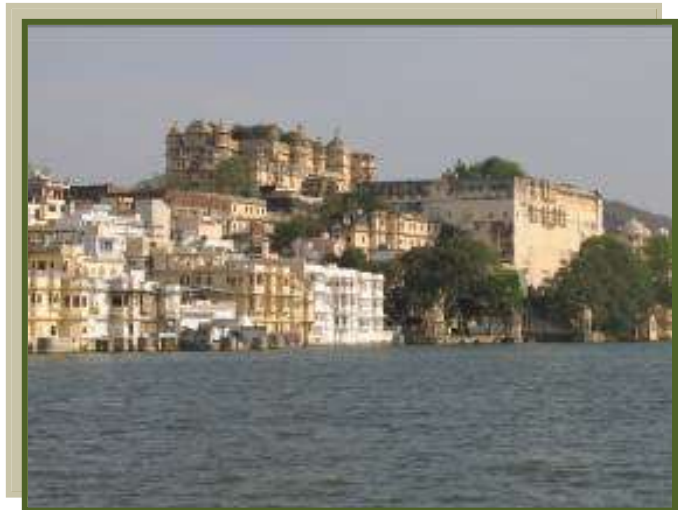




udaipur

FSD Pre-Departure Program Guide



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letter from the fsd staff

Congratulations again on your choice to work abroad on sustainable development projects in conjunction with the Foundation for Sustainable Development and Northwestern University's Global Engagement Summer Institute. For many of you this experience will be an event that sparks a lifelong interest in development. For others, it will be a chance to gain insight to other cultures that can only be obtained through direct experience. For all of you it will be a chance to make a lasting impact on people and communities in your host country and an opportunity that will make a lasting impression in your life.

There are many challenges that await you. It is likely that the most difficult obstacles you face will not be the ones that put your technical skills or knowledge to the test. More often it will be the difficulty of gaining the cultural competencies necessary to do successful work in a community. It will be learning to see the problems facing a region from the eyes of a community member rather than through the eyes of an outsider. Try and remember throughout your experience that the information about culture, community and language you learn should guide your work as much as your other knowledge.

It is important to remember that during your program you will represent both yourself and FSD in your community. Many people in the region that you will work in have had very little experience with people from outside their country. As such they will develop opinions of you and the work of FSD through their interactions with you or what they hear about you. We ask that you take your visibility into consideration when you make decisions about your actions in your host country.

It is the intention of FSD to provide you with a broad support network to best position you for success, but at the end of the day, it is your effort that will most influence the success of your experience with FSD. You will need to take initiative and put yourself in situations that stretch your comfort levels. You will have to work within cultural contexts that can cause extreme frustration. Many other challenges await. At the same time you face these challenges you also have an incredible set of opportunities. Go into the experience with the willingness to listen and learn. You will find that through this willingness you will increase your ability to give to your community.

This guide has been developed to help make clear what FSD expects of our interns and volunteers and what you can expect of us. We look at your internship or volunteer program as a partnership. It is our hope and belief that clear expectations are the foundation for a solid working relationship. Please read this guide thoroughly as it contains information that is crucial to the success of your experience and our partnership.

Above all, be aware that you should feel comfortable contacting us in the San Francisco office if you need additional support or questions answered.

Good luck!

FSD's vision, values and mission

At the center of the internship experience are the core values, vision, and mission that make FSD the organization that it is. We ask that our interns understand this and remember these tenets of FSD throughout their time abroad in order to make their internships meaningful experiences for both you and the communities in which you serve.

Vision

To enhance our partners' abilities to support sustainable community-based development work that is participatory and shaped by community-defined opportunities and needs.

Core Values

Transparency
Accountability
Participation
Community
Responsiveness
Sustainability



FSD's Mission

FSD supports the efforts of grassroots development organizations in the developing world that are working to better their communities, environments, and the economic opportunities around them. We believe economic development begins with community development and is only sustainable if it comes from and is supported by the members of these communities. Also, through our programs, we aim to raise international awareness of the economic challenges in developing countries and support cross-cultural communities in finding more effective solutions to development issues.

web of support

FSD is a key partner in your experience. Below are the three main players on FSD's team, with a description of exactly how they will support you.

San Francisco Office

San Francisco Office: Headquarters

- **Program Arrangements:** FSD San Francisco communicates and confirms your program location, host organization and host family with our international Site Team. The San Francisco staff collaborates with GESI faculty and staff on the program curriculum and participants in the pre-departure seminar and final summit in Chicago.
- **Pre-Departure Materials:** We provide support materials prior to your departure. This includes information about host organization and country-specific pre-departure packets,.
- **Emergencies:** In the case of emergency, at home or abroad, FSD San Francisco is available at all times to support you and your family, and to ensure your safety, security, and well-being.
- **Re-Integration Support:** Upon your return, the San Francisco Office will connect you to a network of other alumni and offer opportunities and incentives to share your experience with others.

FSD San Francisco International Programs Staff

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San Francisco Office:

415-283-4873

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Emergency Cell Phone:

415-828-8414

Site Team Abroad

Site Team Abroad

a. Program Director: Resident Expert and Advisor - Your Program Director is a development professional from your host country and has extensive community contacts and local knowledge. They manage and develop FSD's relationship with our Host Organizations in addition to fulfilling the following roles:

- **Local Expert:** to your host country and community, current events, local culture and customs, food, language.
- **Placement Counselor:** Your Program Director mediates your relationship with your host organization and host family. They will check in with you, your host organization, and family and do everything within their power to ensure that you and your host are comfortable with the match.
- **Project Advisor and Guardian:** Your Program Director will draw upon their extensive community development experience to help you design and implement a successful project. In addition, your Program Director will hold you and your host organization accountable for reporting on your project and the funds used to complete it. After you leave, your Program Director will continue to follow up on your project.
- **In-Country Emergency Contact:** If you fall ill, are robbed, or find yourself in any other type of emergency, the Program Director is available to support you and to move forward with securing medical attention for you, seeking legal support, and otherwise ensuring your safety, security, comfort, and well being.

b. Program Coordinators: Resident Expert and Cultural Liaison - Your Program Coordinator provides the necessary support to you, FSD's host families and our partner organizations.

- **Bridge:** Your PC is there to bridge the communication gaps that often times open up between different cultures and languages.
- **Culture Shock Lifeline:** Your PC has experience dealing with culture shock, and can help you to move through it as smoothly as possible – she is there to listen to your frustrations, to help you work through challenges, indulge you in some comforts from home, and to offer some perspective and guidance.
- **Project Development Advisor:** As you plan, implement, and develop a project, your PCs will offer feedback and advice on how to carry out a successful and sustainable development project.
- **Local Expert and Cultural Bridge:** Your PC is a key resource for understanding your host country and community, current events, local culture and customs, food, language. He is there to bridge the communication gaps that frequently arise between different cultures and languages.
- **Placement Advisor:** Your PCs help mediate your relationship with your host organization and host family. They will check in with you, your host organization, and family and do everything within their power to ensure that you and your host are comfortable with the match.

udaipur site team

Roma Bhardwaj
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Ashutosh Singh Rawat
Local Program Coordinator
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Amanda Shuck
International Program
Coordinator
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your fsd udaipur site team

Program Director: Roma Bhardwaj



Roma Bhardwaj is the Program Director of FSD's Udaipur program. Before joining FSD, Roma was Urban Block Coordinator with the renowned NGO Seva Mandir and focused on Women and Children's Education, Health and other issues. She has a Master's degree in Human Resource Management from Udaipur University (Mohan Lal Sukhadia University). Roma is originally from Udaipur and has great contacts throughout the city, including within the Allied System (government and NGO's alike), and has one sweet seven year old son. She enjoys doing social work, working with interns, talking to people, building relations and helping the local community.

Local Program Coordinator: Ashutosh Singh Rawat



Ashutosh is originally from Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. He has Bachelors of Science degree and is currently pursuing his MBA. He has worked in the field of Sales and Marketing for 11 years. Before joining FSD, Ashutosh was working as a Branch Manager with India Infoline Limited, a brokerage firm in Guna, Madhya Pradesh. He became interested in development work due to his wife's eight year involvement in the field. He is very excited to join the FSD team and utilize the relationship building and mediation skills he has developed in his previous jobs. Ashutosh is looking forward to meeting people from different backgrounds, sharing his experiences with them, and making them feel at home in his country.

International Program Coordinator: Amanda Shuck



Amanda Shuck graduated from Centre College with a Bachelor's in International Studies and Government in May, 2009. Following commencement, she moved to San Francisco where she served as a Communications Intern for FSD. During this time, she gained insight into the fundamentals of the organization, including the structure of its programs, development model, and the purpose of sustainable initiatives and a local, community-driven approach. Her time with FSD dramatically changed her perceptions of international development, and she is ecstatic at the opportunity to be part of the FSD staff again and put her knowledge and passion into practice in Udaipur. Amazed by India's vivacity and welcoming spirit she is also happy to return to the State of Rajasthan, where she had the pleasure of visiting a couple years ago.

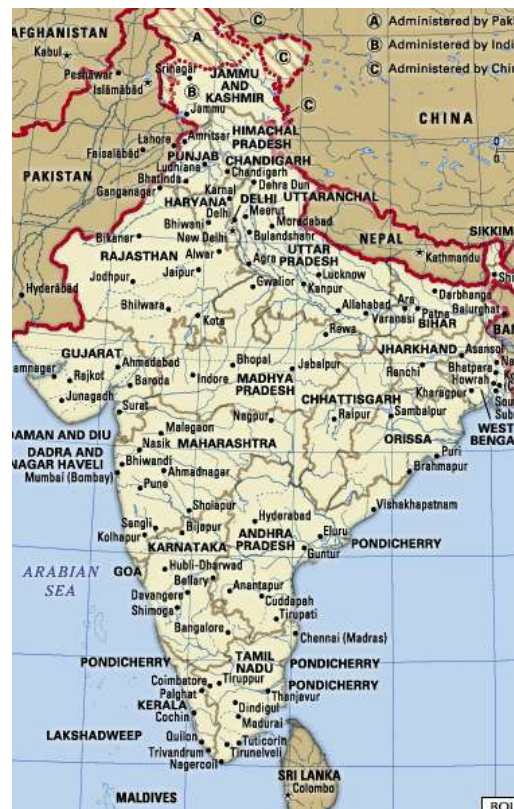
location overview

Fast Facts:

- Area: 3,287,590 sq. km.
- Population: around 1.1 billion with an annual growth rate of 1.38%
- GDP: \$796.1 billion (per capita \$705)
- Poverty rates: 25% of the population lives below the poverty line
- Life expectancy: 64.71 years
- Literacy rates: Male: 70.2%; Female: 48.3%

Current context¹:

In the 1990s, a wave of Hindu nationalism raged through the country led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In May 1996 the BJP became the single-largest party in the Parliament but without enough strength to prove a majority. BJPs popularity continued until April 1999, when its coalition government fell apart, leading to fresh elections and beginning in 2004 the Congress Party formed a coalition with leftist and regional parties. This coalition government, known as the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), is now in power and the current Prime Minister is Manmohan Singh. Manmohan Singh is the former Finance minister who opened up India's economy in the summer of 1991 and has demonstrated a strong commitment to economic reform. Sonia Gandhi, who led the ruling coalition to victory in the polls, chose to appoint Singh as prime minister. As a result, quite unexpectedly, India's chaotic and often-corrupt democratic system has yielded as its head of government a man of immense intelligence, unimpeachable integrity and deep experience.



But Singh has disappointed many of his fans. They had hoped for another set of large-scaled reforms, but the government has been cautious and is implementing programs that look suspiciously like another round of subsidies. Singh heads a fragile coalition without a strong mandate for economic change. He is not himself a powerful politician, depending on Mrs. Gandhi for his clout. But his quiet determination to keep moving forward – on economics, politics, and foreign policy – has been underestimated. His economic ministers are all reformers. They work within the political limits, but they work. Infrastructure in India is slowly getting better and will be funded through public-private partnerships. India's two major airports will be privatized and improve dramatically.

Democracy is India's destiny, a country this diverse and complex – 17 major languages, 22,000 dialects and all the world's major religions – cannot really be governed any other way. The task is to use democracy to India's advantage. In some cases this is happening. The Indian government has recently begun investing in rural education and health, and is focusing on ways to make agriculture more productive. Good economics can sometimes make for good politics. Another change is that, since 1993, democracy has been broadened to give villages greater voice in their affairs. Most important, village councils must reserve 50 percent of their seats for women. As a result there are 1 million elected women in villages across the country. They will now have a platform from which to demand better education and health care. It's bottom-up development, with society pushing the state.

¹ Excerpt from "Is Asia's Other Powerhouse Ready for Its Moment in the Sun?" By Fareed Zakaria



Udaipur, Rajasthan

Rajasthan, known as 'The Desert State,' is situated in the North Western part of India, sharing a long international boundary with Pakistan. It is considered the land of romance and chivalry, legendary Rajput rulers whose tales of valor, patriotism, and love have passed into folklore. Rajasthan is known for its traditional and colorful art and is a shopper's paradise – textiles, handicrafts, and pottery being the state's major export products. The Rajasthani's love for color and joyous celebrations, music, dance and festivals makes it one of the most colorful deserts in the world. Celebrations and festivals occur all throughout the year and are a splendid opportunity for one to gain an insight into the life of the Rajasthani. Agriculture continues to remain the crucial sector in the economy of the state, followed by manufacturing. The

public sector is also a major factor in the state's economy. The second largest state in the country, Rajasthan has a total area of 342,214 sq. km and a population of about 44 million, accounting for about 5.2% of the total population of India. The official language of the state is Hindi, however, English is understood primarily in urban areas.

Often described as "the most romantic city" of Rajasthan, Udaipur's tranquil ambience is set against a backdrop of ornate palaces, awe-inspiring temples, and the glistening shores of Lake Pichola. Rickshaws, camels, and cows line the windy streets of the old town, while peaceful cafes and restaurants brim full with people near the famed Lake Palace Hotel. Today, Udaipur is a large, thriving metropolis, home to a population of around 400,000 people. Udaipur sits at the southern edge of Rajasthan state, Udaipur city's surrounding rural areas are divided into five main 'blocks' – Jhadol, Girwa, Bagaon, Kherwara, and Kotra. Each block is then divided by the state into separate revenue villages. Each revenue 'village' is actually a collection of villages of different population sizes and tribal identities. Although English and Hindi are widely spoken in Udaipur city, surrounding rural areas are often populated by tribal peoples that speak their own distinct native tongue. Mewari is an example of a commonly spoken local language.

Despite Udaipur's picturesque surroundings, drought has ravaged the local economy and has forced many former subsistence farmers to migrate to nearby commercial hubs in order to find work as wage-labor. Low literacy rates, poor sanitation, environmental degradation and inadequate transportation infrastructure add to the frustration and poor living conditions of the local community.



Rural Locations

Dungarpur, Rajasthan

Dungarpur is a completely rural district that is located 110 km south of Udaipur. It is often referred to as the "City of Hills," as it is located by a lake in the foothills of the Aravalli Range. This district remains largely undeveloped and approximately 94% of the rural population depends solely upon agricultural labor. For this reason, many search for additional sources of income in urban centers, making seasonal migration increasingly common. Access to healthcare and educational facilities is often difficult for these village communities and this district experiences both high rates of infant mortality as well as illiteracy. Dungarpur is easily accessible by bus, and buses regularly leave from Udaipur for this three-hour journey.

Bhilwara, Rajasthan

Bhilwara is located on a raised plateau in the southwestern part of Rajasthan. This is an extremely rural district and most of the community relies on subsistence agriculture and animal husbandry for their livelihood. Drought, environmental exploitation, seasonal migration, and lack of healthcare facilities are all obstacles that this community commonly faces. Several development agencies work in this area, including FES, BAIF, CARE, and other, making this a collaborative effort to address this community's development issues. Bhilwara is located three hours outside Udaipur by bus, which run frequently throughout the day.



safety and security

FSD will do our utmost to provide a safe environment and provide a support system to you throughout your experience. To ensure a safe and successful experience for everyone involved we depend upon the following:

- **our site team:** to assess our (FSD's) ability to ensure that your environment is safe and secure.
- **our local community networks:** to serve as a barometer of the local political, social, and economic climate.
- **you:** to adhere to instructions and tips regarding your safety and security, and to act prudently.

a. fsd's responsibilities

- **Ensure a safe and secure host community.**

Our host organizations and programs are run by FSD staff and trusted colleagues who live locally and often have years of experience with FSD. While the political climate varies by location and timing, we feel that our extensive local networks of host families and partner organizations provide us with a good barometer of the climate in relation to the safety of foreign volunteers. We would never place you in a highly dangerous location.

FSD monitors the political, economic, and social climate in each of our host communities. In the event that FSD determines it cannot ensure your safety or security in a given location, we will either place you with another FSD program in the region, or offer a refund for the program.

- **Inform you about safety and security in your host community.**

Through literature and resources disbursed to you prior to your arrival, and presentations during your program orientation, we equip you with the information and tools to be aware of the realities of your host community, to avoid situations that would put you at risk, and to manage uncomfortable or risky situations in the event that they arise.

- **Direct you to a preferred medical facility in the case of an emergency**

During orientation, your Program Director and Program Coordinator will identify a preferred medical facility in your host community.

- **Support you logistically and emotionally through any medical or emergency situation.**

FSD will support you in addressing your needs during any medical or emergency situation, whether it is securing medical attention and medications, filing a police report, or re-scheduling your flight.

- **Contact your emergency contacts in the case of a major emergency.**

FSD will only contact your emergency contacts upon request or in the case of a major emergency when you are not able to contact them.

b. your responsibilities

- **Inform yourself.**

Research the history and current events of your host country and community prior to your arrival. Talk to your Site Team and host family about safety in your host community and follow their tips.

- **Register your living/traveling abroad status with the US Department of State**

FSD highly recommends that all program participants register with the US Department of State prior to embarking on their journey. More information can be obtained on <http://travel.state.gov/>.

- **Minimize risk:**

- Secure all recommended vaccinations, and take precautions to remain safe and healthy.
- Avoid volatile or risky events, locations, and situations.

- Carry as little money and valuables as possible.
 - Hold your bag close to you or in front of you, and never leave it unattended.
 - Travel with someone you know at all times, and avoid being out alone after dark.
 - Know where you are going, or at least look like you know where you are going. If you are unsure, ask someone for directions. If you need to pull out a map, do so somewhere sheltered and discreet.
 - Avoid dressing in a manner that gives an appearance of wealth
- **Be aware of your surroundings:**
 - Observe your environment with great care and attention, and adapt your behavior accordingly.
- **Be prepared - Carry with you:**
 - A copy of your Proof of Insurance card - you will need the card as proof of insurance in case of an emergency.
 - Any pertinent prescriptions
 - A card that lists all of your local and emergency contact numbers and addresses. We suggest that you keep this card apart from your wallet.
- Keep apart:**
- Keep emergency contact information, and any other important documents, in your email account.
 - Keep a copy of your passport and credit cards apart from your wallet and passport.
- **Notify FSD.**
In the unlikely, but always possible, event that you are mugged, are involved in an accident, fall seriously ill, or run into any other type of "incident" please notify your Site Team immediately. The Site Team will help you to resolve the situation to the best of their ability.

udaipur: visa and health preparations

Visas for India

As an FSD Participant, it is *your full responsibility* for securing the appropriate visa and ensuring the full legality of your stay in the host country during the Program. To do so requires consultation of resources above and beyond the information provided by FSD.

Resources:

You need to obtain an **Employment visa before** departing for India. Please note that **India Visa Center- Travisa Outsourcing** is now handling visa applications within the U.S. as a private contractor to the Indian Embassy. Please visit the India Visa Center online for detailed instructions on obtaining an Employment visa.

<https://indiavisa.travisaoutsourcing.com/select-application.html>

According to Travisa Outsourcing, your visa application will take approximately **5-7 business days to process** once it is received by mail. Please refer to their website and the appropriate consulates to ensure a timely and successful visa application process. We suggest that you submit your application at least 2 weeks in advance to allow sufficient time in case there is a delay.

FSD Recommendations:

Please note: The recommendations provided here are subject to change at any time. Please check with Travisa Outsourcing, or an Indian Consulate or Embassy for the most updated information.

You must apply for an Employment visa. This is not a suggestion, rather a requirement. You must submit an application, verification of address, two (2) passport-sized photos, an application fee, and a sponsor letter provided by your host organization in India. Visit the Travisa Outsourcing website and *refer to additional instructions provided by FSD on obtaining an entry visa.*

Your visa takes effect from the date it is issued; e.g. if you get it a week before departure, that week is counted, even if you have not entered the country yet. Try to get your visa at least 1 to 2 weeks before departure.

NOTE: When applying for an Indian entry visa you have the option of choosing your desired duration of the visa, 6 months to 10 years. However, regardless of the duration of your Employment visa, the period of stay in India (for each visit) is limited to six months without registering. If you plan to stay in India for longer than six months, you will be required to both exit the country before the six-month marker and re-enter to revalidate your visa or register in Udaipur within 14 days of your arrival. If participation in the FSD program exceeds 6 months, FSD site team will advise participants that require assistance. Should you choose to do so, the Site Team will help you register upon your arrival.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, please contact us and we will try to advise you on how to obtain your visa.

health preparation and FAQs

As an FSD Participant, it is your full responsibility to identify and take all necessary health precautions prior to, during, and following the Program. Please start your health preparations early, as some vaccinations must be taken as far as 8 weeks or more before departure. Providing detailed medical advice is beyond the expertise of FSD so it is very important to consult the resources below as well as medical professionals such as your doctor or local travel health clinic.

Resources:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

Recorded information about health risks and precautions for international travelers:
1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747)

Traveler's South Asia Region: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/indianrg.htm>

Malaria Hotline: 404-332-4555.

FSD Recommendations:

- **Bring anti-malarial medication and mosquito repellent:** In addition to any recommended vaccines, please be sure to secure a supply of anti-malarial medication for your trip. Note that there are several different types of anti-malarial medications available. Please see your doctor to choose a medication that will work in your host country and with your medical history. Malaria is always a serious disease and may be a deadly illness and your risk of malaria may be high in India, including cities. Be aware, however, that some anti-malarial drugs can have potentially serious side effects so please speak with your physician to determine which drug may work for you. **Note that Chloroquine is NOT an effective antimalarial drug in the Indian Subcontinent and should not be taken to prevent malaria in this region.** Also be aware that anti-malarial medications are not 100% effective and there are other very serious diseases, such as **dengue fever**, which can be contracted through mosquitoes in India so it is very important to protect yourself against mosquito bites. For those who will be in India for an extended period of time, anti-malarial pills may be purchased in-country. However, please be aware that most anti-malarial medication must be taken before entry into the country and there is greater risk of purchasing expired or placebo medications in India. Mosquito repellent can be purchased in Udaipur.
- **Rabies** is a problem in several of the countries FSD works in. Please speak with your doctor for more information and if a vaccine is recommended for your host country. However, be aware that a vaccine does not completely protect you from contracting rabies. Also, be aware that rabies can be contracted not only through animal bites but also through saliva (i.e. a dog lick) and animals in the early stages of the disease may not be aggressive or seem sick. For this reason, please avoid petting stray dogs and other animals which may have contracted rabies.
- Make sure your food and drinking water are safe. Food and waterborne diseases are the primary cause of illness in travelers. Volunteers should be careful to eat in places that have been recommended to them, and to drink only treated water.
- Familiarize yourself with the symptoms of the most common illnesses contracted by travelers, and the appropriate treatment.
- Most medicines can be found in India for a fraction of U.S. prices. However, if you feel more comfortable, bring medicines and supplies for preventing and treating common illnesses and maladies (diarrhea, dehydration, sunburn, food poisoning).
- Bring a stainless-steel water bottle to ensure that you have a safe supply of water at all times and can remain hydrated.

What happens if I get sick?

For serious illness that may occur during your program, there are public and private clinics and hospitals available in most areas. If you should become sick and need to see a doctor, please alert your Program Coordinator, Ashutosh Singh, and your host family immediately.

weather and packing FAQ

What kind of luggage should I bring?

Don't overdo it—pack lightly so you can travel more easily and store your bag in small places. Think in terms of a backpack, duffel bag, or moderate-sized suitcase and a daypack. Bags with shoulder straps are preferable to suitcases because they're easier to carry.

What should I bring in my carry-on luggage?

We recommend that you carry all valuables (money, credit card, passport, identification, immunization booklet, insurance card, etc.) and a complete set of clothes (change of shirt, pants/skirt, underwear) in your carry-on luggage in case your checked bag is temporarily lost or delayed.

What kinds of weather should I expect?

In Udaipur, the coldest months are December and January, the hottest months are May and June, and the monsoon rains come in July and August. Otherwise, the temperature in the city is quite moderate because it is at a slight elevation and because of the effect of the lakes.

Aside from monsoon season, the sun always comes out during the day, making the summer quite uncomfortable, but making the winter bearable and quite pleasant. Temperatures range from 3 degrees Celsius in the winter to 45 degrees Celsius in the summer, with an average temperature of approximately 22 degrees Celsius.

What documents should I bring?

You should bring your passport, vaccination booklet, insurance card, copies of your airline ticket, and list of FSD contacts in-country. It is also required that you bring **five Xeroxed copies** of your passport and visa. During the program, keep the originals and one copy safe in your suitcase and keep another copy on your person at all times. The other three copies are required by the in-country staff and will be collected during orientation week.

How are clothes washed?

Either you or your family will wash your clothes. If your family washes your clothes, you will still be expected to wash your undergarments. Washing machines are usually not available—your clothes will most likely be hand-washed and line-dried. Because the climate is generally dry, you can often wash clothes out and dry them overnight. You will wash your personal items by first soaking them in powdered detergent and then washing them by hand.

Please note that since your clothes will be hand-washed and line-dried they will definitely endure some wear and tear. Please also note that there is some social stigma surrounding thong underwear, and so it may be more comfortable socially with your family to bring non-thong underwear, or to dry thong underwear out of public view.

What should I wear?

India, especially Rajasthan, is still quite conservative, and this is especially true for women. In order to respect local culture, clothing that volunteers bring from home should be conservative (no skin-tight or low-cut clothing). Capris and long skirts are a good idea, though you won't see many local people wearing them. Cotton in general is good because it is cool and is easy to wash. Volunteers may want to purchase clothes and have outfits made in India that will be both fashionable and more appropriate than anything you already own.

At work

On the job, women generally wear salwar kameez sets which consist of loose pants tied at the waist, a printed top that reaches down to the knees, and a scarf (dupatta) around the neck for modesty.

Women volunteers should expect to wear these salwar kameez sets daily (especially when traveling to nearby villages). This is a very affordable option as women can have salwar kameez sets tailored to fit from scratch material for as little as 350 Rs.

Men should expect to wear full pants and decent shirts (t-shirts are alright sometimes, but polo shirts will be more appropriate). Men can have shirts made for 150 Rs. Men's dress code is pretty casual.



In the field

Many FSD volunteers will make frequent "field visits" to nearby rural areas. These villages are very traditional and conservative so female volunteers should expect to wear salwar kameez sets on these occasions. Men should wear full pants and decent shirts.

At home

At home or when going out in the city, any clothing is fine, but again, it would be safer to stay on the conservative side so as not to attract unnecessary attention. For women, shorts at home are generally acceptable, but volunteers should first ask their host-family to make sure it appropriate.

What type of clothes should I pack?

Bring some lightweight clothes and a warm layer for varied temperatures. In the winter months, people usually dress in layers (since the daytime still stays relatively warm and nights can become significantly colder), wearing socks and shawls to keep warm. Keep in mind that darker colors are easier to keep clean, and that your clothes will endure a lot of wear and tear from being washed by hand. Also consider clothes that will breathe in the heat and dry quickly.

If I am living in a rural area what should I bring?

All of the accommodations in rural areas are clean and hygienic, but very basic. Interns staying overnight will have access to running water at all times, but should expect bucket showers and Indian-style toilet facilities. Volunteers should therefore bring extra hygienic supplies (hand sanitizer, hand wipes, etc.). Also rural areas experience frequent power cuts (usually during working hours) so flashlights and extra batteries can be very helpful.

Recommended Packing Lists

clothes:

- 1-2 pairs of jeans (These should not be tight jeans. 1 pair of jeans should be sufficient for 2-4 month interns, interns staying for longer may want one more pair.) (jeans may be harder to wash and take longer to dry)
- 2-3 pairs of comfortable pants to wear around the city
- 1 pair of long shorts (for around the house)
- 3-4 short-sleeved tops/t-shirts (again, should be conservative, nothing too tight or low cut)
- 3-4 polo shirts for men/ casual button down shirts (semi-casual to wear to work)
- 1-2 long-sleeved warmer shirts/tops
- 3 pairs trousers/khakis for men who are working in an office environment
- A pair of comfortable, sturdy shoes
- Sandals (these can double as slippers) • Sturdy cotton socks (and nylons if needed for dressier outfits) (only if coming during winter months)
- Underwear
- Modest sleepwear
- Sun hat
- Windbreaker or light waterproof jacket and umbrella (can buy umbrellas in Udaipur)

health and hygiene:

- Malaria pills
- Sunscreen
- Strong insect repellent (This can be bought in Udaipur)
- Aspirin and/or non-aspirin pain reliever (This can be bought in Udaipur)
- Antibiotics for travelers' diarrhea (This can be bought in Udaipur)

- Any medications you use in their original containers and a copy of your prescriptions
- A supply of hand wipes/Sea Breeze wipes/Wet Wipes and anti-bacterial hand lotion such as Purel (some places won't have restrooms with running water)
- Vitamins (especially for those with special health or dietary needs)
- Tampons (these can sometimes be found in Udaipur, however it can be difficult and they don't sell tampons with applicators)
- Dental floss
- Mosquito net
- Sunglasses, glasses (extra pair if you have a prescription or contacts), copy of your prescription, saline solution

practical supplies:

- Travel alarm clock (with extra batteries)
- Quick-drying towel or two smaller towels
- Medium-sized backpack for day trips and weekend trips
- Flashlight
- Re-chargeable batteries and battery charger (can be bought in Udaipur)
- Adapters for laptops and other electrical appliances as necessary. Indian electrical outlets have an output of 220V 50 HZ (vs. 120V 60 HZ in the U.S.) and a different plug configuration (C or D). (this can be bought in Udaipur)
- Lock for luggage
- Camera and extra film or memory cards, cord for uploading photos
- Money belt (waist is more secure than around the neck)

documents and money:

- Airline ticket
- Passport
- Vaccination booklet
- Insurance Card
- ATM card (There are many ATMs in the city)
- Visa or Mastercard (remember that credit card companies often charge high fees for using the card while abroad and most places in Udaipur won't accept credit cards)
- Photocopies of all Documents
- Cash

sentimental valuables:

- Novels, reading materials
- Pictures of your family, friends, school, neighborhood, work
- Small gifts for your host family

What items will be especially difficult to get in country?

- Tampons with applicators
- Bar deodorant
- Hand sanitizer or hand wipes
- Dental floss

How should I approach photography?

You should always ask permission before you take someone's photo. People may ask you to send copies and please keep track of addresses to send them. It is prohibited to take photos of military or security zones.

Should I bring my laptop?

The advantage of bringing a laptop is the ability to work on documents at home without paying for internet/computer time. You can then save your work to a USB drive and email/print it at an Internet cafe. The FSD office has wi-fi. Access to computers at your host organization is likely to be limited, and it is unusual for a family to have a computer in the home. Interns should be aware that software for Macintosh computers is **currently unavailable** and if possible it is advisable to bring a PC.

Instead of a laptop (or in addition) it may be a good idea to invest in a cheap USB drive. These are an excellent way to cart around your documents: email, print or fax them from an Internet cafe. *This can be purchased in Udaipur as well.*

If you do decide to bring your laptop, please take the necessary precautions! It should be in your carry-on bag to take on the plane and you should keep it at your host family's home. Please understand that taking a laptop entails the risk that it could be lost, stolen or damaged - FSD is not responsible in these scenarios.

If you do decide to bring your laptop or other American electronic devices you will need voltage converters which convert to 230V with "c" and "d" plugs. Converters can be bought in India, however to be safe you may consider purchasing one before departure.



Type "c" plug



Type "d" plug

Should I bring my iPod?

iPods are becoming more common here, but you should generally not walk around listening to your iPod; they automatically advertise your wealth and set you apart. Keeping it at home and listening to it with your family is perfectly fine.

Should I bring donations?

Donations are welcome, but totally optional. If you choose to bring donations, please think about the practicality, sustainability, and durability of those items. Email your Site Team to find out the best types of donations to bring with you.

food and water FAQ

Can I drink the tap water?

NO. Do not drink the tap water. You are only to drink bottled water, filtered water, or water that has been boiled.

Where can I get safe water?

It is hot in India, so please pay close attention to your hydration at all times and be sure you're getting plenty of (**safe**) water.

Your host family will make either filtered water or boiled water available to you. When visiting other families or communities; bring your own bottled water with you at all times, and when in doubt, drink a bottled beverage.

Bottled water is available at most local shops, restaurants, and roadside stands. Plastic waste, however, is having a significant negative effect on India's environment. While it is often necessary to consume bottled water, there are some environmentally responsible options as well. The most sustainable way to ensure that you always have a supply of purified water available is to bring a water bottle and re-fill it each morning from your host family's supply. Families often use water filters for the home that make water safe to drink, with the Aquaguard brand being the most popular.

Some people bring their own purifiers, however this is unnecessary and can be very expensive. (<http://www.eurekaforbes.com/products/healthylife/wpurifier.php>) These filters are very expensive (~\$130-\$200) and must be serviced regularly to be effective. You may also consider bringing water treatment tablets or a camping water filter for backup.

What is typical food or a typical meal?

Meal times occur at about 9 am, 2 pm, and 8 pm. While living with a family, breakfast and dinner are usually taken together at the table, or sometimes on the floor for different occasions. Lunch is either taken to work in a lunch box ("tiffin"), or some people go home for lunch and then come back to work.

Breakfast is light and usually consists of parantha (grilled Indian bread), chai (milk tea), and possibly fruit. Lunch is more substantial and will include a subzi (vegetable dish), roti (Indian bread), and possibly a dal dish (lentils). Dinner will, again, consist of a subzi dish, dal, roti or chaaval (rice), and some sweet (of which there are a wide variety in India.) Snack foods include namkeen (a spicy, dry mix of nuts and crunchy, fried nuggets) and fruits. Please note that most meals will include mirchi (chilli) but you can ask your host family to add only a small amount of chili to your meals.

What do most people drink?

Chai. Expect to be offered this milk tea several times daily. Fresh fruit juice and coffee are also commonly available at home. Alcohol is not usually consumed at home and volunteers should not expect to bring alcohol into their homestays. Alcoholic beverages are available at restaurants or cafes in Udaipur City.

How vegetarian-friendly is the local cuisine?

India is home to some of the tastiest vegetarian cuisine. Being a vegetarian in India is incredibly stress free and should not be a problem for any intern who follows such a diet.

What foods should I avoid?

During orientation, you will be given more information about foods you will want to avoid in India. To prevent parasites and diarrhea, you will want to eat lightly the first week and stay away from milk and cheese that has not been pasteurized. Avoid uncooked food, street vendors and restaurants that have not been recommended by FSD Staff. Do not eat fruits or vegetables that have been washed with water unless they are peeled or the water was treated beforehand. When eating leftovers, re-heat them thoroughly.

Can I eat fresh fruit from street stands, and trees?

In India you are likely to encounter an abundance of fresh fruit. As a rule, if you can peel it, you can eat it! Avoid peeled fruit served on the street unless you watch the vendor peel it.

How should I express my preferences, or turn down unsafe food that is offered to me?

Food is an important form of hospitality and it is cultural practice to offer food and drink as a welcoming, friendly gesture. Your host families will be notified of what you can and cannot eat or drink, but be both aware and respectful of the situation – never put yourself at risk, but please be diplomatic in expressing your needs. Take care not to offend your hosts with negative comments or facial expressions. It is often difficult to turn down food, as people feel that visits are incomplete without some kind of food or drink; either take just a little of what is being offered, or say that you are afraid of getting sick and would like to just have water. You should feel comfortable politely asking your family for food to be less greasy or salty, to put salt on the side, to mention that you like fruits and vegetables, or to be given more or less food. Also please advise your family in advance if you do not plan to be home for a meal.

Are there any US-style restaurants?

Since Udaipur is a relatively small city, there are very few options outside of Indian food that volunteers can indulge in. Chinese food is available, but it is more of a mix of Indian and Chinese cuisines. This is not to say that there are not a plethora of fabulous Indian food options, but you will often find that home-cooked food is better than restaurant food. The local co-ops function as grocery stores in which volunteers can buy food for cooking (rice, bread, spices) and snacks (cookies, cereal, nuts). Vegetables and fruit can be bought at any street vendor (volunteers will certainly establish favorites!).

communications

What is the best way for friends and family at home to reach me?

Email is probably the most reliable way to be in touch with your friends and family at home. We have a cellular phone bank for our interns. Upon arrival you will be given a phone for the duration of your stay in return for a deposit of 600 Rs. When you return the phone to the Site Team, your deposit will be refunded. On these phones (Reliance brand), International calling plans can be reasonably priced. While in Rajasthan, all incoming calls and texts, domestic or international, are free. If your host family has a phone, you can also ask them if it is all right for your family to call you on that line.

Realize that phone communication is often interrupted by bad weather, local technicalities or overloaded circuits, and sometimes lines are cut in the middle of a call. Please ensure that your friends and families are aware of this with the understanding that it is best not to schedule international calls at exact times. In case of an emergency, your family can call the FSD Site Team and leave a message for you.

Is there access to Internet and email?

Udaipur is well stocked with Internet cafes, especially in the Old City area. Stores that feature the 'I way' logo ensure a speedy connection (although the service isn't always as reliable.) The local Reliance store has opened up its own Internet cafe with high-speed connection. It is probably the most dependable of all Internet services. The FSD office has wi-fi which is available to you during the day time.

Volunteers who bring laptops, depending on their location in the city, may also have the option to purchase Internet connection in their homes. One option, through Reliance and Tata Indicom, is to purchase a data card that is inserted in your computer through a USB port. This works off of the cell system. . You can then use your laptop to make very cheap (~1Rs/min to US) international phone calls in the privacy of your own home. Interns seeking this service are strongly advised **not to bring Macintosh laptops**, however, because software to support them is not currently available.

Can I make and receive phone calls at my host family's home?

Your host family may or may not have a telephone. Never make any long distance calls from the phone of your host family or that of your employer, and always ask permission from your host family before making any local calls on their phone.

Where can I make and receive phone calls?

We have a cellular phone bank for our interns in Udaipur. Upon arrival we will give you a cell phone for you to use during your internship. You will be asked to give a 600 rs. deposit for the phone, which will be refunded to you once you return the phone at the end of your internship. We use Reliance phones as the carrier has pretty reasonable international calling plans. While in Rajasthan, all of your incoming calls (even international calls) and texts are completely free.

Volunteers can also purchase 100 Rs. or 200 Rs. calling cards that last 20 or 40 minutes respectively and can be used from a house landline. Long distance telephone access is easy to obtain through privately owned telephone booths, which are often marked with a handy yellow "ISD/STD" sign. These private booths are found everywhere – sometimes several booths can even be found right next to each other. An average call to the U.S. will run you about 8 Rs. a minute. Aside from Skype and certain calling plans for your cell phone, the cheapest option for making long distance calls is the I-Way Internet cafe, where calls to the U.S. cost 3.5 Rs. per minute.

How do I receive mail while in India?

To receive mail, please have letters sent to your name, care of your host family address. It costs Rs. 20 (\$0.50 USD) to send a standard letter from India. Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery. It is wise not to send or receive packages or valuables due to the uncertainty of the postal system. If a loved one wishes to mail you a package from abroad, make sure they use FedEx, DHL, or another well-known private courier (otherwise, your package is liable to be opened en route.)

Monetary Unit: **Rupee**

Exchange Rate:

The current exchange rate is approximately 44 Rupees to the US Dollar, but check it again before you leave.

How much cash should I bring with me?

You should plan on bringing about US\$200 in cash when you arrive, an ATM card, and a credit card for emergencies. ATMs are found all throughout the city and can often be an easier option than trying to exchange money. IT is good to have some money for emergencies as well. You can exchange money at the airport or upon arrival in Udaipur.

How much money should I plan on spending in country?

FSD covers all of your necessary expenses, including room and board, transportation to and from work, orientation and debriefing sessions, etc. You will want additional money, however, for entertainment, snacks, books, gifts, newspapers, weekend excursions, additional transportation and health emergencies. You should budget for \$4.00 per day or \$100-\$200 per month. Bring more if you plan to go out often, travel, or buy gifts.

Never carry a large sum of cash or your passport on public transportation; if you must, please do so with caution. Bring only what you need for the day and use a nondescript bag to carry books or papers. Do not wear expensive sunglasses, watches or jewelry, and dress modestly. Keep your valuables locked in your suitcase.

How can I get cash?

ATM machines are recommended because they are available, secure, and get a good rate of exchange.

Traveler's checks are not recommended: they do not get a good exchange rate (cash is much better) and are not accepted in any stores or restaurants in Udaipur. Do not exchange money with street dealers; banks or exchange bureaus are much more secure.

Are credit cards accepted?

Credit cards are not widely accepted. They are only accepted in more expensive shops and restaurants, bring VISA or MASTERCARD since they are the most widely accepted.

What is the local attitude towards bargaining?

Bargaining is part of the culture and expected at local markets and the handicrafts in India are as outstanding and unique as they are affordable. You should bargain for nonfood purchases made at the market (as a foreigner, local sellers will without a doubt charge you higher prices). A meal out will cost you between 50 and 200 Rs., a tempo ride will cost you up to 6 Rs. one-way to your destination, a rickshaw ride with friends will cost between 30 and 70 Rs. each, bottled water will cost around 15 Rs., and a Bollywood film at the local Chetak Circle theater will cost you 80 Rs.

transportation FAQ's

Your Arrival: Getting to Udaipur

How do I get from the international to the domestic terminal?

The domestic terminals at both the Mumbai and New Delhi airports are separate from the International terminal. When you fly internationally into Mumbai or Delhi you must collect your luggage, go through customs, and catch a shuttle which will take you from the international to domestic airport which is about 20 minutes away. Some connecting airlines will have their own shuttle and will transport you while others require you to find your own way with the airport shuttle. Please check with your airline for the most reliable and up to date transfer procedures.

How far is the orientation site from the airport?

The Udaipur airport is approximately a 30 minute taxi ride to the orientation site. The Site Team will pick you up at the airport and bring you to the hotel in which you'll be staying for orientation week.

What if my flight is delayed?

Members from the Site Team will pick you up when you arrive. They will be checking your flight status to find out if your flight was delayed. However, it is helpful for you to call the Program Coordinator, Cheryl, if you learn that your flight is delayed. Please carry the phone numbers for the Site Team with you on the plane.

Transportation within Udaipur

What are the most common modes of transport and are they expensive?

You will be able to walk to most places in Udaipur – the furthest walk, from NGO row (Fatehpura) to the Old City will take you about 50 minutes. However, in the heat of the summer, it can be difficult to walk long distances. For other options, rickshaws are like taxis and take you door to door, while tempos have set routes and you can choose when to get in and out. They may look like the bigger, more crowded cousin of the rickshaw, but tempos are simply the cheapest, fastest way to get to most parts of the city. In terms of prices, transportation to and from major parts of the city will be inexpensive as compared to prices you may be used to paying.



Can I travel after dark?

You should plan ahead, be cautious, and not travel after dark if it can be at all avoided.

Is it safe to go out at night?

Do not walk around at night after 9 p.m. If you must go somewhere, do **not** go alone. Consult with your host family about safety information specific to your neighborhood. Plan ahead and be cautious. Also it is difficult to find transportation home after 10 pm so plan accordingly.

family homestay

One of the most rewarding, challenging, and meaningful experiences during your time in India is likely to be the time you spend living with your host family. Host families offer the rare opportunity to truly integrate oneself into the local culture and build meaningful relationships that will last long past your stay. The families who host FSD Participants are carefully selected and offer their homes out of a genuine sense of generosity and the wish to learn about another culture. Your host family will view you as a member of the family and treat you as such. We hope that you will feel equally at home with your family but we ask that you never forget you are a guest in their home. Please always be respectful of their rules and help out the best you can. Here are some answers to common questions that will help prepare you for your homestay:

Homestay FAQ

What will my host family provide?

Your family is required to provide you with a private room, three meals a day, purified water.. Toiletries and a towel are not provided; you must bring your own.

What are the living accommodations like?

Living accommodations are basic by U.S. standards. Electricity often isn't available for short periods of time. Due to water shortages bucket showers the norm.

Ants, mosquitoes, lizards, and occasionally spiders and small rodents can creep into the house! Your family can help prevent these unfortunate visitors, so let them know if you see something! Keeping the house clean and storing food in its place will make a big difference.

You will become accustomed to a fair amount of night sound, including traffic, animals, and radios. Earplugs can help.

Will a mosquito net be provided?

A mosquito net will not be provided in most cases but are only necessary when staying overnight in rural areas.

How are families structured in India?

Indian culture is centered around the family unit, and families are generally very close-knit. Many people live in joint families, with several generations living under the same roof. FSD families in Udaipur are usually middle to upper class. The men in these families own their own businesses (usually family businesses) or are employed by companies in Udaipur. Some of the women in these families stay at home taking care of the children and the home, some get involved in their own small entrepreneurial adventures, and others have jobs teaching or working for NGOs.

Do I need to help out with chores?

We ask families to treat you as another member of the family, which means you will pick up after yourself, keep your area neat, and help out with the cooking and cleaning as appropriate.

Is it safe to bring and store valuables at my host family's house?

There is no need to bring many valuables. ***We require that you keep items of value locked in your luggage at all times.*** This is extremely important because friends, relatives, and household staff are often in and out of the house. However, there have been incidents when an intern thought something was stolen only to find that s/he had misplaced it. This kind of "scandal" is hard on the host family who take great care to protect you and your things. If something unusual of this nature does happen, please speak with your host mother and/or the FSD Site Team immediately.

How much time should I spend with my host family? What should we talk about?

One of the most rewarding, challenging, and meaningful experiences during your time in country is likely to be the time you spend living with your host family. You will learn a great deal about country through

the people who live there, so cultivate a habit of listening and observing, rather than merely hearing and seeing.

Ask questions and share your perspective. Be sensitive to the feelings of others and embrace the different viewpoints, lifestyles, experiences and company your family provides. Host families are eager to get to know you and learn about your American life so be ready to talk about your interests, culture, family and plans. We encourage you to share pictures and stories from your life at home.

What language should I expect at home?

While FSD families are relatively comfortable with English, Hindi is the primary language spoken in the home and with friends.

What will be the largest adjustments I should expect to make while living with my host family?

The concept of personal space is very different than what volunteers are probably used to, and while volunteers will have their own rooms, privacy is not considered a necessity here. In fact, it is often seen as undesirable. On the other hand, you as a volunteer will be welcomed with more genuine and unabashed hospitality than you ever thought possible.

Household servants are a common part of Indian home life. Some families have servants who live with them, but most have people who come and clean the home and help with the cooking daily. This is always difficult for volunteers, and it may be awkward at times. However, volunteers can do their best to make sure servants are treated with the respect that they would expect. Maggie Jacoby, along with other previous FSD interns, agrees that, "In general, whether you are living with an Indian family or on your own, just be willing to adjust how you normally live your life. It might feel at times that you are losing your individuality or freedom, but in the end you are gaining insights into another culture you could never experience any other way."

How often should I check in with my family?

You are entrusted in the family's care and just like your own family, and they will worry about you if you don't check in. Please advise your family in advance if you do not plan to be home for a meal. Likewise, be sure to notify your family in advance of any weekend excursions you take other than those in the scheduled program.

Can I have visitors come over to the house?

Please advise your family before you invite anyone to the house, especially someone of the opposite sex. Overnight guests are **NOT** appropriate and are unacceptable during the program. Protect your family's safety and privacy. Do not give out their home number. Remember: Even though you will be treated as part of the family, you are still a guest in their home and must be respectful of their rules.

Can I go out at night?

If you do make plans to go out at night, please advise your family of your transportation, who will be accompanying you, your return time, and arrangements for getting home and into the house. Remember that it is difficult to find transportation after 10 pm so it is your responsibility to make the necessary arrangements to be home before this time. Exercise good judgment: As anywhere, it is best to go out with family members, co-workers or friends that you meet. Simply being an American makes you more of a target for theft, harassment, etc.

How should I handle requests for money?

FSD program fees subsidize all of your room and board expenses so there is no need for you to discuss money with your family. They should not ask you to borrow money and if this happens, tell them it is against your program rules to lend money. If children ask for money, gently remind them that it is against the rules, and let your Site Team know about the incident.

What types of gifts are appropriate to bring for my host family?

We suggest that you bring small and modest gifts for your host family as a token of goodwill and gratitude for their hospitality. Ideas include: souvenirs of your hometown or state, chocolates/candies, inexpensive solar calculators or watches, inexpensive jewelry, or school supplies for the children, etc. It is possible to purchase small gifts in country too, but regional gifts are special. Use your imagination!

personal account: an intern's reflection on India

Ashley Harden, Udaipur

As a nine week intern in India, time is short and work is hectic. Although, I have limited time here, I was still able (with the support of the FSD site team and my co-workers) to implement and obtain funding for a project. The Institute for Local Self-Governance and Responsible Citizenship, my host organization, conducts bi-weekly trainings for members of panchayati raj (India's village government and representative system). The Institute does not have any substantial data that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of its trainings. This lack of evidence has started to become problematic for the NGO because donors and future investors want proof of the trainings' positive impact.



In an attempt to help the Institute evaluate its trainings, get funding, and improve the quality of the training itself, my co-workers and I designed an interactive evaluation game entitled the "Rainbow Game". This game is color coordinated by training categories. The rules and questions are simple. The game will be played by participants at the end of all six-day trainings. By recording the amount of incorrectly and correctly answered questions for each category, the institute will be able to document the amount of training information retained by representatives. In addition, the game will be fun, colorful, and easy to follow, especially since the majority of trainees are illiterate.

As a foreigner, who does not speak a word of Hindi, it was very difficult to design and develop a project. The work and living environment has been nothing less than challenging. However, it has been a positive and humbling experience. Since this is my first time out of my home country, it was hard to admit my vulnerability and deal with the fact that I am a burden to my host family and especially my host organization. Before the internship, I knew that I would be a drain on my organization's resources, but I could have never prepared myself for the task of embracing my limitations while discovering which skills (that I possess) could be used to the Institute's benefit.

My creativity, my determination, my adaptability, my pride, my previous conceptions about Indian culture, and especially my patience have all been challenged during my stay in Udaipur. Yes, the Indian work culture is at times frustratingly slow, but in order to make any difference I learned to adapt, embrace, enjoy, and respect this different way of life. Random power outages, six chai (tea) breaks a day, office gossiping, and the hierarchical work system can be wearisome at times. However, the atmosphere at the Institute has been by far the most enjoyable office environment. At work there is always an endless supply of jokes, laughter, invitations to homes and celebrations, curiosity, respect, and offers for rides home. It has truly been my honor and privilege to work at the Institute for Local Self-Governance and experience the good, the bad, and the quirky facets of India's work culture.



Although I have felt uncomfortable, lost, and frustrated, the experience of working in Udaipur has been empowering in its own way. My project is nearing completion and will be implemented next week at a monthly training session on women's empowerment for elected representatives of several wards (local districts). Despite the obstacles, the "Rainbow Game" will be used and played. To have left something not only beneficial, but sustainable has been acutely rewarding and significantly outweighs all of the negative experiences.

race, sexuality, and gender

How you interact with others (and they with you) will initially have a lot to do with preconceptions. You'll feel more comfortable once the inevitable "getting to know you" period is over, but keep some cultural norms in mind:

Race and Ethnicity

In India, you may not encounter the same level and/or kind of awareness and sensitivity surrounding race relations and conceptualizations of heritage as you may be accustomed to finding in the U.S. If you have dark skin or features associated with an African heritage, for example, people may refer to you as "Negro/a." If you have fair skin, people may refer to you as "Angrez." In most cases, these names are not necessarily derogatory terms; many people use them simply because your skin color or features are unusual or intriguing within that context. In some cases, it may be valuable to engage the people you meet in a conversation about the specificity of your heritage. India is very racially homogenous. Consequently, people here often have trouble understanding the racial diversity present in the U.S. People are very interested in getting to know more about you and your heritage. Don't be surprised if people here ask questions that are more probing than you're used to in the U.S.

Sexuality

Sexual orientation or preference is not a topic that is openly discussed in India. Please realize that any affiliation or experiences you have at home (especially in the LGBT community) may not be regarded with the same understanding or sensitivity in India. Please do your best to take this into consideration when discussing such issues with your host family or other members of the community. Also it is important to know that homosexual relations between men just became legal and there lesbian relations have not been considered illegal for a while.

Gender

As a foreigner, you are going to attract attention. Women have to deal with much more harassment than men, including lewd comments and grabbing. The only thing to do is to be cautious and aware of your surroundings, dress conservatively so as not to attract any extra attention, and don't stay out too late (especially not alone). Do not give out your phone number to people you don't know. You can explain that you are living in someone else's house and are not allowed to receive calls or visitors. For the most part, there are no bad intentions, but it is always better to be cautious.

Also it is important to understand that Indian men interact differently than what you may be used to in the US. It is common to see men and young boys holding hands, or walking with their arms around each other. This is a frequent occurrence and you should expect to encounter this whether on the street, in the office, or at home.

common cultural practices and beliefs FAQs

For the most part, you will gain insight into Indian culture through your own experiences, but here are a few common questions that are likely to arise:

How do people in country view time and/or punctuality?

The concept of time is very flexible in India and Udaipur is a very laid-back city. Patience is a virtue because punctuality is difficult to come by. Depending on the people you are with or the organization you work with, things often do not happen until much later than planned. It is expected and people generally plan to be late.

Do people in country have different beliefs about personal space or privacy?

The definition of personal space is very different from what you are used to. The concept of needing to be alone and needing space that is just yours is often considered odd, and aside from your room, there are very few places where you won't be bombarded by the general loudness of life here. People often crowd together especially when riding public transportation or attending outdoor fairs and festivals. Indians are also very personal people. They will ask questions that seem nosy or too personal, and it is not considered rude (you can do it too and it is alright).

What are some common greeting gestures in country?

The most common greetings are "namaste" or "namashkar" said with palms together in prayer position at chest height. There is little difference between the two as they both mean "I bow to you." These greetings are used throughout the day and can be used to signify either hello or goodbye.

What kind of public touching gestures are acceptable in country?

Affection is very rarely displayed in public and you should always refrain from hand holding, putting your arm around another, kissing, etc. This type of affection is not condoned by society. It is common, however, to see men holding hands in public and you should be aware that this is an accepted expression of nonsexual friendship.

Are there customs surrounding eating that I should be aware of?

Most Indians rarely use utensils to eat and instead eat with their right hand, using only the tips of their fingers. The left hand is never used because it is reserved for toilet duties. If possible try to use only your right hand at the dinner table. It is understood that you are foreign to these customs and are not held to the same expectations, but efforts to adjust to their culture are always appreciated.

Are there any customs I should be aware of when visiting someone's home?

It is common for guests to take off their shoes before entering a home. It is customary to offer food to guests when they come visit (at home, at the office, anywhere). Volunteers will often find themselves in situations where they do not want to eat or drink anything, but are being forced to. The problem is that people often take it personally if you try to refuse, even if you go about it in a diplomatic manner. The best option is simply to try to say no, but then agree to eating or drinking just a small amount.

How are children treated in country? Is it common for children to be reprimanded physically at home or at school?

Since India is such a family- oriented culture, children are the center of attention in most families and are very well taken care of. Disciplinary measures vary from household to household, but in school physical reprimands are commonplace. Teachers and principals will strike unruly students as this is widely accepted form of discipline.

How are animals treated in country? Do people keep pets?

Many families keep dogs as pets, but cats are extremely rare. You should expect to see cows, donkeys, goats, and dogs roaming the streets, scavenging in search of food. These street animals are frequently considered nuisances and thus are not treated well and often abused.



What place does religion have in country?

Religion plays a major role in the lives of most Indians. Approximately 82% of the population is Hindu, 12% Muslim, and the rest is comprised of Christians, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists. Social structure, political affiliation, and cultural norms have been heavily influenced by these religions throughout India's 5000-year history. India has an incredibly rich religious history and since Indians are generally very open about their religious beliefs don't feel shy about asking questions regarding customs, festivals, beliefs, gods, etc. In fact most Indians take pride in their religious heritage and appreciate the opportunity to share their beliefs with others.

When visiting a religious or sacred site are there any rules I should follow?

Always dress conservatively, and remove your shoes before entering. Also know that it is offensive to touch someone with your feet and to touch a carving of a deity.

in the workplace...

What is the general perception of work in country?

People do work very hard, either in the office, with partner organizations, or in the field, but the attitude towards work is different than volunteers are used to, as work is frequently intermingled with socializing with coworkers and chai (tea) breaks.

What is a typical work schedule in India?

Like many parts of India, Udaipur works on a six-day workweek with Sunday being the only day off. Some organizations, however, have the second Saturday of each month off. While this may seem quite intense, the working environment in the NGO sector is generally quite relaxed. Offices open around 10 am after a leisurely morning and full breakfast, lunch is usually taken around 1 or 2 pm either with coworkers at the office or at home, and people leave the office for home around 5 or 6 pm. Holidays occur frequently, sometimes for religious purposes, sometimes for nationalistic reasons, and some that can be interpreted in any number of ways.

How is personal initiative viewed? Is it appropriate to voice my opinions?

Initiative is encouraged and in many instances a necessity at work. According to Maggie Jacoby, a 2005-2006 10-month intern, "Have as clear an idea as possible about what you want to get done. Don't wait for work to be assigned to you; actively seek out ways in which you can be useful and helpful. Even if it is only that you have a better grasp of written and spoken English, find ways to utilize these skills at your organization. More importantly, suspend all your Western notions of how things should, and will, work. If you come in expecting efficiency and quick changes, you'll only get frustrated." You should always feel that you can share your ideas and opinions, as creativity is always encouraged. But be prepared to adjust to the Indian work culture and not place strict expectations about timing and efficiency on those around you.

What are common practices for socializing with colleagues?

Expect to get to know your colleagues well as office teams spend significant time around each other (given the six day work week!). It is most common to socialize during work hours, however, on occasion colleagues see each other outside for coffee or dinner.

language guide

No fewer than eighteen major languages officially recognized by the constitution, numerous minor ones and over a thousand dialects are spoken across India. When independent India was organized, the present day states were largely created along linguistic lines, which at least helps the traveler make some sense of the complex situation. Hindi is commonly spoken throughout northern India and will be the language you will find most helpful to know at work and at home.

- **Practice:** Speaking a language is the best way to learn, so don't be afraid to practice your Hindi with as many people as possible. Your best resource in learning the local language will be your host family and co-workers at your host organization. Depending on your language ability, this may be extremely frustrating at times. Relax and remember that the key to learning (or improving your skills in) a language is the ability to laugh at yourself. Indians are also very receptive and appreciative of foreigners who speak even a little broken Hindi so don't be afraid of making mistakes. Hindi is spoken by such a wide range of people in India (many who actually speak it as their second language!) that it is rarely spoken in its "pure" form and Indians are used to hearing mistakes and variances of grammar. Many Indians these days also speak Hindi with a generous amount of English mixed in ("Hinglish"). This is great for new Hindi students because when you don't know a vocabulary word it is often acceptable (and even "trendy") to just use the English equivalent. Pronunciation, however, causes the most confusion both for new language students and those trying to understand you. Many Indians are not used to hearing Hindi spoken with a foreign accent and mispronunciation can often completely change the meaning of a word. The Hindi alphabet is very phonetic with each letter having a specific sound which often can not be directly translated into an English equivalent. It can, thus, be very helpful to learn the Hindi alphabet from the start so you can read and understand the sometimes subtle differences in pronunciation.

Hindi Language Resources:

The following is a list of basic to intermediate Hindi language learning materials. Except for the starred (**) books, all the following are available either exclusively in India or for a fraction of the price as in the US so it's better to wait until you arrive in India to purchase them. Because Udaipur is a small city, however, these books may not be available in local shops but most of them should be able to be ordered on demand. The first two books are appropriate for beginning to intermediate language learners while the others are for intermediate to advanced students who can read Hindi and have an understanding of basic grammar.

- **Teach Yourself Hindi by Rupert Snell ****

This book is one of the very best books for learning Hindi and is probably one of the only books participants who are interested in learning Hindi will need. It is fairly challenging and can take the student from a complete beginner to an intermediate level. It contains an excellent dictionary, lessons in writing and pronunciation, and a solid review of Hindi grammar. It is particularly recommended to purchase this book as a set with the audio CD's and is best purchased in the US.

- **Hindi-English Phrase Book by Kavita Kumar**

A wonderful and very small pocket book with many useful phrases, grammar lessons, dictionary, and useful lessons about Indian culture and religion. It is written in both Hindi and English alphabet for beginning to intermediate students. It may be hard to find in Jodhpur but can probably be ordered by a good bookstore.

- **The Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary by R.S. McGregor**

This is the best and most reputable Hindi to English Dictionary. It is available in India for much less than in the US and is meant for intermediate to advanced students who can read Hindi.

- **Hindi for Non-Hindi Speaking People by Kavita Kumar**

An excellent upper intermediate to advanced level grammar book which is written more as a reference guide than a textbook. The numerous examples and detailed grammar rules it covers is extremely helpful for more advanced students.

india: film guide

Hindi Film:

Hindi film is very beloved in India and having a familiarity with films, songs, and actors can give you a window into Indian popular culture. While in the U.S., a good source for renting Hindi films is www.netflix.com and Wikipedia has a good guide to Bollywood cinema with great links (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bollywood>). Hindi film is often very long (~3 hours) and usually incorporates song and dance routines and far fetched storylines which sometimes surprise and amuse foreign viewers. However, amidst the stereotypical mass released films are a good deal of very high quality beautiful movies with fantastic cinematography, storylines, acting, and yes...usually music. The following is a list of some recommended films based upon their influence and popularity in Indian society, their quality, and entertainment value.

Classics:

- Shree 420 (1955) – classic Raj Kapoor movie
- Awaara (1951) – classic Raj Kapoor movie
- Mera Nam Joker (1970) – classic Raj Kapoor movie
- Pakeeza (1971) – sad love story of a concubine and her quest for true love
- Umrao Jan (1981) – beautiful drama about a prostitute in Muslim 19th c. north India famous for its excellent ghazal songs, cinematography, acting, and storyline
- Mother India (1957) – often either critiqued or admired for its portrayal of the Indian mother figure
- Aanand (1970) – touching story about a doctor and his patient w/Amitabh Bachchan
- Mughal-E-Azam (1960) – story of a prince and his forbidden love with his courtesan
- Sholay (1975) – very famous and entertaining “masala” comedy with Amitabh Bachchan
- Don (1978) – again Amitabh Bachchan
- Silsila (1981) – love story with Amitabh Bachchan and Rekha

Modern Hindi Film:

- Swades (2005) – although sometimes far fetched and patronizing, it’s a great movie to watch for FSD participants due to its development theme and the lessons learned and struggles faced by the main character - a westernized Indian living in the US who returns to visit family in a rural village – also has some great humor, music, and touching scenes
- Lagan (2001) – excellent film about one village’s struggle to stand up against colonial British tax collectors – famous for its great storyline, acting, and wonderful song and dance numbers
- Earth (1998) – an excellent, gripping, and sad drama surrounding the disastrous effects of partition as told through one family
- Salam Bombay (1988) – excellent real life drama about the harsh realities of life for street children in Bombay
- Mandi (1983) – interesting story of a modern brothel and the corruption that surrounds it (note that the Hindi in this movie is often a very local Marathi dialect) – great characters and acting
- Masoom (1982) – touching drama of a family coping with issues of infidelity and acceptance of the husband’s illegitimate son into the family
- Lekin (1990) – takes place in Rajasthan – story about a ghost in search of redemption and release from her earthly bonds
- Chandni (1989) – popular Bollywood love story
- Devdas (2002) – epic love story popular for its beautiful cinematography and actors/actresses
- Dil Se (1998) – a Bollywood love story entwined with issues of terrorism – excellent music and good storyline
- Paheli (2005) – a sweet love story with beautiful cinematography and music based on a traditional Rajasthani folk tale
- Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (1995) – considered one of the sweetest and most famous love stories and the longest running film in Indian cinema
- Veer Zaara – quality love story about the forbidden love of a Pakistani and Indian – great story and music
- Munnabhai MBBS(2003) – an excellent and famous comedy about a gangster who tries to become a doctor
- Lage Raho Munnabhai (2006) – popular sequel to the above movie
- Sarfarosh (1999) – popular Amir Khan movie

- Black (2005) – Bollywood’s version of The Miracle Worker about the relationship of a deaf/mute girl and her teacher
- Rang De Basanti (2006) – popular Amir Khan movie revolving around the storyline of a group of college friends and deals with corruption and politics
- Malamaal Weekly (2006) – a funny slap stick comedy about a man in a small village who wins the lotto, drops dead with shock, and the villagers who fight to take their share

india: recommended reading

Travel/Entertainment/Culture

- Lonely Planet Guide by Various Authors
Excellent Travel Guide on North India, South India and Hindi/Urdu Phrasebook
- Culture Shock: India by Gitanjali Kolanad (Graphic Arts Center Publishing 2001)
An innovative guide to the varied customs, etiquette, norms, and regions of India

History

- A Concise History of India by Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf (Cambridge UP 2001)
An accessible account of Indian history from Mughals to present day
- City of Djinn by William Dalrymple (Acacia Press 1994)
A British writer weaves his account of living in Delhi with a rich description of the city’s history
- India: From Midnight to the Millennium by Sashi Tharoor (Perennial 1998)
Special Assistant to the UN Secretary General gives his account of changes in India since Independence, interspersed with personal stories
- Discovery of India by Jawaharlal Nehru (Oxford UP 1990)
Independent India’s first Prime Minister writes a classic account of Indian history and how he viewed India’s role in the modern world. Originally published in 1946.
- A New History of India by Stanley Wolpert (Oxford UP 1999)
An accessible introduction to 4000 years of Indian history

Development and Economics

- India Unbound by Gurcharan Das
An insightful overview of India’s social and economic reform since independence with a decidedly optimistic and pro-liberalization argument
- Development as Freedom by Amartya Sen (Anchor Books 2000)
The 1998 Economic Science Nobel Prize winner’s ground breaking book that places individual freedom at the center of a comprehensive analysis of today’s global economy
- India: Development and Participation by Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen (Oxford 2002)
A fantastic book that looks at the inequality of India’s economic reforms during the 1990’s. It displays the positive impacts of reform but also argues that India must develop in ways that uphold democracy and spread the benefits of reform among the poor and rural sectors.
- Everybody Loves a Good Drought: Stories from India’s Poorest Districts by P. Sainath (Penguin, New Delhi 1996)
Stories of various development projects in India
- In Spite of the Gods: The Strange Rise of Modern India by Edward Luce (Doubleday 2007)
An enlightening study of the forces shaping India as it tries to balance the stubborn traditions of the past with an unevenly modernizing present.

Religion and ethnic conflict

- [Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India](#) by Ashutosh Varshney (Yale UP 2003)
Varshney examines the question of why communal conflict is more likely in some areas than in others, studying three pairs of Indian cities
- [Colors of Violence: Cultural Identities, Religion, and Conflict](#) by Sudhir Kakar (University of Chicago 1996)
A psychological approach to the roots of Hindu- Muslim tensions, Kakar uses case studies to explore cultural stereotypes, religious antagonisms, ethnocentric histories and episodic violence

Recommended websites

- www.samachar.com
Headlines from and links to major Indian news agencies, including Times of India, The Hindu, and Indian Express
- www.indianngos.com
An informative site on the development sector in India
- www.thehindu.com
A respected newspaper, which often has stories related to the development sector
- www.flonnet.com
Top national news and current events magazine
- www.thetimesofindia.com
India's most widely distributed daily
- www.epw.org.in
An influential journal for social development studies and policy discussions
- www.financailexpress.com
India's leading business newspaper, covers the economy, financial, and industrial news and stock market reports
- www.travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html
US department of State's page for country-by-country travel warnings, consular information and public announcements
- www.indiaimage.nic.in
Government of India portal. Has links to most government of India websites, including departments, autonomous bodies, state governments, ministries etc.
- www.indiatogether.org
Informative development sector news, features, and stories