



# **ISTA at UCSD**

## **Iranian Student Association at University of California San Diego**

### **Must see places in San Diego**

San Diego is California's second largest city. The 70-mile coastal line creates one of the most beautiful beaches and places for many visitors every year. There are several areas within San Diego which are commonly visited by tourists and local residents such as South Bay, Point Loma, North County, Old Town, Mission Valley, Mission Bay, La Jolla, Hillcrest, Gaslamp quarter, East County, Downtown San Diego, and Coronado.

- ❑ South Bay: This area is adjacent to Mexican border. The hiking areas and trails are expansive and they attract many tourists. Also biking is very common within these areas. Those enthused in desert-like nature show up for bird watching. Las Americas Premium Outlet Center is also located within South Bay.
- ❑ Point Loma: It is located on the west side of Downtown San Diego. The hallmark of this area is numerous with great restaurants which can satisfy the hunger of anybody with any sort of appetite. Since the area is close to the ocean, one could enjoy whale watching. This area includes Harbor Island and Shelter Island.
- ❑ Gaslamp Quarter: It is located in downtown San Diego, mainly along 5th Ave, from Harbor Dr. to C Street. This area is full of historic Victorian buildings with bars, clubs, restaurants, and shops. It is always busy and alive and we can name it the partying hub center of downtown San Diego. You can find different kind of bars and restaurants that can satisfy almost every taste. There are also many Hotels located in Gaslamp with different range of prices.
- ❑ Little Italy: It is located in North West of downtown San Diego and it's mainly Indiana St. between Ash and Hawthorn Street. Compared to Gaslamp, it has the same urban area but more relax and quiet. There are so many Italian cafes and restaurants in this area and you can try some good Italian food here.
  - ❑ La Jolla: This area is along the coast and it has the most beautiful coastline in San Diego. There is a place called Downtown La Jolla, along the Prospect Ave. It is full of bars, restaurants, cafes, shops and galleries, some with beautiful ocean view. Along the coast you can enjoy watching different kinds of birds flying around in groups and also seals laying down on the beach. There is also a cove and a coastal trail in this area you might want to discover. A little farther from this area you can hike in Torrey Pines State Reserve.



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- ❑ Mission Beach: In this area there is a great path to bike or jog close to the ocean. In addition, there are so many houses with ocean views that you might be able to rent. So many restaurants and bars which make it always alive and busy.
- ❑ Balboa Park: This Park is at the Northeast of downtown San Diego and is one of the largest urban cultural parks in the US. It is an awesome place to spend time. There are also so many Botanic buildings, museums, Old Globe Theater, and a huge lily pond. There are many events going on during the year in this park that you can join and have fun.
- ❑ Old Town: This is a historical Mexican place which used to be the heart of San Diego. It is full of Mexican restaurants and shops. San Diego County has tried to keep this area in its old style to provide an urban environment for the people of this city. People wear old style clothes and you can enjoy listening to Mexican music bands. It is a friendly, happy and busy area to spend the day or night.
- ❑ North Park: This is another friendly area full of cafes, restaurants, bars and clubs. The cafes in this area provide free access to Wi-Fi, therefore you can enjoy a nice cup of coffee while working or studying. This part is also busy and live during the day and night.

### **Where and how to buy a cellphone**

There are several phone carriers around United States that provide variety of services such as wireless phones, internet and accessories. The most popular ones are Verizon, AT&T, Sprint, and T-Mobile. There are also more carriers such as Metro PCS and Cricket wireless that might meet your needs.

Each one of these providers offer different plans that suits you better depending on your data and talking minute usages. All these carriers have traditional stores and kiosks available throughout the city and shopping malls. They also have customer services available by phone and online to learn and buy what is best for you.

Besides Metro PCS and Cricket wireless, almost all other wireless service providers require you to sign a two years agreement. In case you needed to break your contract, you are required to pay a prorated termination fee of \$375. However, by signing a contract you are eligible for free or inexpensive rates on phones such as iPhone, Samsung, etc.



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Nowadays, many service providers let you have plans without any contract. For example T-Mobile provides some month-to-month plans which might be appropriate for the newcomers.

You can always use family plans to save some money and use better services. It, however, needs decent credit scores, and you may not be able to start your plan as soon as you arrive. Nevertheless, you can always join a family plan of your senior friends!

At the time of signing up for a new plan, you are usually required to provide your social security number and some credit background so that they can evaluate your eligibility. If you are an international student and possibly have not built a credit history yet, you are required to pay a deposit upfront or they might offer pay as you go plans which does not require a security deposit. That being said, each carrier provides special rates and discounts for students that might vary time to time. For example, AT&T offers discounts for UCSD affiliates and also a deal for UCSD students in which the deposit fee is waived and students do not need to have credit-history to enroll in cellular plans. You might also want to look for such offers and deals. For more accurate information, ask your local AT&T branch about the offers and deals they might offer to UCSD students.

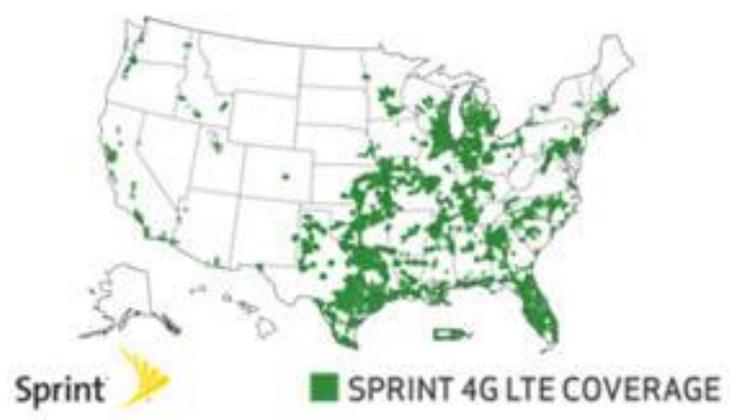
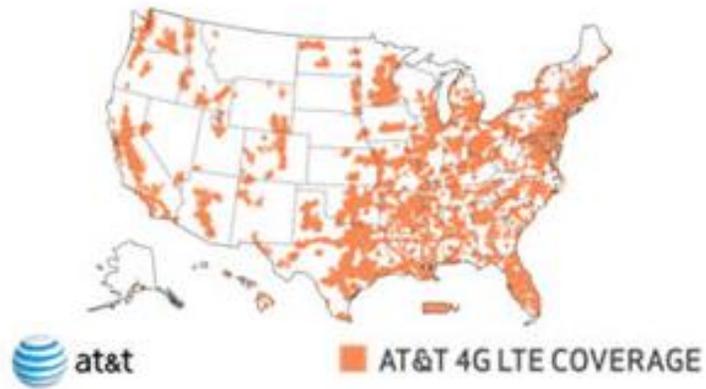
Below you may find some basic and useful information and links:





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### **AT&T**

Customer Service: Monday - Sunday 7am - 10pm Local time, +1 (800) 331-0500  
[www.att.com/shop/wireless/data-plans.html](http://www.att.com/shop/wireless/data-plans.html)

### **Verizon**

Customer Service: +1 (800) 837-4966  
[www.verizonwireless.com/wcms/consumer/shop/shop-data-plans/single-line-data-plans.html](http://www.verizonwireless.com/wcms/consumer/shop/shop-data-plans/single-line-data-plans.html)

### **Sprint**

Customer Service: +1 (866) 866-7509  
[www.Sprint.com](http://www.Sprint.com)

### **T-Mobile**

+1 (877) 453-1304  
[http://www.t-mobile.com/cell-phone-plans/individual.html#lshop\\_plans\\_1](http://www.t-mobile.com/cell-phone-plans/individual.html#lshop_plans_1)



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### Where to get food in and around the campus

#### **On Campus ([universitycenters.ucsd.edu/eat](http://universitycenters.ucsd.edu/eat))**

##### **Food**

Price Center food court is the biggest place on campus that offers many different fast food. There, you can find many different kind of food from different countries. Below is the list of fast foods in Price Center food court:

Burger King, Bombay Coast (Indian), Thai (Asian), Panda Express (Chinese), Round Table (Italian), Rubio's (Mexican), Santorini (Greek), Subway, Tapioca Express, and Lemon Grass..

In addition to Price Center, there is also a place called Croutons. This place has healthy Sandwiches, Soups, and Salads and is located at Student Services Center across from Price Center. Club Med is another place that you can eat on campus. This place is located at Medical School Campus near Biomedical Library. It has variety of foods including salad, sandwiches and pizza.

##### **Juice and Ice Cream**

D' Lush is located in the Price Center and provides delicious salads and great beverages. There are also places outside of the food court, across from Price Center where you can purchase fresh juices and yogurt/ice creams such as Jamba Juice and Yogurt World.

##### **Coffee and Tea**

- There are many places on campus to get coffee and tea including:
- Perks at Price Center BookStore
- Starbucks at Price Center
- Peet's Coffee and Tea at RIMAC
- Muir Woods at Muir College
- Art of Espresso Cafe at Mandeville Center

##### **List of Dining Halls to eat**

- Cafe Ventanas at Roosevelt College
- Canyon Vista at Warren College



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- Foodworx at Six College
- Pines at Muir College
- OceanView Terrace at Marshall College

### **Off Campus**

If you want to explore the city, there are also many places around the campus to purchase food. UTC mall is very close to UCSD campus and has a big food court and also couple of very good restaurants.

#### **Some of the great restaurants at UTC mall**

Tender Greens mostly has healthy fresh salads.

Seasons 52 is an American restaurant. It has a bar and often live music.

Eureka is a burger lounge.

Jersey Mike has sandwiches similar to Subway.

Veggie Grill is a veggie restaurant that has some offers for UCSD students

Across from the mall you can also find PF Chang's, a Chinese Restaurant with great food.

#### **Villa La Jolla Drive Dining Places**

In addition to UTC mall, across from UCSD at Villa La Jolla Drive there is a shopping center with many restaurants:

BJ's Restaurant, which is one of the few restaurants that is open until 11pm on Monday-Thursday and Sunday and open until 12am on Friday and Saturday. This restaurant has variety of food but it is mostly famous for its great pizzas.

#### **Nobel Drive**

California Pizza Kitchen is also another great pizza place located at Nobel Drive very close to UCSD and has variety of Pizzas and soups.

## **Eating Healthy at College**

Being a busy student you won't always be able to enjoy home cooked meals and while there is plenty of food choices available on campus, it can have some potential unhealthy consequences if you eat fast food every day. Here are some tips to eating healthier as a college student:

### **Eat Breakfast Everyday**



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It's worth getting up 5 minutes earlier to have a healthy breakfast. This will help with your metabolism, blood sugar, and concentration levels during class and will help you not to overeat at lunch.

Start with a high fiber (5g fiber per serving or more) and lean protein breakfast.

### **Pack Snacks**

Nutrition experts say that our meals should include: breakfast, light snack, lunch, light snack, and dinner. You can buy plastic snack-sized bags and fill them with nutritious snacks. Carry these snack packs with you throughout the day and you'll see a difference in your energy levels. A good snack will include lean protein and fiber (ex. string cheese with whole wheat crackers).

### **Sneak In Fruits and Vegetables**

Not everyone is a fan of fruits and/or vegetables. However, we are all aware that these food groups provide a wealth of health benefits. Here are some ways to "sneak" these into your diet:

- Breakfast: add fruit to oatmeal, yogurt, cottage cheese, cereal, or omelet.
- Lunch: add vegetables to your sandwich, pita, pizza with whole-grain crust, etc.
- Dinner: sauté or steam vegetables and eat with a lean protein, puree cauliflower to make smashed cauliflower with cheese (resembles mashed potatoes), or puree squash and add to macaroni and cheese. If you do not know how to puree or don't have a blender, you can buy frozen pureed vegetables

### **Limit Sugar, Salt, and Caffeine**

Salt, sugar, and caffeine do not provide important nutritional value. Sugar and caffeine can give us a "high" and "low" in energy levels. Be sure to read nutrition labels and try to limit sugar to 10g or less per serving.

### **Avoid caffeine in the afternoon**

It takes about 12 hours to filter caffeine from your body and this may interrupt your sleep cycle

### **When eating out**

- Start with a broth-based soup, fruit, raw veggies, unbuttered bread or a light seafood appetizer.
- Choose entrees that are steamed, broiled, roasted, grilled, baked, or cooked in their own juices. Fish is almost always the best choice (grilled, not fried)
- Stay away from thick, rich sauces; choose red pasta sauces over white.



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- Ask for steamed vegetables
- Order salad with dressing on the side and use it sparingly (skip the bacon, cheese, croutons)
- Order half-portions or take half home or share with a friend.

### **On-Campus Dietitians**

Provides one-on-one nutritional counseling for students. Uses food logs and computerized assessments of nutritional requirements to advise students on their diet.

Free for students with SHIP and RAFT. Only a one-time fee of \$20 for students without SHIP or RAFT.

For appointments: (858) 822-5926

Reference: Healthy Eating Habits for College Students by Christine McNamara, RD, MPH and Maria N. Fish, MPH

## **How to get a driving license and rent a car**

### **Applying for a driving license**

The first step in applying for a driver license is visiting the DMV website and making an appointment for the written test. Follow the steps below to make an appointment:

1. Visit the website of the Department of Motor and Vehicle of California at “[dmv.ca.gov](http://dmv.ca.gov)”.
2. From the Online Services menu, select Appointments.
3. Follow the instructions on this page to make an appointment for visiting the office and taking the written test.
4. Choose the time, date and location that works best for you. In case you do not have a car and want to use public transportation to get to the DMV office, Clairemont office is the closest one to the campus and is reachable via bus line 40. Otherwise, you can choose between two offices that are located in San Diego.
5. Print the confirmation number and bring it with you to the DMV office.

The next thing to do is being prepared for the written exam. All the materials that you need to read for the exam are available on the DMV website. These handbooks are available in many languages and can be found at “[www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/pubs.htm](http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/pubs.htm)”.

Prepare for the written exam and visit the DMV office on the day of your exam. The DMV staff will help you with the paperwork and direct you to the test site. After passing the exam, you will



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receive a temporary license or permit which you can use to practice for the behind-the-wheel exam. Depending on your previous driving history, you might need to have another person with a driver license in the car while practicing.

Once you have the temporary license, you can schedule your behind-the-wheel exam. Most of the people usually do it immediately after receiving their permit, while they are still at the DMV office. However, you can schedule your exam later using the DMV website.

The last and probably most important step before receiving your driver license is the behind-the-wheel exam. On the day of your exam, you will need to arrive at the DMV office about an hour earlier. In order to take the exam, your car must be in a good condition for driving, especially in terms of safeties. Moreover, the DMV staff will ask you for your driving permit and a valid car insurance, so make sure to have them with you. Then, an examiner will be assigned to you who will assess your driving skills.

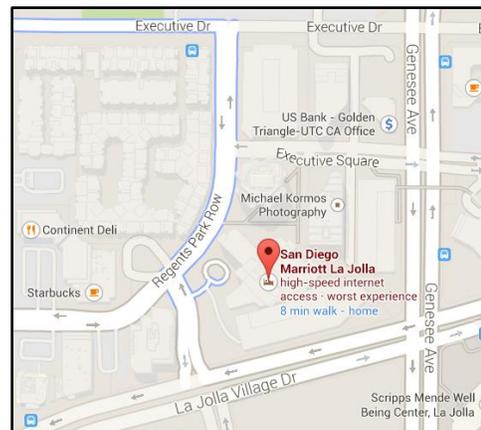
Once you pass the exam, you will receive a temporary driver license that you can use while the real one is being issued and sent to your address in mail.

You are encouraged to visit "[www.dmv.ca.gov/dl/new\\_driver.htm](http://www.dmv.ca.gov/dl/new_driver.htm)" for updates and more information.

### Renting a car

In case you do not own a car and want to go explore places or do grocery shopping, ZipCar might be the best choice that you have as a UCSD student. In order to use ZipCar, you need to register on their website at "[www.zipcar.com](http://www.zipcar.com)" and provide your contact information and driving history. Once you have your account activated, you can rent a car at any time of the day by simply visiting the website and picking the car that is located at your convenient location. There are always a couple of cars located on UCSD campus and Miramar housing facility, so you usually only need to walk for a couple of minutes to get to the nearest one. One thing to mention about using ZipCar is free gas refill and cheap insurance coverage. Visit the following links to get more information about ZipCar for UCSD students.

❑ [www.zipcar.com/ucsd](http://www.zipcar.com/ucsd)





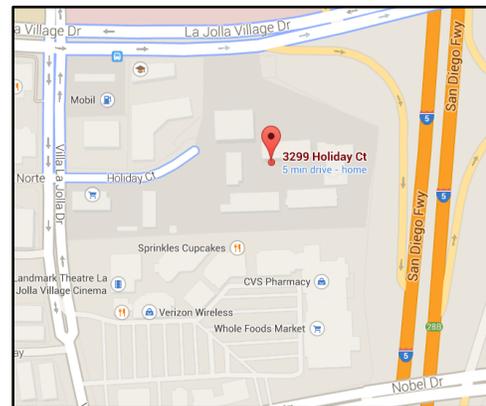
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- ❑ [blink.ucsd.edu/facilities/transportation/commuting/zipcar.html](http://blink.ucsd.edu/facilities/transportation/commuting/zipcar.html)

One of the other rental companies near the UCSD campus is Hertz, which is located in 4240 La Jolla Village Drive. For more information or to reserve a car, visit their website at “[www.hertz.com](http://www.hertz.com)”. They also provide pickup service at your convenient location.

In addition, there are many other options like Enterprise which is also in the vicinity of the campus. Enterprise is located in 3299 Holiday Court, which is less than 2 miles from the campus. They too offer free pickup service at your location. Visit their website at “[www.enterprise.com](http://www.enterprise.com)” to find out about their deals and prices.



As a final note, always make sure to enroll in a proper insurance coverage plan while renting a car. Moreover, remember to add the name of all the drivers under the rental agreement.

### Market/Grocery Shopping

Price Center food court has a store where you can do your limited grocery shopping, which is called Sunshine Market. This Market is similar to a small grocery shop where you can find many things.

In addition to Price Center market there are also market/dining places in each college at UCSD. If you live on campus you are required to buy Dining Dollars. Basically you pay a certain amount in advance which goes to your UCSD ID card and you can use that to buy food throughout the quarter. You can ONLY use your card to buy things at dining halls/ markets, NOT the Price Center food court. If you do not live on campus, you still can visit and shop and these dining halls and markets. They accept credit cards or debits cards and cash as well.

#### List of Markets for Grocery

- ❑ Earl’s Market at Warren College
- ❑ Goody’s Market at Marshall College
- ❑ John’s Market at Muir College
- ❑ Roger’s Market at Revelle College
- ❑ Sixth Market at Six College



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- The Village Market at Village
- Grocery store tips

Muir College has a coffee shop or a hangout place which you can get coffees and, etc. Plus it's very chill to hang out there. It's called MOM (middle of muir)

Besides having markets throughout campus, we are lucky to have so many excellent grocery stores close to UCSD, including Ralph's, Trader Joe's, Von's, Whole Foods and Bristol Farm, which are all nationwide supermarkets.

There is a wider range of options for grocery shopping if you are willing to drive a few miles away from campus. Among those are Henry's, known for cheap high quality goods including nuts, candies and fruits, as well as 99 Ranch Market, for budget conscious Asian food. We also have Balboa International Market to do Iranian, and Mediterranean groceries.

## **What to do upon arrival in the US**

### **Social Security Number**

You need a Social Security number to get a job, collect Social Security benefits and get other governmental services. Full-time students holding F-1 visa and J-1 visas who are employed in the U.S. (either on-campus or off-campus) must apply for a social security number. You can apply for a social security number 10 days after your arrival in the U.S. In order to apply, you need a verification of your employment from International Center, a copy of your visa and your valid passport. Note that many Fellowship students are not considered as employed, and will not be eligible to get a verification of employment, and therefore SSN until they get hired by another source of funding. For the complete list of the required documents please visit: <https://iss.washington.edu/employment/ssn>

You can apply for a social security card by going to one of the social security offices in San Diego. The closest office to campus is located at: 8505 Aero Dr San Diego CA 92123

It is recommended to set an online appointment ahead of time in order to avoid waiting in long lines.

It usually takes 2 to 4 weeks for your application to be processed and to receive your card. After you received your card, it is best to memorize your SSN and avoid carrying the card with you. Don't share your social security number with ANYONE unless required!



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### **Bank account**

There are many different banks in the U.S. where you can open an account such as: Chase (They do not open accounts for Iranians anymore), Bank of America, Wells Fargo and etc. While choosing a specific bank is a personal reference, we recommend you to open an account with Bank of America, which has many branches within the United States.

There are different types of bank accounts but the cheapest one, which we recommend, is E-banking. You don't have to pay monthly fees for this account as long as you do all your banking online or via ATM. Using ATM makes it very convenient to manage your banking because you can deposit cash, checks and withdraw money via ATM machine. If you use an ATM machine with your own bank, there will be no charge. However, if you use the ATM of other banks you are usually charged a \$3 fee.

Beside debit cards, which you will receive by opening a checking account, you can apply for a credit card. You can use your credit card for purchasing goods or services on credit and pay your balance later. It is best to pay your credit card monthly, otherwise you will be charged an interest fee on your debt.

You can apply for a credit card in different banks; however, you might not be eligible for a credit line upon your arrival in the U.S. In order to build your credit you can apply for a student credit card offered by Bank of America. The easier way might be to apply for a credit card through UCSD Credit Union.

### **How to use Yelp and Amazon**

Amazon is the most advanced and feature-full online shopping website, which will cover most features in other websites like bestbuy.com as well.

#### **Registering for Amazon Student**

Amazon is the most known online shopping website which you can buy mostly anything. Moreover, it has special offers for students. With your UCSD email, which ends in ".edu", you can register for the amazon student for 6 months. It includes free 2-day shipping like the prime



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membership, and also deals and promotions for students. You can register by clicking on the link below:

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/student/signup/info>

Important: Amazon student does not have all the Amazon Prime features, such as free kindle eBooks or instant videos. If you watch an instant video it will charge your cart for prime membership; although, you can upgrade to prime during this time or after 6 months with 50% discount.

Important: Some items are not prime eligible, which means they don't have the prime free 2-day shipping, but free shipping might be offered by some sellers. Moreover, some items are add-on, which means they can be shipped for free if you buy 25\$ of non-add-on items in the same order. At the end of the day, it's better to check the shipping prices before placing your order.

### **Returning items**

Another good point about amazon is their good return policy within a month. First you need to login to your account, then go to your orders and select the item(s) you want to return. Return shipment is free as well, unless your "reason for return" is for example Accidental order or so. Next step is to select drop off and it will give you a label to print. You should put the label on your package and drop it off at a post center, like the one in the Price Center or the one on campus housing post center. It's better to keep the shipping package for these occasions. Especially for electronic items, you can try them and return them easily if you are not satisfied.

### **Users' Comments**

Most useful part of the Amazon website is the users' comments on the products. Even if you are buying something from a store, you can check the item by reading comments in the Amazon website to consider any negative or positive points that the product might have. But some comments could be from the employees of the producer which could be misleading. Moreover, sometimes the corporation behind the product responds to the problems people mention, which shows good customer support for that product. At the end of the day, whenever you want to buy something, you can check the pricing and comments on the Amazon. Other good feature of the amazon is filtering results to find the item you want. On the left hand side there are many options to restrict the search results.



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### **Pricing**

It is important to consider that the prices are not always the lowest. For instance, an item could worth 100\$ elsewhere but on amazon it's on sale 105\$ with a note saying that the item was originally 200\$. You can check the price on other sites like bestbuy.com and also the producer's website for your assurance. The same item can also have 2 or more prices on the Amazon by different sellers.

### **Trade-in**

The trade-in feature in Amazon allows you to sell your items to amazon or via amazon. Their prices are usually much better than best buy and if you sell them to Amazon you won't have the problem of waiting for somebody to buy it which could take a while. This could be useful for old items which you don't use anymore. You will set a price for your item and send them through UPS drop-off and if they accept your price after checking the item, you will receive a gift card in your amazon account.

### **Refurbished and used items**

Refurbished items are the ones that are returned, because of a problem or just dislike by customers. They are shipped back to the factory and are checked and resold with lower price and less warranty time (usually 3 months instead of 12). Used items are the ones sold by users, using trade-in. They are not sold by amazon prime, but many of them have free shipping, especially the refurbished ones.

### **BestBuy Price Compare**

BestBuy has a feature called "price compare". With this feature if you find an item that is cheaper on amazon or other stores in compare to BestBuy, they will match the price for you and sell it cheaper (excluding eBay). So if you want something immediately, you can use this trick. The item on amazon must be "sold by amazon" in order for them to accept the price match.

### **Yelp.com**

Yelp.com website is a very good reference for places, which includes user rating and comments with smart misleading comment rejection which makes this site powerful. For instance, it includes the menu for most restaurants, or their operating hours. It has some filtering for price,



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category or distance, which are so useful. You can also use yelp for almost any place such as cinema or shopping centers as well.

### Transportation:

- **MTS bus**
- **Uber, Lyft**
- **Bike**

Helemt, bike lock (U-Lock) , rear light. Follow all traffic rules

- **UCSD Shuttle services**  
<https://transportation.ucsd.edu/shuttles/>

### ***ISTA CONTACT INFO:***

**Website:** <http://istaucsd.org/>

**Email:** [ista@ucsd.edu](mailto:ista@ucsd.edu)

**Visit and like us on Facebook for upcoming events and gatherings:**

<https://www.facebook.com/ISTAatUCSD/>