

Traveling to Irvine

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The next ISU World Congress will take place from August 8 to 14, 2017, at Hotel Irvine, 17900 Jamboree Rd, Irvine, CA, 92614, USA. Whether you are traveling internationally or “just” within the USA, the following article will shed some light on your travel options and other things to keep in mind.

When traveling from overseas, please familiarize yourself first with any immigration and visa issues before booking a flight. Canadian citizens will usually require a valid passport or a NEXUS Card when traveling to the USA by air or land. Many other nationalities can easily travel under the US Visa Waiver Program. Those countries – at the time of writing this article – include:

- Andorra
- Australia
- Austria
- Belgium
- Brunei
- Chile
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Japan
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Monaco
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Portugal
- San Marino
- Singapore
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- South Korea
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Taiwan
- United Kingdom

When traveling under the US Visa Waiver Program, you will have to apply for an ESTA Permit (ESTA is the acronym for “Electronic System for Travel Authorization), which will cost US\$14, payable by a credit card. The ESTA application can only be done online at esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta

No matter where you are traveling from, I strongly advise you to check the Visa Wizard for the latest information – to be on the safe side: travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/visa-wizard.html

Once you have sorted everything out and have your ESTA Permit or US visa in your hands, it’s time to start looking for suitable flights. You will have many options to travel to Irvine by air, and I’ll just mention two of the most common ones here.

If you are just attending the congress and have no other travel plans before or after, it is worth noting the Hotel Irvine is just over 2 miles (3.2 km) away from John Wayne Airport (IATA Code: SNA) and offers complimentary airport transfers.

John Wayne Airport is served by the major airlines – and the major international hubs through which you can travel internationally are marked in **bold** in the following list:

Alaska Airlines:	Portland (OR), Puerto Vallarta (PVR), Reno/Tahoe (RNO), San Jose (CA), San José del Cabo (SJD), Santa Rosa (STS), Seattle/Tacoma (SEA)
American Airlines:	Chicago O’Hare (ORD), Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW), Phoenix Sky Harbor (PHX)
Delta Air Lines:	Atlanta (ATL), Minneapolis/St. Paul (MSP), Salt Lake City (SLC), Seattle/Tacoma (SEA)
Frontier Airlines:	Denver (DEN)
Southwest Airlines:	Austin (AUS), Chicago Midway (MDW), Dallas Love (DAL), Denver (DEN) , Houston Hobby (HOU), Kansas City (MCI), Las Vegas (LAS) , Oakland (OAK), Phoenix-Sky Harbor (PHX) , Portland (OR) (PDX), Puerto Vallarta (PVR), Sacramento (SMF), St. Louis (STL), San Francisco (SFO) , San Jose (CA) (SJC), San José del Cabo (SJD), Seattle/Tacoma (SEA)
United Airlines:	Chicago O’Hare (ORD), Denver (DEN), Houston Intercontinental (IAH), Newark (EWR), San Francisco (SFO)
WestJet:	Vancouver (YVR)

Your other option – especially when traveling from overseas – will be to fly to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), which is a 42 mile/68 km drive from Hotel Irvine. Since it is a major airport, airline companies are competitive and prices might be lower.

A rental car is the most convenient way to travel within the USA, but overseas travelers should keep in mind that reserving the car through an overseas agent is often cheaper than renting directly at the airport. Check the internet for places such as holidaycars.com, rentalcars.com, usacarsrental.com (none of which I’ve used personally before, because I use a local German agent). Make sure that unlimited mileage, LDW (Loss Damage Waiver), CDW (Collision Damage Waiver) and a suitable amount of liability insurance (at least \$1 million) are included. The most favorable fuel option is to receive the car with a full tank of gas/petrol – and to return it full.

Another option to travel from LAX to Irvine (especially when you’re just attending the Congress and have no other travel plans) is to use a shared-ride van service. It works by grouping riders traveling to a similar destination together, thus sharing the cost of travel. When exiting the LAX airport building, follow the signs providing directions to the shared-vans pick-up area. A map giving you an idea about where to find those areas can be found at www.lawa.org/uploadedimages/lax/images/GT_mapF.gif

A reliable provider is SuperShuttle (www.supershuttle.com). At the time of writing, the cost of a seat in a shared-ride van from LAX to Hotel Irvine (one-way) was \$34. When using the discount code ISU3D, the price will be lowered to \$32.40. Keep in mind that tipping the driver a few dollars is customary in the USA.

Unfortunately, there is no other useful public transportation for traveling from LAX Airport to Hotel Irvine: the fastest options take close to four hours and require at least two stops in between plus a walk. At the end of the day, a shared-ride van is not much more expensive but a whole lot more comfortable.

Safe travels – and see you in Irvine!

