost hotels with less amenities to help minimize costs.

### **Tip #7: Talk to Students**

Who knows the campus best...the students that live there! You can get candid feedback from students on a variety of topics. Talk with students at the dinning hall, the campus store, or the student center.

### **Tip #8: Take Notes**

Taking notes can be a family activity. Everyone can jot down impressions, information, or

websites offered on the tour. With all of the information you take in on one college tour; it is unlikely you will not remember everything. Take notes during each college tour and discuss them during your trip back home.

**Tip #9: Take a Break**

Whether you are taking a long road trip or flight, everyone needs a break from the routine. Plan to take a hike or sight-see between college A and B. This will allow everyone to get some exercise and add new perspective.

**Tip #10 Let a Professional Help**

Planning a college tour can be challenging and time consuming. Consider getting a professional to assist with car rentals, hotel recommendations, plane tickets and estimated travel times between schools.

College tour planning is now available through AAA. And they have partnered with Best Western to save you even more money. To find out more visit [www.aaa.com/financialaid](http://www.aaa.com/financialaid)