

AN INCOMPLETE ARRIVAL GUIDE FOR NEW STAFF AT THE INSTITUTE FOR THEORETICAL PHYSICS

(Disclaimer: content is based on what information was available in September 2024, so always make sure to check what current conditions are)

1. Housing and registration

1.1 Finding an apartment

For temporary accommodation while looking for an apartment, there are affordable options on Airbnb where one can easily stay for one or two weeks, a period of time which is usually enough to find an apartment.

Apart from Airbnb you can also check here for short term options:

[KURZZEiMiete: Wohnen auf Zeit - möbliert mieten & vermieten](#)

[Home - kolping-inns Webseite! \(kolpinghaus-innsbruck.at\)](#)

(the Kolpinghaus is very conveniently located opposite the Technik Campus)

Otherwise you can also search for *Zwischenmiete* (temporary rentals) since sometimes people might leave for a month or two and sublet their room/apartment while they are away. In general, Innsbruck is **very** expensive when it comes to renting, even for shared flats. You can look at the average prices per square meter here:

[Die aktuellen Immobilienpreise für Tirol \(immopreise.at\)](#)

Note: 2-Zimmer-Wohnung means that there is 1 bedroom and 1 living room, so it's a bit different from the English meaning of two-bedroom-flat. Often you also find 2-Zimmer-Wohnungen used for shared flats among two people, in that case you would both have your own bedroom and share the kitchen and bathroom as communal rooms.

Innsbruck is not very big, so anywhere in the city is pretty well connected to the Technik campus by public transport. Cycling or walking is also a feasible option, especially from the following districts: Hötting-West, Höttinger Au, Allerheiligen, Kranebitten, Sieglanger. Here is a list of towns outside of Innsbruck that are also well-connected to the campus:

- Völs
- Zirl
- Telfs
- Hall in Tirol

- Rum
- Birgitz
- Götzens
- Axams
- Aldrans
- Igls
- Lans
- Kematen in Tirol
- Schwaz
- Wattens

A great place to start is the *ÖH Wohnungsbörse*, which is an online platform for renting apartments of the Austrian Students' Association (non-students can also use it).

[ÖH Wohnungsbörse - Dein Studium. Deine ÖH. Dein Zuhause. \(oehweb.at\)](http://oehweb.at)

The webpage is in German but you can use Chrome to translate, and it works like this: you find an apartment/room in a shared apartment you like and you send a message directly to the contact person in order to schedule a visit:

Ideally soon after you should hear back from the landlord/landlady regarding a viewing.

There are usually many people interested in renting a single apartment/room, so, in order to maximize your chances, it would be good to contact many places, preferably **in German**. So be prepared, that you might not always hear back. Also, when a place becomes available, contact them ASAP (preferably by phone), and you can also set up email alerts so you always know when a new place gets posted. It is good to mention that you are a PhD student/Postdoc etc (also useful to mention the field and the campus), and that you plan to stay in Innsbruck for several years. The standard contracts for renting an apartment are usually signed for 3 years, with a minimum stay of 12 months and if you want to leave there is a 3 months' notice (so technically minimum stay is 15 months, but some landlords might agree to a more feasible solution if necessary). There is usually a deposit to be paid upfront (3 months' rent) so keep that in mind when starting your search. Please be careful! There are a lot of scams with rental offers. In particular, do not make any unusual payments!

Other useful places to look for accommodation:

Facebook Groups

WhatsApp-Group for e.g. Indians in Tirol/respective nationality

[Immobilien Tirol - Wohnungen, Häuser & Grundstücke auf immo.tt.com](#)

[Immobilien in Innsbruck - Marktplatz-Anzeigen MeinBezirk.at](#)

[Wohnung mieten in Innsbruck - willhaben](#)

[Unterkünfte - OeAD student housing](#)

[private Wohnungsangebote – Universität Innsbruck \(uibk.ac.at\)](#)

Regarding the rent, if the rent says “inkl. BK(Betriebskosten)”, this means that the utility costs are included, specifically heating and water, also things like rubbish collection etc. Electricity and internet are usually separate and not included in the BK, so make sure that you understand the terms and conditions of your potential lease. Important: When you find an apartment and meet with the owner to sign the contract, make sure to have the Meldezettel with you (see 1.2), because they need to sign it.

1.2 Meldezettel and Meldebestätigung

Once you find an apartment, you need to go to the Bürgerservice office to register your new address. For this, you need to fill in the Meldezettel(registration form)

[Wohnsitzmeldung - Stadt Innsbruck](#)

Note that the Meldezettel needs to be signed both by you and your landlord/landlady. The Meldezettel is in German, but for your convenience the translation can be found below.

[meldezettel-hilfe_eng_2 \(uni-graz.at\)](#)

The Meldezettel must be submitted to the Bürgerservice within three days of moving into the new apartment. This is done in the “Anmeldung” office on the first floor and it is free of charge. You need to bring your pre-filled Meldezettel as well as your passport. Your registration is processed immediately and you obtain a confirmation of registration, in German *Meldebestätigung* (or Bestätigung der Meldung). This confirmation is valid for 3 months and you can use it in any situation which requires you to provide a permanent address, such as opening a bank account and buying a Klimaticket. Another note: the Bürgerservice is located in the middle of the shopping mall *Rathausgalerien*. The address is Maria-Theresien-Str. 18, but once you enter the building, you need to walk past several shops before you reach the entrance to the Bürgerservice (close to Müller), see below.

[Bürgerservice - Servicecenter - Leben in Innsbruck - Stadt Innsbruck](#)

1.3. Groceries and eating out

There are basically 6 main supermarket chains (listed from cheap to more expensive), for your convenience I highlighted the most widespread ones):

- Lidl
- Hofer
- Spar
- MPreis
- Billa
- Billa Plus

Hofer, Lidl and Spar are good for basics, but if you want some more exotic ingredients or more vegetarian/health food options, Billa Plus is usually your best bet. Billa Plus regularly offer 25% off certain food groups, e.g. frozen goods and also 25% off stickers so that can help when you are on a budget. Spar also often offers 25% on certain product types and there is also an app you can download that gives you vouchers and discounts. Same applies to MPreis.

There are also a few ethnic shops, which are useful for buying things like rice, spices and legumes in bulk. For Indian/South Asian/Asian these three places probably have the best selection of goods(some of them are cash only).

- Indo-Asia Market Spice Bazaar. Höttinger Au 46a
- Afghan Market, Innrain 9
- Namaste, Brixner Str. 4
- Asia Food Market, Südtiroler Platz 3-5
- TingTing Asiamarkt, Erlenstraße 4

Also if you have a bit of time on your hand, if you drive to Brenner there is discount supermarket called Eurospin which seems to be popular with the Tyroleans for buying things like pasta/canned goods/smoked meats/coffee etc.

Main options to eat out around Technik:

ICT TechCafe(located inside the ICT building, usually about 3 options every weekday, prices vary between 6 and 10€)

Froschkönig(buffet style, menu changes every day, 12,90€, all you can eat)

Der Bäcker Ruetz(sandwiches)

MPreis Baguette(sandwiches)

Happy Energy(kebabs and pizza)

Phil's Diner(burgers)

Most of these places also accept the Pluxee app scheme that is available to university employees.

There is a kitchen with two microwaves and a fridge available in case you prefer to bring and heat up your own food. Don't forget to clean up after yourself 😊

2. Practical stuff

2.1 Electricity and internet

Electricity is usually not included in the rent. You can apply online at the website of Innsbrucker Kommunalbetriebe (IKB) or in person at IKB offices where they also speak English if necessary. The information required is your address and your IBAN. After applying, IKB will charge your bank account automatically via direct debit. For Internet there are many options, for example A1, Magenta or Drei. If you move into shared accommodation usually there is already an Internet provider and you just all pay the same amount towards the network fee.

2.2 Austrian mobile phone number and data plans

It's very easy to get a SIM card in Innsbruck, they can be found anywhere like at corner shops(Tabaktraffik), supermarkets, phone shops etc. Tip: One of the cheapest phone plans for people who don't travel a lot and have access to WiFi most of the time is HoT(Hofer's own phone plan), which can be obtained in the Hofer supermarkets all around the city. The cheapest plan is just under 10€ a month, which should work fine for most people. You can top up online or you can buy credit at Hofer.

2.3 Furniture

Apartments are usually rented unfurnished, though there is usually a kitchen at least. When looking for a place to live you can filter for möbliert(furnished) and unmöbliert(unfurnished). The easiest way to get used furniture is to buy it from the previous tenant who is moving out,

so you don't have to worry about assembling and disassembling it. In case this is not an option and you are moving into an empty apartment, there are several big furniture stores in Innsbruck, for example Ikea and XXXLutz, and most of them have an online shop. If you don't have a car, the delivery costs are fairly affordable and the delivery can be freely scheduled. Otherwise you can also rent a van from IKEA to move stuff yourself. For second hand furniture you can have a look at Ho&Ruck, or join Facebook groups like "Innsbruck verschenkt" and "Innsbrucker Flohmarkt und Marktplatz". In each place you will probably have to dig around a little to find something really nice, but you'd be surprised by the amount of decent stuff people give away. For bedding, Hofer usually has pretty good deals.

2.4 OBS ORF-Beitrag (TV and radio fee)

From the 1st of January 2024 onwards, every household has to pay 18,40€ per month (ORF contribution). This fee has been fixed for three years from 2024 to 2026. Note: this is per household, so if you live in a shared flat, you can share the costs. For more information, you can check here: [Introduction to Austria's "ORF Beitrag" \(englishspeakers.at\)](#)

3. Health insurance

With your e-card you get access to free medical care in Austria. Here is how to get one. [e-card \(chipkarte.at\)](#)

Note: if there is no photo for you in the Austrian system you need to make an appointment at the Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl, BFA RD Tirol to get your photo registered.

Details here: [Tirol \(chipkarte.at\)](#)

Also note for the first year your card won't be valid in the rest of the EU, however, every time you travel you can request a temporary free health insurance paper from BVAEB that you can use for the duration of your trip. Once the year has passed, you can request a new e-card that is also valid when you travel to other EU countries.

If you are employed at the ITP, your health insurance provider will automatically be BVAEB. If you need to visit a general practitioner (Hausarzt), the procedure is simple. You can search for doctors online or ask your colleagues for recommendations. If you call, mention where you live because often doctors are more likely to accept new patients if they live close to the practice. A good source to check is docfinder.at, since it lets you filter for things like what languages the doctors speaks and whether they are Kassenarzt(public) or Wahlarzt(private).

[Arztsuche | Online-Terminbuchung | Bewertungen bei DocFinder.at](#)

When you decide which doctor you want to go to, you simply go to their office during their opening hours, where you can then get a check-up (usually there is no need to schedule an appointment). This is also the doctor you would consult to get a sick note for work. The university also has their own doctor (Arbeitsmedizin), where you can book appointments online. This is particularly handy for vaccines.

[Arbeitsmedizin – Universität Innsbruck \(uibk.ac.at\)](https://www.uibk.ac.at/Arbeitsmedizin)

If you would like to schedule an appointment with a specialist (for example, dermatologist), you can again find doctors online or ask for recommendations from your colleagues. In this case, you should call and schedule an appointment, and it is common to have long waiting times (several weeks or months). Some specialists require that you bring a referral on the day of the appointment, which you can obtain from your Hausarzt.

4. Cycling and public transport in Innsbruck

In Innsbruck it is very easy and convenient to get around by bike. Affordable bikes can be found in sport shops such as Intersport or SportsDirect. For bike service or second-hand bikes there are affordable smaller shops like Veloflott or Conrad. Helmets are not compulsory by law but strongly recommended. Kids under the age of 14 must wear a helmet, also to be used when travelling in a bike trailer. There is also an option to rent bikes operated by the city of Innsbruck. City bikes can be rented cheaply and simply at many stations in Innsbruck. For more information, go to the website of Stadtrad Innsbruck:

[Startseite - IVB Stadrad Innsbruck](https://www.stadtrad.innsbruck.at/)

There are special conditions for university employees:

[Stadrad – Universität Innsbruck \(uibk.ac.at\)](https://www.stadtrad.innsbruck.at/)

Another convenient option is to use public transportation. The one for the city of Innsbruck is called IVB (Innsbrucker Verkehrsbetriebe). To learn more, visit [IVB - Innsbrucker Verkehrsbetriebe und Stubaitalbahn GmbH](https://www.ivb.innsbruck.at/). They also provide a useful app called IVB-Scout, with real-time departure times and the map with locations of all the bus stops. Another public transportation company is VVT (Verkehrsverbund Tirol), with its own webpage and an App, which can be accessed at [Startseite • Verkehrsverbund Tirol \(vvt.at\)](https://www.vvt.at/) Unlike IVB, VVT operates not only in Innsbruck, but also in the entire Tirol. The app will also show you all the IVB operated means of transport, so if you want to reduce the number of apps on your phone, VVT is the more useful one.

If you are under 26 you are eligible for the Klimaticket Tirol U26, which lets you travel around the whole of Tirol for a whole year. The link can be found here [StudentInnen • Verkehrsverbund Tirol \(vvt.at\)](#)

The University of Innsbruck subsidises the Klimaticket, so make sure you keep your confirmation of payment.

There are also tickets available for just Innsbruck or semester tickets at a reduced rate, however, for those you need to show proof of being registered as a student. You can buy tickets online OR go to the VVT Customer center (VVT KundInnencenter) -

The ticket is obtained immediately so you can start using it straightaway. In case you are planning to only use public transport only occasionally, you can simply buy tickets online through the app or for travelling within Innsbruck you can get a block of 8 tickets (need to be validated at the start of each trip) at the ticket machines available at most bus/tram stops. Make sure you hold on to your ticket for the whole duration of your trip, since the fines for travelling without a valid ticket are quite high.

5. Leisure activities and sports

The possibilities are endless. The University has a designated sport Centre that offers a variety of courses.

[USI | Kurse \(uibk.ac.at\)](#)

There are also several gyms around town, many offer discounts to students, plus the VHS also offers sports classes around town and beyond.

[Volkshochschule Tirol \(vhs-tirol.at\)](#)

If you are into winter sports and hiking, one good option is the Freizeitticket Tirol, which lets you use cablecars, chair lifts etc for a fixed price per year. Further information can be found here:

[Freizeitticket Tirol - die Jahreskarte für Sommer + Winter](#)

Those who are more into team sports can choose from a long list of sports clubs in the Tyrol.

You can use the platform [Vereinsportal](#) to see what clubs are available in your area.

Otherwise word of mouth also helps finding out about clubs that are not listed on the portal.

If you own a Klimaticket (which is subsidized by the university) you can also reach many places for hikes. If you are employed the University as scientific staff you can also buy

discounted value cards for the various swimming pools around the city. For more information check here: [Aktuelle Aktionen – Universität Innsbruck \(uibk.ac.at\)](https://www.uibk.ac.at/aktuelle-aktionen)

The Welcome Service Tirol also occasionally organizes hikes or other activities. You can find out about them here:

[Events | Welcome Service Tirol](#)

If you identify as female/non-binary you can also join Innsbruck Girl Gone International.

They have a community on Facebook

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/GGIInnsbruck/?fref=ts>), and meet regularly in real life, with events such as dinners, quiz nights, books swaps, hikes ect. The focus is that women can meet other women in safe environments, and build social networks.

In addition, most districts in Innsbruck also have their own community centers (this is very rare in most countries), where activities (often free) are run. You can also run your own activities there. The closest one to Technik is the Stadtteiltreff Hötting-West in Viktor-Franz-Hess-Straße 11. It offers stuff such as craft evenings, language cafes, quizzes etc.

You can find out more about these community centers here:

[Stadtteiltreffs - Innsbrucker Soziale Dienste GmbH \(isd.or.at\)](https://www.isd.or.at)

The next one is the Stadtteiltreff Höttinger Au in Danyegasse 1.

6. Learning German

Learning at least basic German will make your life much easier. The main course providers are the following: Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut (WiFi) Tirol, Berufsförderungsinstitut (BFI) Tirol, Volkshochschule (VHS) and the Language Centre of Innsbruck University (ISI). For more information about learning German you can also visit this webpage:

[Deutschkurse | Deutschlernen Tirol | Deutschkurskoordination Tirol \(deutschlernen-tirol.at\)](#)

In some cases, there is funding available from the Land Tirol that partially covers the cost of courses.

[Financial support | Welcome Service Tirol](#)

Inlingua also offers classes in smaller groups.

7. Family matters

The Welcome Service Tirol provides a nice and quick overview of the education system in Tirol.

[Education | Welcome Service Tirol](#)

For kids under the age of six there are three options:

Krippe (daycare for kids from 12/18 months to the age of 3)

Kindergarten (daycare for kids from 3 to 6, the last year before school is compulsory)

Tagesmutter (daycare providers working with small groups of children, usually in their own homes, most commonly they take kids from 6 months to 3 years old).

The two main providers for Tagesmütter in Innsbruck are Frauen im Brennpunkt and Aktion Tagesmütter

[Startseite - Frauen* im Brennpunkt \(fib.at\)](#)

[Aktion Tagesmütter/-väter Tirol - Startseite und Aktuelles \(atmtv.at\)](#)

For Krippe and kindergarten you can use the portal of the city of Innsbruck to check for free spots:

[Betreuung & Bildung - Leben in Innsbruck - Stadt Innsbruck](#)

In general, finding daycare spots can be quite challenging, especially when you need longer hours so try to find a spot sooner rather than later and contact as many places (that seem suitable) as possible. The University of Innsbruck has a cooperation with a Krippe (Luftabon) and a Kindergarten(Leopold) so these spots are subsidized by the university and offer long hours.

[Luftabon - luftabons Webseite!](#)

[Kinderkrippe & Kindergarten "Leopold" Wilten - Kinderfreunde](#)

As of January 2024 the University of Innsbruck also subsidizes childcare for kids under 3 with up to 200€ per month.

8. Entertainment

Innsbruck has several cinemas that regularly show movies in English. You can usually find them by the label OV(Originalversion) or OmU(Original mit Untertiteln). The two main ones are Metropol and Leokino.

[Kinoprogramm von Metropol Kino mit 4DX - Alle Kinostarts - Jetzt im Kino \(metropol-kino.at\)](#)

[Leokino Cinematograph Open Air Kino im Zeughaus Programmkino Innsbruck/Austria](#)

If you are a member of the scientific staff you can get tickets for Leokino for a discounted price.

