

# Student Experience Report

## Study Abroad in India



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# Introduction

If you look for an adventure far off Europe, I promise that you'll find it in Delhi. I hope this will give you a little summary on what to expect, how to prepare and how to enjoy your stay. I will give some tips and share a few of my experiences. My basic motivation for India was to study outside of Europe, to challenge myself with a little adventure. India is an excellent choice for that, due to many reasons:

- Rising economy (there is tension in the air)
- Very different, diverse and friendly culture
- Different climate conditions
- English is widely spoken (no need to learn Hindi, but if you have the opportunity do it!)
- Cheap living
- If you overlook the pollution you will find a stunning nature

I chose the IIT Delhi because the Indian Institutes of Technology [IIT] are the best technical universities in India (you will study with some of India's brightest minds) and my Formula Student Team in Germany has a collaboration with the Formula Student Team (Axlr8r) at the IIT Delhi. I financed my stay with the help of the Promos scholarship (DAAD).

## Preparation

If you made your decision to go to India, you've already managed the biggest challenge because the preparation was not that difficult. At first meet your local coordinator for studying abroad in Asia, he/she will tell you what to do. My semester started in mid-July and ended with the last exams at the end of November. The application deadline was in May. Here is what I had to prepare:

- Vaccinations and medicals
  - Rabies
  - Japanese encephalitis
  - Hepatitis B
  - Typhus
  - Buy tablets against malaria
- Visa (be patient, it won't be your last experience with Indian bureaucracy)
- Scholarship or Auslandsbafög
- Learning Agreement
- Flight
- Interim tenant
- Credit Card
- Life Insurance
- HIV test and medical test

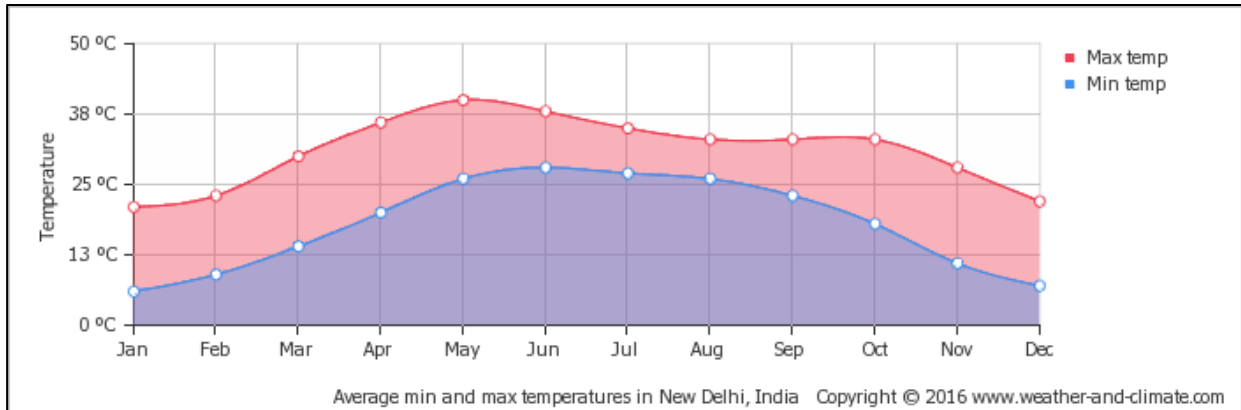
Hostel Fees	7.000₹+150₹/day
Both Flights	500€
Meal on Campus	80₹
Meal in Restaurants	500₹

# India

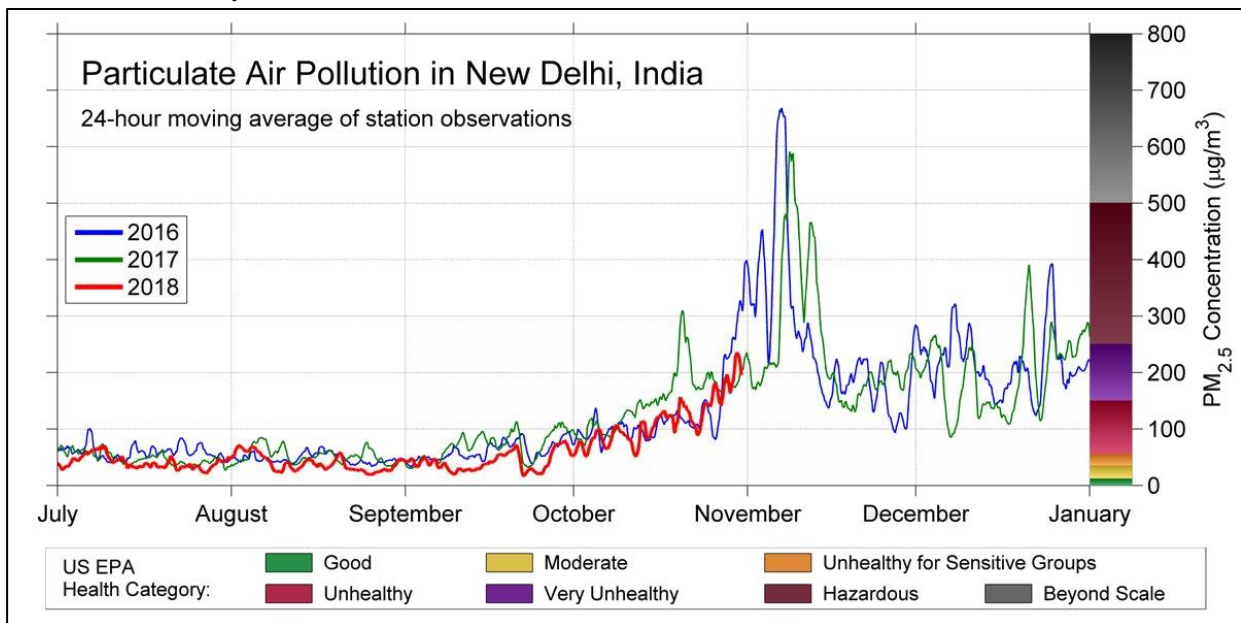
Life in India is different. You will face a series of interesting, exciting and funny moments, but also several annoying, dangerous and bothering situations.

It is a wonderful place for vegetarians because the vegetarian offer is huge, meticulously marked and divided from non-vegetarian food. Vegetarianism in India also excludes eggs. Whereas for vegans, it can get difficult because everything contains milk and most Indians don't know the concept of veganism. Hence if you ask, if it is vegan, they'll think you mean vegetarian and say yes.

The hotness can get very onerous. Especially in May it will be hard and the humidity during the raining season is not helping. I recommend a hard mattress to sweat less during the night.



The pollution in Delhi reaches its maximum during Diwali Festival and stays on a dangerous level. During this time, I recommend buying a mask (min. N95) at the local pharmacy and daily check the Air Quality Index of the nearest measurement station at R.K. Puram.



The Indian people will welcome you with open arms and do everything they can to help you. You will get invited to dance with them on streets during Festivals or visit their home town. I never experienced such a big, warm welcome and this should be enough to go for an exchange to India.

# Life in the Hostel

I had an awesome time in the Kumaon Hostel, where exchange students usually stay. It became a good home to me and the other students. The Students at the IIT Delhi (same for the other IIT's) live on the closed campus, where they stay in hostels. The campus is a safe space. Compared to Delhi it's less crowded, less polluted and way more relaxed. The whole campus, with the academic area, all hostels and apartments for the professors and the staff, covers an area of two square kilometers and is in New Delhi-Hauz Khas. The IIT Administration thinks it is better to separate the genders, so the women hostels are at the east part of the campus, while the men hostels are in the west. The villa of the university president is also located in the east part. Men are strictly prohibited in women hostels and women can only access the community area of the men hostel during day times. Each Hostel hosts around 300-1000 Students. The Kumaon Hostel has something more than 400. It is an open Structure with rooms for two people usually, so you'll have a roommate most likely.

In the shared bathroom you have warm water to shower, if you use a bucket to mix hot and cold water. The shower head only gives you cold water. Though most of the time it is so hot, that you'll thankfully take the cold water. The Bathroom near to the rooms of the internationals got renovated recently, so they look okay. The other bathrooms may host cockroaches. To wash your clothes, you can choose between a laundry shop nearby on the campus or you buy some washing powder and use the washing machines in the hostel for free.

The mess (canteen) will provide free food three times a day, seven days per week. It will be spicy, sometimes even for Indians. The diversity is quite poor, and you may get bored quickly, but there are some nice alternatives on the campus. The mess serves veg. food mostly. You can buy scrambled eggs and sometimes chicken. I don't recommend buying and eating meat anywhere in the world, but especially not in India. You'll see the horrible "living" conditions of the chicken on some markets and I promise you that not a single chicken that died for the mess food, gets treated well.



For your studies or just to relax, you have two small learning rooms and a common room. The common room and one learning room have AC's. It is a good place to escape the heat. In the case of a big cricket game you should go to the common room and watch it with the Indians.

How much Fees you must pay depends on your University and exchange program. I stayed enrolled in Hannover to be able to write the exams of the Winter semester and payed my normal study fees. Due to the DAAD exchange program between the IITs and the TU9 I didn't have to pay fees in India, except for the Hostel fees for eating and sleeping.

Normally you don't have to bring things like a mosquito net or a blanket. Students from last semester will leave their stuff, or you can just buy it in a near market. If you are not sure, if you want to choose Mumbai or Delhi, then I can say that Mumbai has the better campus, less air pollution, but also harder weather conditions and higher prices.

# Studying at the IIT Delhi

Except for the high level of difficulty, studying at the IIT Delhi feels like going back to school. You will have to do quite a lot of assignments, you must attend the lectures and there is a class participation grade. There is even a parent-teacher day. Luckily there is no need to hand out a sick note from the doctor for every missed class, but your professor can lower your grade by one note if your attendance falls under 75%.

Most subjects include two minor exams during the semester and one major at the end. Some professors also give quizzes in between. So, if you want to travel (which you should), then be prepared to learn when you are back at the campus. The IIT Delhi is a very famous university and offers many guest lectures or other exciting events like first aid for dogs or free meditation and yoga classes.



# Traveling in India

There are endless interesting and beautiful places to visit in India. I visited most places during the off season. It was good, to avoid the crowds and get better prices for accommodation or at the shops.

I would recommend the train to travel. Traveling by train in India brings you close to the culture and is a must have experience. If you want to travel larger distances, organize the train early. You can't use the tourist privilege to get specially reserved seats for foreigners, because you will have a student visa. The bus another good way to travel. You can choose between sleeper and seater busses. They are easy to book online and give you a bigger adventure than the train (most drivers are crazy, ask them to slow down). Sometimes it can be tricky to find the departure location for the bus. Stay in contact with the bus driver over a phone number that will be provided. Also ask Indians for the described location. The third way to travel is the plane. Don't travel by plane, the



flight to India and back will already pollute the environment with approximately more than one ton of CO<sub>2</sub> per passenger. With two other friends I did a cycle tour from Ratnagiri to Goa. For me it was the best way to really see India away from the big cities and tourist places. It was my most unique experience here and included a cycle tour through Mumbai, where we bought the cycles. It also took some Indian bureaucracy to transport the cycles from Mumbai to Ratnagiri via train.



## Last Words

I hope I could settle some questions, or rise some interest in taking your exchange semester in India. I guess every exchange semester offers a range of unforgettable memories, but surely India will give you more. Enjoy your time!