Intensive Hindi in India
ON-SITE GUIDE 2013–14

ASIA & OCEANIA
STUDY ABROAD

LEARNING ABROAD CENTER
University of Minnesota
Important Names & Addresses

The Learning Abroad Center provides a full range of services from preliminary program advising to assistance with re-entry. Do not hesitate to contact any of the MSID Learning Abroad Center staff with your questions. Prior to departure, please direct all questions to the Learning Abroad Center. Friends and family members should always contact the Learning Abroad Center, not the on-site staff, for assistance, even once you are overseas.

In the United States
Learning Abroad Center
University of Minnesota
230 Heller Hall
271 19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0430
Phone: 612.626.9000
Fax: 612.626.8009
Toll Free: 888.700.UOFM
Email: UMabroad@umn.edu
Web: www.UMabroad.umn.edu
Jessica Hartnett, Associate Program Director
hart0581@umn.edu, 612.626.6380
Heidi Soneson, Program Director
sones001@umn.edu, 612.625.2571

Emergencies
In case of a serious emergency, contact the Learning Abroad Center at 612.626.9000. If it is after business hours, a recording will give you a number to call. The Learning Abroad Center has someone on call for emergencies and to contact the on-site administrators if needed. Once overseas, participants should contact their in-country program staff.

In India

Telephone Codes
011 International access code from the US. From other countries, code will be different.
91 India’s country code used for dialing from outside India.
141 Jaipur city code if calling from United States. If calling from elsewhere within India, dial 0141. Necessary if calling within Jaipur.
11 Delhi city code if calling from the United States; 011 if from elsewhere in India.

Time Differences
Jaipur is 11.5 hours ahead of Minnesota during the winter and 10.5 hours during months when the United States is on daylight savings time.

Addresses
NOTE: Please direct all pre departure questions to the Learning Abroad Center, not to the on-site staff.

Your Address in India
Until you have your assigned homestays, mail should be sent to you at the address below:
Your name (clearly spelled out)
MSID c/o
15, Uniara Garden
Jaipur 302 004, Rajasthan
India

MSID On-site Director
Dr. Rima Hooja
11, Uniara Garden
Jaipur 302004, Rajasthan
India
Program Emergency Phone: 011.91.9667515323

Program Coordinator
Rakshat Hooja

Delhi Contact (airport pick-up)
Vini
YWCA
10 Sansad Marg
E-mail: India@vinstring.com
Web: www.vinstring.com
Fax: 91-11-23368901 or in the US 775-255-1052
Phone: 91-11-23368717

US Embassy in New Delhi
For information on the local US Embassy in India, please visit the following website: http://usembassy.state.gov/

Web addresses
Visit your MSID country website for useful health, safety, travel, development, and country web links: www.UMabroad.umn.edu/programs/asia-oceania/msid-india.php

Know Before You Go
Before you leave the country, make sure that you have read and understood the information in your Confirmation Checklist, Online Orientation, and the Learning Abroad Center’s policies (www.UMabroad.umn.edu/students/policies). These materials will guide you on a safe and successful learning abroad experience.

Friends and Family Resources
Valuable resources for your friends and family members can be found at www.UMabroad.umn.edu/parents. Topics such as health and safety, program prices, logistics, and travel are discussed.
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<thead>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 29</td>
<td>Last day of pre-session program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 30</td>
<td>Official Departure date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## Academic Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 3</td>
<td>Official arrival date. Orientation and classroom phase begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 26</td>
<td>Classroom phase ends. Internship (6 weeks) begins over the next several days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 7</td>
<td>Internship phase ends. You head back to headquarter city for final week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 15–Jan 6</td>
<td>Break period: you are free to travel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1–8</td>
<td>Mid-semester seminar in headquarter city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>Last day AY program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 20</td>
<td>Official departure date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## Fall Semester

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 3</td>
<td>Official arrival date. Orientation and classroom phase begins.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 26</td>
<td>Classroom phase ends. Internship (6 weeks) begins over the next several days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 7</td>
<td>Internship phase ends. You head back to headquarter city for final week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 14</td>
<td>Last day of fall semester program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 15</td>
<td>Official departure date</td>
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## Spring Semester

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 21</td>
<td>Official arrival date. Orientation and classroom phase begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 8</td>
<td>Classroom phase ends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 11</td>
<td>Internship (6 weeks) begins over the next several days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>Internship phase ends. You head back to headquarter city for final week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 26</td>
<td>Last day of spring semester program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 27</td>
<td>Official departure date</td>
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Purpose of This Guide

This Program Guide provides an overview of your unique study abroad program. It contains information relevant to the program as well as specifics about the country. The Program Guide should be used in tandem with the Learning Abroad Center’s online orientation and website for information regarding registration, credit, payment, refunds, academic policies, health, safety, insurance, and cultural adjustment.

Preparation & Planning

Documents

Passport
A valid passport is required to enter your country and to re-enter the US. You also need a passport in order to receive a visa. For information on applying for a passport see the Learning Abroad Center website: www.UMabroad.umn.edu/students/travel/passports.

Visa
The intensive language programs have different visa procedures. Students on the Senegal program must complete an on-line process on the Senegal embassy’s website. Refer to the Learning Abroad Center’s Senegal program website for detailed instructions. Students on the Ecuador program can enter on a tourist visa, which will be issued upon arrival in Ecuador. Students on the India or Kenya programs must utilize Perry International’s visa services described below.

Perry International Visa Services
Participants on the India and Kenya programs must use Perry International, based in Chicago, to process their student visa. Perry’s processing fee is included in your program fee; you only need to submit payment for the actual visa. Since you need special documents from our office, which we send to Perry International for all students, you must use Perry’s services for your visa. You must submit your passport to Perry International in order to receive the student visa. Always send your passport via express mail.

Visa information is located on the Learning Abroad Center’s website. Additional information can be found on Perry International’s website at www.perryvisa.com.

From Perry International’s website:
• click on “Visas”
• select your country
• select ‘MSID’ as your account
• print the student visa packet

Travel & Visits
You are encouraged to travel during official program break periods, over holidays, or after the program is completed. During the program, travel on the weekends should be limited to nearby locations in order to ensure that you are able to maintain good rest, health, and timely completion of all coursework. Students are not permitted to travel during the program to countries currently under a US State Department Travel Warning. See http://travel.state.gov/ for the most up-to-date list. It also compromises the host family experience if you are away every weekend. Before traveling, complete the correct permission form with on-site staff and be aware of any relevant travel concerns or State Department advisories. It is important that you share with the on-site staff your travel plans, including dates, destinations, and information about how to reach you in case an emergency should arise.

If any friends or relatives wish to visit, they can only visit during official program breaks, not while classes are in session. Visits at other times interfere with your ability to focus on the program and host culture and are not allowed.

Packing
Packing is highly individual, and no single list will work for everyone. A packing list is provided in the county-specific section of this guide. The following considerations can help you pack wisely.
Packaging Principles

Think about laundry. Lighter colors help you stay cool, but darker colors show dirt less; you might wish to strike a happy medium if you expect to be in hot areas. Stress lightweight fabrics that can be easily hand-washed, can hold up to repeated washing, and do not need ironing. A key question for choosing clothes: How long does it take to air dry?

Plan to be presentable. People dress nicely every day in all four countries, especially in the cities, and local students often dress well, as they are proud to be among the elite group attending university. Clean, fairly conservative western office-type apparel is appropriate. Include one or two dressy outfits for evening outings, for which people tend to dress up. Pack clothing that is relatively new, both to be sure it lasts through your time overseas and because you will feel uncomfortably out of place if you wear ripped, baggy, or faded clothes.

Be conservative. Some clothing that is common on a US campus would be considered provocative. If you wish to pack a running outfit, choose athletic pants or shorts that extend to the knee. Do not plan on using shorts except when you go to the beach. If you use tank tops, choose modest ones. Women tend to wear skirts in rural areas, and although you may wear pants without offending, in some rural settings you may look out of place.

Choose your luggage wisely. Most students prefer backpacks to suitcases. Buy a high quality backpack/daypack. Can your smaller backpack/suitcase nest inside a larger one? Will your carry-on double for weekend travel?

Anticipate possible delays (or even losses) in checked baggage when packing your carry-on. Pack in your carry-on anything that you would need during your first two or three days in country, including prescription drugs, as well as small items that are fragile, irreplaceable, or of significant monetary value. Do not take scissors, knives, etc., in your carry-on.

Remember you can buy things in country. You can purchase clothing in country, although you will not have time to devote to shopping for new items. If you have a strong brand preference, ask a returnee whether your brand is available in your country. Very tall students might find it hard to purchase clothes of the right size.

You will find many clothing items to be cheaper in country than in the US. However, other products, such as batteries, personal hygiene, feminine products, etc. are often more expensive in these countries and not always readily available.

Don’t take the kitchen sink. The most consistent hindsight of returned students is “I took too much.” Be selective. No one will need all the things on the packing checklist in the Appendix. Decide what, and how much, is really essential to you. Try to get by with one large backpack and a carry-on. Many savvy travelers recommend that you pack once, try walking around the block with all your stuff, and then begin eliminating things until you can do it comfortably.

A Note on Electricity

In all four countries the supply of electricity tends to be erratic, with frequent blackouts and occasional power surges. You will need a good surge protector if you are taking a laptop computer or any other sensitive items, and if you are using a computer you should save documents frequently.

Electricity is very expensive. Host families may want students to limit their use of electronic appliances in the home.

Health & Safety

Health

The website of the Centers for Disease Control, www.cdc.gov/travel, provides extensive information and advice on immunizations and on staying healthy in your country. Keep in mind that it is illegal to ship medication overseas, and any packages that are held at customs abroad will require payment of a high import tax before they are released. Bring all necessary medication (including such items as birth control) with you to your study abroad site.

Medical facilities and health conditions are significantly less advanced than in the US. It is important that you inform yourself prior to departure what precautions to take while living abroad.

Long before travel, consult with a health provider specializing in travel medicine; most general practitioners lack the requisite knowledge. Do this as early as possible, for some immunization series begin many months before departure.

Following consultation with a travel health specialist, you will need a number of immunizations. Ensure that these are recorded in your international immunization record, a yellow card that you should keep with your passport.

The program headquarter cities have good doctors and medical facilities, and care may be quite satisfactory in some other major cities as well. Only rudimentary levels of care, at best, tend to be available in villages and small towns.

A Few Additional Tips

• Avoid eating in restaurants with poor hygiene or buying food from street vendors. Assure yourself that food is well cooked. Avoid uncooked fruits or vegetables unless you can peel them yourself.
• Wash your hands frequently.
• Tap water is not recommended. Drink boiled or bottled water (either carbonated or non-carbonated). Soft drinks are usually okay, but beware of juices that may be diluted with water.
• Ice is as unsafe as water. Never add it to drinks unless it has been made from boiled or bottled water.
• Take your own medications with you.
• If you travel to high altitudes, avoid intense exercise until you have adapted. Drink lots of liquids and eat lots of...
carbohydrates. Monitor any symptoms of altitude sickness, which can include headaches and nausea.

- It is strongly recommended students bring a water purification filter.

**Malaria Prevention**

Malaria is a very serious illness. Your travel health specialist will recommend that you take a prophylactic (preventive) drug for malaria, possibly beginning before you are scheduled to arrive in country. Different medications are required for different countries so seek medical consultation. It is essential that you purchase and take the necessary medication. Without medication you will become very ill very quickly and may need hospitalization. While the medication cannot prevent you from contracting malaria, it significantly reduces the symptoms, allows you time to seek medical attention at a clinic in country, and facilitates a speedy recovery.

Speak with your US health care specialist about possible side effects and alternative anti-malarials if a change needs to be made overseas. Not all overseas physicians are aware of the different types of medications available so inform yourself before you leave. Should you experience side effects once overseas, speak with the on-site staff about possible alternative medications.

Students in the past have inquired about purchasing medication in country against malaria. In order to be protected, you must take the medication prior to your departure. Exposure to malaria-carrying mosquitoes could occur as soon as you arrive in country, and it is difficult to arrange clinic visits immediately upon arrival. Clinic visits are quite time-consuming, and medication in country can be unreliable. If you determine that your country-specific conditions require medication, purchase and take your medication while in the US.

Insect repellent with at least 21% DEET will additionally help ward against malaria-carrying mosquitoes. A new product, Ultrathon, manufactured by 3M contains 30% DEET and has been recommended by health professionals.

You should use insect repellent both during the day and especially at dusk and in the evenings. Mosquitoes carrying dengue fever are active in the day, and malaria-carrying mosquitoes are active at night.

**Medication Overseas**

Keep in mind that medication should not be shipped overseas and will likely be confiscated at customs. Students should bring any medication with them for the duration of their time abroad. CISI insurance can also assist in determining whether and how medication can be transported to another country, if necessary. Some medication and dosages that are legal in the US may not be available overseas.

**Rabies Vaccination**

Rabies vaccination is recommended but not required prior to departure. Although it is highly unlikely that you will encounter an infected animal, it is an added precaution to be protected prior to your arrival in country and will simplify medical treatment in country.

**On-Site Safety**

On-site staff receive all new or revised State Department travel advisories. The office in Minnesota forwards relevant bulletins to the in-country staff, who share them with students. Read them carefully. The most recent travel information for every country of the world is also posted at: [http://travel.state.gov/](http://travel.state.gov/). The on-site staff also keep in touch with the US Consulate in times of political unrest or natural disasters such as floods or earthquakes.

Be certain to keep electronics, such as cell phones and laptops, hidden in public to avoid theft.

**Sexual Harassment & Sexual Assault**

Do not tolerate behavior that feels threatening or disrespectful staff or faculty members, or homestay family members. When in any doubt, consult with an on-site staff or faculty member with whom you feel comfortable. Report any incidents of sexual harassment or sexual assault to on-site staff immediately.

**Health Insurance**

All students enrolled at the University of Minnesota are required to have US health insurance. This includes students registered for education abroad. For more details and specific process information for students with University of Minnesota Student Health Insurance through the Student Health Benefits Office, visit the Learning Abroad Center’s US Insurance webpage: [www.UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/intlhealthinsurance/ushealthinsurancerequirement](http://www.UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/intlhealthinsurance/ushealthinsurancerequirement).

In addition to your US health insurance, the University has contracted with Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) to provide comprehensive international travel, health, and security insurance. This coverage is mandatory for all students and included in the program fee. You are covered by CISI only for the dates of the program. If you plan to travel before or after your program you should extend your CISI coverage or purchase your own insurance.

CISI does not include any preventative case, and individuals are advised to consult their medical providers for any check-ups or preventative care prior to departure.

Your CISI card and insurance policy will be emailed directly to you. Carry the card with you at all times. If you have any questions or need additional information about CISI, visit the Learning Abroad Center’s insurance webpage: [www.UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/intlhealthinsurance](http://www.UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/intlhealthinsurance).

**Coordinated Flight**

Participants will receive flight information and booking instructions from Village Travel which handles flight
arrangements for the Learning Abroad Center. Students from the Twin Cities area fly in a group; students from elsewhere join that group in either a US or a European hub. Coordinated flight information will be available in mid-October for winter-break and in late April for summer. Visit Village Travel's website at: www.villageinc.com. If you elect not to take the coordinated flight, you must arrive within six hours prior to the coordinated flight.

Always bring a copy of you itinerary and your electronic ticket number (NOT your confirmation number) with you. Some airlines and ticketing agents outside of the US will require you to show this at the airport check in.

If for any reason you choose not to book your flights through Village Travel, you must provide the Learning Abroad Center with a copy of your itinerary.

**Staying after the Program**

If you intend to stay after the program ends, you are responsible for your own housing and your transportation to the airport when you depart. It is not acceptable to remain in your homestay after the program, unless the on-site staff authorizes it. In all cases, you must pay for any lodging after the program ends.

For students departing on the official coordinated flight on the program end date, the on-site staff will arrange transportation to the airport for you.

**Practical & Program Information**

**Housing Considerations**

Homestays are an integral component of the learning experience. All students live and share most meals with one family. Do not ask to live independently.

Students take at least breakfast and the evening meal with their host families, and all three meals on weekends. Often distances preclude returning for the noon meal during the week. Although you generally will be expected to eat the same food as your family, we do ask the families to accommodate the dietary needs of students who have food allergies or are uncompromising vegetarians. Many students who are vegetarians in the US decide instead to relax their standards during their experience in order to minimize the inconvenience to non-vegetarian host families.

Students report that the homestays are among the richest and most challenging dimensions of the program. You will find that a tremendous amount of your language and cultural learning takes place while you are at home. Students constantly bring insights gained from their families into the academic program, and, similarly, the classroom learning helps provide tools for a successful homestay. students are placed with a variety of families in terms of family size, profession, ethnic background, etc. Not only do students speak in class about the differences among their families, but they also drop in on fellow students in their homes. Think of each visit as an important learning experience.

The stipend paid by the program to the host families is only a token gesture of appreciation for the time and expense of hosting you. The money in no way covers the cost of hosting a student nor compensates for the adjustment the family agrees to undertake in order to incorporate a student into their family.

Consult the country-specific section in this handbook for more detailed information on housing in your country.

**Homestay Placement Process**

The in-country staff strives to match students with families that meet as many of the characteristics as possible that students have requested on their forms. It is often not possible to find a family that meets all the criteria a student has listed.

You will receive basic information about your homestay family (name and address) approximately one week prior to the program start date, and we will send the information to your University of Minnesota email account. Last-minute changes occasionally occur.

Since you may not know much about your host family prior to departure, we encourage you to bring a range of generic gifts to give as gifts. Past students have recommended coffee table books from your home town/state, a board game, t-shirts, calendars, magnets, keychains and sweets such as jelly beans.

The in-country administrative staff will outline for you and the family your respective rights and responsibilities in the homestay. The family is told that for the most part your presence should not lead them to change their customs, operating rules, or food.

**Tips for a Successful Homestay**

The in-country staff seek families eager to incorporate US students into their lives. Host families are generally warm and welcoming and will want their students to participate in social events with friends and extended family. When you are placed with a family, you will probably get more than the family itself. You will get a wide range of friends, not to mention information, coaching, advice, and endless opportunities to practice your language skills. If you and the family are both willing to throw yourselves into making the experience a rich one, you are likely to look back on your homestay as a highlight of your time abroad.
A successful homestay requires consideration and cultural sensitivity. At times your cross-cultural skills and insights will be stretched to the limit. The country-specific section of this guide includes information and advice concerning homestays for your country. The in-country staff will supplement this with initial support and ongoing coaching to create a smooth linkage between students and their families. Staff are always available to assist and sort out cultural adjustment problems as they arise.

In most countries, the notion of private space and time is not as common as in the US. Spend plenty of time with your host family and do not seclude yourself in your room. This is often viewed as rude and may cause your host family to wonder if you are sick or unhappy.

You will find your homestay parents and siblings very concerned for your well-being. They will be good sources of information and advice about negotiating the transportation system, safety precautions, etc. At the same time, their concern might occasionally seem to border on over-protectiveness, especially if you are a woman. Understand that the family is not trying to control you but to fulfill its inescapable responsibilities for the welfare of its US daughter or son.

In most cases, your family will do your laundry. Since dryers are infrequent, have sufficient undergarments for the delay in receiving your items back. Keep in mind that you should rinse and clean any underwear that is soiled, as this is considered a very private matter.

Host families may not have internet access. Be aware the cost of electricity and internet use in homes can be very high. You may be asked by your host family to pay a fee for your internet use, and you should consult with the on-site staff about correct cultural protocol.

When you leave the house, it is important to let the family know where you expect to be and approximately what time you plan to return. Never stay overnight elsewhere without first notifying your family.

In case of minor illnesses, your family will help you seek medical attention. In the case of more serious problems, you and your family are expected to notify the administrative staff immediately in order to coordinate the best possible treatment.

Most families are conservative about relations between men and women. You are not allowed to have overnight guests of the opposite sex or to receive visitors in a closed bedroom.

Be judicious in your use of alcohol. Your host family and work colleagues will disapprove of substance abuse, and drunkenness could irreparably damage your relations with people who are important to you.

It is important not to abuse hospitality. Remember to ask the family for permission to bring friends, and be ready to cover extra expenses when inviting them.

Keep your room very neat and tidy and be respectful of the common spaces in the house. Since you are a guest in the home, your bedroom should be kept in a manner that shows your respect and appreciation. In most countries, the notion of personal and private space does not exist in the same manner as in the US, and your room in your host family is not the same as having your own room in the US. Do not leave your clothes strewn on the floor or leave personal belongings around the house. Do not put your shoes on furniture, including your own bed. Unfortunately, US students are often viewed as messy and disrespectful. Do your part to correct this image. Keep in mind that personal hygiene is also very important. You are a guest in their home and should present yourself with respect and cleanliness.

If you have questions about your homestay experience, speak to the on-site staff. As in the US, it is not acceptable for you to be asked, for example, to assist with caring for a host family member on a daily basis, be exposed to drunken or rude behavior, or tolerate any sexual advances. Although it is extremely rare for a host family experience to involve any of these, speak to the on-site staff if you have any concerns.

Before you go abroad it may be difficult to imagine the depth of the bonds that can develop between you and your host families. There is a special magic to friendships that cross deep cultural boundaries, and you may find the relationship with your family to be quite unlike other relationships you have experienced.

Farewells at the airport are often tear-filled on both sides. As your life becomes filled with the US hectic pace following your return, however, it can be all too easy not to take the time to keep in touch. An occasional letter, postcard, or email from you means a great deal to a family for whom you are as unforgettable as they for you. We ask you to take a few moments to write from time to time. Keep in mind, however, that host families should not be expected to host you after your experience or on future visits you may make to the host country.

**Diversity & Host Country**

**Race & Ethnicity**

Race can influence students’ perspectives on their host country. Past participants of color tell us that the differences between their experiences and those of Euro-Americans can include both advantages and disadvantages. Students of color often learn a great deal about their identity as a US citizen through an experience in a foreign country, and they sometimes find the new cultural context quite liberating. On the other hand, they occasionally encounter new forms of prejudice and discrimination. It is important that participants of all races avoid projecting American assumptions and attitudes about race onto the host culture. For example, definitions of racial categories, if they exist at all, may be very different from those in the US.
It is difficult to generalize about the overt and covert levels of racism that may or may not exist in any given culture, or to predict what a particular student’s personal experience will be. It can be said that any experience abroad will be a combination of circumstances, attitude, and coping skills. Some study abroad offices have put together resources for students of color who are preparing to study abroad. You should contact your own study abroad office or a member of the staff for additional information.

Students going to a location related to their ethnic heritage—for example, an African-American student to Kenya—might wish to examine critically their expectations in advance. If part of your reason for enrolling in this program is to explore your own identity, be careful not to romanticize what you might find. Students often discover that local people perceive them much more in terms of their American identity than their racial or ethnic background. You may gain rich insights into your roots, but do not expect members of the host society to treat you as a returning brother or sister.

Gender

Gender roles tend to be more rigidly defined in these countries, especially in rural areas, than they are today in the US. You may find that people respond quite differently to you depending on whether you are male or female. You may also observe a strongly gender-based division of labor in your homestay family or your agency. This sometimes challenges students’ cross-cultural understanding and skills. As in other areas, try to understand what is going on rather than to judge. It is all right to gently test the limits of gender roles—for example, if you are male to see what happens when you offer a couple of times to help with the dishes in your homestay, or if you are female to try to be more assertive than you observe among female colleagues in your agency—and be sensitive to the feedback you receive. Above all, resist any temptation to launch a one-person crusade to change things. For example, even if you feel that your homestay mother and sisters are “oppressed,” you will not be able to “liberate” them, and any attempt to do so could irreparably harm your relations with your family.

Many women experience “cat calls” and other forms of gender harassment while overseas. Be prepared in advance for this possibility and consider the following coping strategies: look straight ahead and keep walking; walk with a purpose and do not appear to be wandering without aim, walk quickly and with confidence; say “no” or “no, thank you” with conviction; consider wearing local attire to help you blend in (shawls, head scarves, etc. can reduce the possibility of intruders catching your eye and attention); develop a tough skin and do not take the matter personally; avoid walking alone or at night.

Cultural norms concerning relations between men and women, including dating, vary considerably among countries, and even from one region to another or between rural and urban settings. This topic will be included in your in-country orientation. When in doubt concerning what behavior is acceptable, consult with a trusted on-site staff or faculty member.

Sexual Orientation

Attitudes towards sexuality are very traditional. People are generally intolerant of different sexual preferences, and strict taboos and laws against such relationships exist. We encourage you to find out how different sexual preferences are viewed overseas and where your support may exist, so that your time overseas can be as enriching as possible. Consult with the Learning Abroad Center staff for more information on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues if you have any questions.

For additional resources, you can contact the Office for Equity and Diversity at www.diversity.umn.edu.

Disabilities

In-country staff are more than willing to help locate personal assistance or arrange testing accommodations as needed, so long as they learn early enough of your needs. The level of physical accessibility varies from country to country. For example, wheelchair-accessible transportation or elevators may be non-existent in some sites. On the other hand, local people tend to be very supportive and will often assist you in gaining access to public transportation or buildings. It is important to consider your comfort level in asking for access assistance while abroad. For more information on access and available accommodations, contact the Learning Abroad Center.

Diversity among Participants

Whatever your own sexual orientation, gender, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, or physical ability, keep in mind that you will be part of a diverse group. Some differences will be obvious or made known to you, others will not. Sensitivity to diversity within your own group will further enrich your experience abroad. Some of your most powerful learning experiences may revolve around differences within your group. Participants also come from extremely varied academic backgrounds. Majors range from the social sciences or humanities to fields such as engineering, business, or agriculture. All students are strong in some dimensions and weak in others. Be prepared to share your strengths and to draw on those of your classmates.
Academics

Hours of Student Effort
University of Minnesota policy specifies that each semester credit should reflect approximately 12.5 instructional contact hours of 60 minutes and twice that amount for out-of-classroom assignments.

Grades & Credit
All courses must be taken for A/F credit. S/N (pass/fail) registration is not permitted. The University of Minnesota's A/F grading scale includes grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, and F.

All coursework is posted on a University of Minnesota transcript approximately eight weeks after the end of the program. For non-University of Minnesota students, the Learning Abroad Center sends a transcript of work completed on the program to the address the student has specified on the Transcript Release Form. Verify that this address is the correct one. Non-University of Minnesota students can order additional copies for a charge directly from the University of Minnesota’s transcript office at: www.onestop.umn.edu/onestop/grades.html.

Incompletes
Incompletes are not allowed. Rare exceptions can be requested in cases such as serious health problems or family emergencies. These exceptions must be approved in advance by the on-site director.

Academic Rigor
Students will need to learn to function simultaneously in two cultural contexts. Local time as experienced in the village or the family may be more fluid and informal than “classroom time.” It is important to learn to flow with local time; it is equally important to retain enough structure and self-discipline in the academic part of life to avoid getting behind on assignments. Students who fail to attend class without prior permission from the on-site director will be dismissed from the program.

Grade Petitions
If you wish to question a grade issued for a particular course after the program is completed must provide evidence that the professor made an error in his/her grade calculation. The following are not reasonable grounds for grade appeal:
- Differences between US and host country educational systems
- Personal disappointment in the grade outcome
- Comparison with one's own prior academic record/GPA
- Failure to complete one or more assignments
- Minimum grade requirement of college/department or home university (in the case of non-University of Minnesota participants)
- Health concerns/missed classes

Contact the Learning Abroad Center for a Grade Petition Form if you believe an error has occurred.

Student Grievances
Academic grievances are complaints brought by students regarding the provision of education and academic support services affecting their role as students. For grievances concerning University of Minnesota Learning Abroad Center or affiliated programs offered through the Learning Abroad Center, students should make inquiries and appeals to the appropriate University officials, in the following order: the program representative in the Learning Abroad Center, the Director of the Learning Abroad Center, the Student Dispute Resolution Center, and the Office of the General Counsel. For complaints concerning non-University of Minnesota programs, students should make appeals to the program sponsor.

FERPA
It is important to be aware that the Learning Abroad Center and the Office of Student Finance, in compliance with the Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and Regents policy, cannot share financial or academic information with a third party (including parents, spouse, guardians, etc.) without your written permission. You can download a Student Information Release Authorization at onestop.umn.edu. Complete the form and send it to OneStop Student Services, 200 Fraser Hall, 106 Pleasant St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455. The Learning Abroad Center must receive a copy of a notarized Power of Attorney form in order to share any program-specific information.
Coming Home

The Re-Entry Experience

The following tend to be among the biggest issues:

• **Poverty and affluence:** Students catch many glimpses of the meaning of real poverty. You will gain a new perspective on resource use as you observe the austerity of most people’s lives in your host country. Everything is used until it is worn out, then re-used by someone else who is still poorer. Your host family may discourage you from showering more than a minute or two per day in order to conserve water, or from reading late at night because of the energy that a light bulb consumes. Things you have always taken for granted may come to seem unimaginable luxuries. Then, when you return home, you may experience a profound sense of resentment at over-consumption and waste in the US. People in the US may seem to have far too much, and their dissatisfaction about still not having enough may seem incomprehensible.

• **US influence:** Living in another country, especially a poorer one, affords many opportunities to observe the economic, political, and cultural roles the US and its corporations play on the global stage. Especially when viewed from the perspective of the poor in your host country, those roles may seem less than constructive. Upon return to the US, you may feel resentful that such issues trouble your friends and family members so much less than you think they should.

• **Ignorance and distortion:** You may find yourself intensely resentful of the US media. Coverage of the rest of the world, when it exists at all, may seem shallow and ethnocentric, and the depths of American ignorance may appall you. Remember, though, that you were probably almost equally ignorant of your future host country a year ago.

• **Social justice:** The inequalities of your host society probably hit you daily throughout your experience. Now, upon return, you will likely be more attuned to see the inequalities in our own society. You will find yourself asking why so rich a country should have the most inequitable distribution of income and wealth anywhere in the industrialized world, and you may find it strange that others here can be so oblivious to injustice.

• **Values and pace:** The experience leads many students to reexamine their own values and lifestyle. Although the slow pace of life in your host society may have been frustrating initially, you finally did learn how to just “be,” rather than always needing to “do.” Now the hectic pace of US life may well feel disconcerting, even offensive. US society may seem obsessed with productivity, leaving little time for cultivating the human relationships you have found central to your host culture. director and the program coordinator maintain frequent email communication with the staff in Minnesota.
Cultural Adjustment

The On-Site Experience

What happens when you suddenly lose clues and symbols that orient you to situations in everyday life? What happens when facial expressions, gestures, and words are unfamiliar? The psychological discomfort and adjustment period in a foreign country is commonly known as culture shock or cultural adjustment.

You will almost certainly experience some form of culture shock. It might hit you after two days, two weeks or two months—timing varies widely for different people. Six common phases of cultural adjustment are listed below. These may be out of order for you, one phase may last longer than another or you may skip a step entirely.

**Initial Fascination:** On arrival your surroundings seem glamorous and exotic, you feel like the focus of attention and activity.

**Initial Culture Shock:** The initial fascination and euphoria fade as you settle in and you enter an emotional decline.

**Surface Adjustment:** After the initial “down” (a few days to a few weeks for most), you begin to truly adjust and settle into your surroundings. Language skills begin to improve, and you’ll feel less fatigued. Often you’ll be forming a small group of friends at this stage as well.

**Feelings of Isolation:** Difficulties in your new culture seem to stubbornly remain and you grow frustrated with the process.

**Integration/Acceptance:** After continued effort you find yourself more at ease with language, friends, professional, and academic interests. The culture you are living in is more easily examined. Differences between yourself and the society you live in become understandable and you come to accept both the situation and yourself in it, allowing you to relax and feel at home.

**Return Anxiety:** Just when you feel at home in the new country it’s time to go. Thoughts of leaving new friends raise anxiety similar to those felt before departure. You sense that you’ve changed as a person and apprehension grows when you think about people at home that may not understand your new feelings and insights, yet you may feel guilty for wanting to stay.

A sense of isolation sets in. Boredom and a lack of motivation often follow. Unresolved personal issues often surface during this stage.

**Integration/Acceptance:** After continued effort you find yourself more at ease with language, friends, professional, and academic interests. The culture you are living in is more easily examined. Differences between yourself and the society you live in become understandable and you come to accept both the situation and yourself in it, allowing you to relax and feel at home.

When in any of the above phases you may experience: changes in sleeping habits, feelings of helplessness or hopelessness, loneliness, depression, unexplainable crying, placing blame for difficulties on the program or host culture, homesickness, getting angry easily, increase in physical ailments or pain, compulsive eating or lack of appetite.

Other symptoms may manifest themselves as well. It is important to understand these are part of a normal process of adjustment, however, if uncomfortable feelings persist for extended periods or seem unbearable, seek assistance from your programs onsite support staff.

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**Cultural Adjustment Curve**

Adjusted from Oberg (1960) and Gallahorn (1963)
Intensive Hindi in India

On-Site Staff
At each site an on-site director and an administrative director or program coordinator work closely as a team to manage the program. There is also a team of support staff to assist your daily life adjustments. Both the on-site director and the program coordinator maintain frequent email communication with the staff in Minnesota.

The staff also have personal lives and should be contacted in the evenings and on weekends only in case of an emergency.

On-Site Director
The On-site Director is Dr. Rima Hooja. Dr. Hooja has a Masters in history from Rajasthan University, Jaipur, a Ph.D. in archaeology from Cambridge University, and a Post-Graduate Certificate in prehistoric archaeology from Cambridge University. She taught history at Kanoria College, Jaipur, and held a position as Associate Professor of Indian Tradition & Culture at Kota Open University, Kota, India. Dr. Hooja was twice a Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur, and is currently a Senior Fellow of the Institute of Rajasthan Studies, Jaipur. Besides over 50 published research papers and articles, she has written several books, of which the latest is 'A History of Rajasthan' (Rupa & Co., 2006). She is currently a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society (UK), a Senior Fellow of the Institute of Rajasthan Studies, Jaipur, and also Associate Editor of the Indian Book Chronicle.

Program Coordinator
The Program Coordinator, Rakshat Hooja, has a Masters in Sociology and a M.Phil in Science Policy from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He is currently working on his Ph.D dissertation. He has previously worked at the International Water Management Institute, South Asia Office, and has published academic as well as journalistic articles on natural resources management, watershed development, livestock policy and intellectual property rights. He has also undertaken process documentation of activities of some nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Rajasthan. He has also had a short stint in television with Asian News International (ANI).

Facilities
The house contains a large lecture room and smaller classrooms and offices that are used for faculty meetings with students and social get-togethers. A simple kitchen provides tea and coffee. A water purification system has been installed.

Libraries & Study Resources
Students report that it can be difficult to study at home because there is less sense of privacy than in the US. Students are invited to study in the office. Jaipur offers a couple of specialized libraries and research collections—including one belonging to the Institute of Development Studies (IDS)—though not the sort of large, comprehensive libraries common on US university campuses. The on-site staff provide students with an orientation to library and research resources in Jaipur. In addition, the office also maintains a small in-house library for basic research and reading.

Computers
The office has wireless internet access and has a small computer lab. A printer is available for use by students in writing papers. Students are encouraged to bring along an inexpensive laptop to use for completing assignments. Bring an adaptor to plug in your computer and keep in mind that laptops are a target for theft. Keep it well hidden when storing and traveling with it. Never put these kinds of valuables in your checked luggage.

It is under the discretion of the on-site staff whether laptops are allowed for note-taking in the classroom. Laptops can be banned if students surf the web or access e-mail during classtime.

Homestay Families
All students live with a host family during the classroom phase of the program in Jaipur. Most host families in Jaipur belong to what might be considered the Indian middle class, ranging from lower-middle to upper-middle. The families are highly diverse in terms of composition, educational level, occupation, and the degree to which they are traditional vs. “modern.” Most speak at least some English. The majority are Hindu, but some may be Sikh, Jain, Muslim or Christian. Students learn much about Indian society through hearing about each other’s experiences and visiting each other’s homes.

Most Jaipur homestay families have refrigerators, gas stoves, telephones, and baths—the kind where you ladle cups of lukewarm water out of a bucket. There is no air conditioning, but electric fans are available. Indian families exercise excellent frugality in the use of energy, water, and the telephone; be respectful. If your host family does have wireless internet you will be expected to pay for it.

Personal appearance and hygiene are very important in the families. Indians tend to view American tourists as a very scruffy and unkempt lot, which is a major barrier to their being accepted. Clothes should be clean and well pressed, hair combed, bodies bathed (daily if not twice), etc. Indians will view this as a sign of respect for their cultural values.

Eating is a daily adventure in India, and many students find American food bland after months of Indian spices. In most
Students cannot arrive in India prior to the official arrival handbook for general information regarding arrival. The program must register arrive on the coordinated flight. The Learning Abroad Center strongly recommends that students official arrival date due to visa restrictions. For this reason, the program must register students with the Indian police upon arrival, and the program cannot undertake this process prior to the arrival date.

Note: Student visas are for a maximum of 6 months (program period plus personal travel) and will need to be registered with the authorities in Jaipur. Validation begins as soon as the visa is issued. Students of Indian origin may wish to consider a “country of origin” card rather than apply for a visa but will still need to register with local authorities if staying longer than 180 days. Students of Pakistani origin must allow at least six months for visa processing and approval is not guaranteed. Contact Perry International for more information.

Upon arrival you will go through immigration. You will need your passport with the student visa attached inside along with the completed immigration form that you receive on the plane. After clearing immigration, you will be directed to pick up your checked luggage, pass through the customs desk, and continue to the arrival lounge.

A representative from Vinstring Travel will wait for you on the LEFT side, outside of the arrival lounge (after the baggage area and bank counters). He will hold a YELLOW placard with “MSID” or “University of Minnesota” printed on it.

If for any reason you will not be arriving as planned and you are not able to communicate with the University of Minnesota, or if you are unable to locate the driver from Vinstring at the airport, you should contact Vini, the owner of Vinstring Travel, directly on his mobile phone, or call Vinstring. Mobile phone: 98-100-97686 Vinstring Travel phone: 91-11-2336 8717, 2336 8759 fax: 91-11-23368901 E-mail: India@vinstring.com Web: www.vinstring.com

It is very important that you not attempt to take a taxi or other unscheduled form of transport. Taxis consistently take travelers to hotels owned by family members and will refuse to transport you to your desired destination. This situation has happened to past MSID students. Learn from their unfortunate experience and call Vini to arrange safe and reliable transportation.

Note: If you do not arrive with the coordinated flight, you must arrive no more than six hours prior to the coordinated flight. You will need to wait for the group and representative from Vinstring Travel in the arrival area.

You will not be able to call home upon your arrival. Telephones are not readily available, you will be exhausted, and orientation will begin quickly. Let your friends and family know that it will take several days for them to hear from you, and you are likely to contact them via email. The on-site staff will notify the Learning Abroad Center if a student does not arrive, and we will call the student’s emergency contact, as needed. Remind friends and family members not to contact the on-site staff directly. All contact should be through the Learning Abroad Center.

Living in India

Arrival

Consult the coordinated flight section in the beginning of this handbook for general information regarding arrival.

Students cannot arrive in India prior to the official arrival date. Participants going to India are required to arrive on the official arrival date due to visa restrictions. For this reason, the Learning Abroad Center strongly recommends that students arrive on the coordinated flight. The program must register students with the Indian police upon arrival, and the program cannot undertake this process prior to the arrival date.

Note: You will not be able to call home upon your arrival.
Orientation In Country

The program orientation will begin in Delhi. The program director will arrange for all participants to be transported to Jaipur by private bus (a five to six-hour trip) after the initial orientation program in Delhi.

You will stay as a group in a hotel or hostel for the first one or two nights in Delhi, then spend an additional two or three days at a hotel in Jaipur. This gives you some time to recover from the trip and to begin acquainting yourselves with each other before moving to your homestays. During this time you will receive an orientation to your host country and city, the program, and its staff and faculty. You will also have some opportunities to begin acquainting yourselves with the city. When it comes time to move to your homestay, your host family will come to your hotel or another gathering point to pick you up and take you to your new home.

The in-country staff and faculty provide an orientation covering a wide variety of topics including the academic program and its courses; expectations of staff, faculty, and students; cultural differences; the homestays; health and safety; local transportation, communication systems; and other practical matters. It may also include a welcome reception or other social event, a tour of Jaipur, and sometimes one or more additional field trips as well. Most of this orientation takes place during the first few days in country, but a few topics are deferred until students have had time to make the initial adjustment. An orientation and program schedule, as well as a handout for emergency needs, will be provided upon arrival.

Excursions & Social Activities

Excursions to locations of cultural interest in and around Jaipur are included in the program fee. More information will be shared during your orientation in Delhi and Jaipur.

Schedule and Orientation

August or January language students will stay at a group hotel in Delhi for the first night before traveling as a group to Jaipur. You will receive a 2-3 day orientation to Jaipur and India, the language program, and its staff and faculty. Students will spend approximately 4-5 hours a day in the classroom. Assignments and activities outside of the classroom will also be incorporated.

For students who are staying in India to continue with the MSID India program, you will participate in the MSID orientation with all the other fall semester and/or academic year students. The on-site staff may ask you to facilitate or assist with different parts of orientation.

Let friends and family know that it will be difficult to reach you during this orientation period. Reassure them that you will be in touch via email as frequently as possible.

Academics

Academics

One language course is taught over a 3 ½ week period and awards 4 undergraduate credits. The India program offers intensive Hindi for students at beginning to intermediate levels. Classes are held Monday through Friday, morning and afternoon.

Indian Higher Education Academic Culture & the Classroom

Indian culture differs from America in the classroom as well as outside. Failure to understand differences can cause misunderstanding or disappointment. American students sometimes perceive Indian faculty as unsympathetic, disorganized, or authoritarian. Indian faculty may interpret American students as demanding, unengaged, or rude. Some understanding of Indian academic culture can help you make the most of your academic experience.

American students are used to having courses planned out in detail before they begin and expect that planning to be documented through an extensive syllabus. Indian courses also in effect have syllabi, but these are often given out week by week, sometimes orally only, rather than written down in advance for the entire length of the course. Consequently, American students may perceive Indian courses as “disorganized.” Indian faculty in turn complain that even when they do write down everything, including due dates of assignments, students claim that they were not reminded. In the eyes of faculty, to give additional reminders of a due date already written down would amount to spoon-feeding and ought, if anything, to be insulting to students.

One other issue concerning assignments is neatness. Indian faculty expect coursework handed in by students to look professional. Even a brilliant paper fails to impress if scrawled in poor handwriting on smudged paper. A sloppy looking project displays lack of pride in one’s work.
Most Indian faculty value classroom discussion; so do most participants. Paradoxically, faculty often complain that students are very passive and that it is difficult to get discussion going, and students often perceive that faculty do not welcome discussion. Part of the seeming contradiction may flow out of different perceptions of what is meant by discussion. Indian faculty may see it primarily as an opportunity for students to seek clarification or to ask the instructor to go into greater depth on a particular topic, whereas American students may view it as an occasion to develop and express their own ideas on a subject. Most American professors at least say that they love to have their ideas challenged by students, whereas Indian professors might sometimes find it pretentious or even disrespectful for an undergraduate to question the professor’s perspective.

Faculty are often chosen for their knowledge, not their ability to communicate in ways that US students expect. They will use a lecture format and will feel free to pursue tangents rather than continue in a linear format. Be prepared to have a cultural and academic learning experience.

In order to allow students to adjust to their surroundings and to the new learning style, the first week of classes are typically slower with fewer assignments. Take advantage of this time to adjust to your new surroundings and your host family.

**Communication**

Students communicate with their friends and family members in the US through various means. Students are required to purchase cell phones in country, which allows for unlimited incoming calls, including from the US, text messages, and local calls.

Let your family and friends in the US know that you will not be able to contact them immediately upon your arrival in country. It will usually be several days before you have the time to make contact, and students frequently correspond most easily by email.

**Email & Internet**

The office has several computers and wireless access, and students are encouraged to bring a laptop for academic and personal use. Internet cafés are commercially available at reasonable rates throughout India. Cost varies greatly from place to place. On-site staff will provide additional information after you arrive. Few host families may have email connections, and you are requested to use only outside facilities. If the host family does have internet access you may be asked to pay an additional fee for the cost of electricity if you use the internet regularly in their home.

**Social Media**

Not all countries share the same laws about freedom of expression that we have in the US. Students should keep in mind that derogatory comments, especially on social media, can result in legal claims and have extended legal implications even after a student has returned to the United States.

**Telephone**

All host families in Jaipur have telephones. There is a toll for local calls, so please use the phone sparingly. Some families may request reimbursement. To phone the US, students can use public phone offices. More information will be provided at Jaipur. Remind your family of the time difference before you depart. India is approximately 12 hours ahead of Minnesota.

Relatively inexpensive calls to the US (or other countries) can be made using ISD phones, which can be found on nearly every corner. Charges for such calls will vary depending on the pulse rate and service provider, but average $.25 per minute.

**The India program requires all students to purchase and carry cell phones while on the program. This is not only a good safety precaution, it also facilitates communication between students and program staff. India on-site program staff will assist students with selecting and obtaining cell phones and service contracts. The cost of the cell phones are included in the program’s budget estimate. The service contract or minutes that are purchased by students are not included in the budget estimate.**

Reliance provides the most comprehensive service in India, and a cell phone costs about $50. All incoming calls in India are free for the receiver. Outgoing calls to numbers within Rajasthan are charged at local rates, but you will need to pay roaming charges if you enter other states. You will need to submit two passport photos to apply for a cell phone, so bring along some extra passport size photographs.

**Mail**

Air mail takes about two weeks to reach India from the US. It is advisable to send everything first class airmail. Any valuable items should be sent via Fedex or DHL to the MSID office. Do not attempt to send a parcel or letter by surface mail; it will take at least three months. Even air parcels typically take one to two months. Ask friends and relatives not to send anything you do not request.

**Fax**

The on-site staff can provide information on fax options, should you need to receive or send faxes in India.
Money Matters

Money & Currency Exchange

The rupee is the official currency of India. Bills are issued in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1000 Rupees, and coins are available in 0.1, 0.25, 0.5, 1, 2, and 5 rupee coins. You can check the current exchange rates at www.xe.com/ucc. It is helpful to exchange $100 upon arrival at the airport or at the YWCA. Note that Indian laws do not permit you to bring rupees into India, even if these can be made available at a US exchange bureau, or carry them out of the country.

We recommend that you carry only a small amount of cash with you at any given time. You should use a money belt for carrying larger sums of money, ATM or credit cards, and traveler’s checks. As with any large city, pick pocketing occurs in Jaipur and other Indian cities, so be alert in crowded areas like markets, buses, or trains.

ATM/Debit Cards

ATM facilities are available in larger cities. You can withdraw cash in rupees using an ATM/debit card linked to your US bank account. The ATM machines are not always reliable, and it is important to have some money in cash or traveler’s checks as a backup. Carefully monitor your bank account balance in the US and note that your full account number is often printed on receipts. You should use your card at least once before you go overseas and notify your bank that you will use your card abroad. Failure to notify your bank may result in your account being frozen. Ask about ATM fees while abroad. Cards must be Cirrus or Plus compatible.

Credit Cards

We suggest that you carry a major credit card (Visa, Master Card, American Express) in your name that you can use for more expensive items. In the rural areas credit cards are not useful, but in large cities and some tourist centers, they are convenient. Credit cards are now frequently used in Jaipur though at selected businesses like large grocery stores, restaurants, train stations, shopping malls, and hotels.

Credit card advances are possible, but there are fees to consider. To prevent your account from being frozen, you should inform your bank in advance of your travel to facilitate international use before you leave the US. Also, ask about foreign currency conversion fees for purchases you make abroad. Make arrangements for someone to pay your bill in the US while you are in India, set up autopay on your account, or pay your bill online.

Financial Planning

Consult the program budget sheets on the website for recommended spending amounts and plan to bring the appropriate amount. Refer to a travel guide, such as Lonely Planet, for estimated daily expenses.

Two daily meals (breakfast and dinner) during the week and all three meals on the weekend are provided by your host family. You will need to budget for your weekday lunches, bottled water, local transportation, and other miscellaneous expenses.

Personal spending habits vary too greatly to predict exactly how much it will cost you to live in your country during the program. Expenses tend to be higher in major cities than in most other locations. But wherever you are, the amount you spend will depend on your lifestyle and your own objectives in participating in this program. The big variables are optional activities such as nights out, music or dance lessons, gifts, and especially recreational travel. You should budget accordingly.

In the past, many students have found that they spent much more money than they had anticipated. When asked what they spent it on, however, most have said travel.

Climate & What to Wear

If you arrive in August, Jaipur will still be experiencing daytime highs in the 90s, with lows in the 70s. The monsoon season will be coming to an end and the weather will generally be dry. Winter daytime highs are in the 60s and low 70s and lows can drop to 30 degrees. Students should be prepared for freezing temperatures in January and February and bring appropriate fleece jackets, hats, and scarves.

The weather is generally dry, and during the summer the city receives occasional dust storms off the desert. Most of the rainfall occurs during the period of the wet monsoon, from July to September. The average humidity during the year is around 60 percent, but it rises during the monsoons.

To avoid unwanted attention students should dress conservatively—keep arms, shoulders, and knees covered.

A Cautionary Note on Gift-Giving

It is important to bring a gift for your host family members as a symbol of your appreciation for staying in their home. These gifts do not need to be elaborate but should demonstrate your appreciation. Calendars, local products from your state, and T-shirts are appropriate. For women, hand and body lotions are popular because these items are very expensive in India. It is also helpful to bring a small photo album of yourself, your family, and your home in the US to leave with your host family at the end of your stay.

India has a great deal of poverty, and you will be addressed by beggars regularly. Be judicious in giving out donations, as small change cannot change their situation.
Introduction to India

India is officially named the Republic of India. (The official Sanskrit name for India is Bharat, the name of the legendary king in the Mahabharata.) Located in South Asia, India is the seventh largest country and second most populous country in the world. India’s population is just over one billion, falling only below China. The capital is Delhi.

India consists of three major geographic regions from north to south: the Himalayas and associated mountain ranges; the northern plain; and a diverse southern region of highlands and plains.

Economy

Over the past decade India has been shifting from a “mixed” economy with substantial government ownership and widespread regulation, towards a neoliberal economic model with reduced government ownership and regulation. Agriculture still accounts for about two-thirds of the labor force but for only about one-third of the gross domestic product (GDP). The service sector yields two-fifths of the GDP; and the steadily expanding manufacturing sector provides as much as one-fourth of the GDP. India’s economic growth, though fairly steady since independence in 1947, has been undramatic, and its gross national product (GNP) per capita remains one of the lowest in the world. Despite a substantial and expanding middle class, a large proportion of the population still lives below a meager poverty line.

Despite much land-reform legislation, less than half the country’s peasantry own land, and most peasants are still subsistence cultivators. Landlessness, tenant farming, and debt remain serious problems. The Green Revolution, however, has brought about remarkable transformations in several favored agricultural regions and has increased production sufficiently to allow India to weather a number of bad monsoons without succumbing, as in the past, to famine. Rice and wheat are the principal staple crops, followed by various millets, legumes, corn (maize), and oil seeds, while the chief cash crops are cotton, sugarcane, coconut, spices, jute, tobacco, tea, and rubber. India’s combined population of cattle and water buffalo is by far the world’s largest, and goats, sheep, and camels are also numerous. The government manages most of the rapidly diminishing forests.

People

The peoples of India comprise widely varying mixtures of ethnic strains drawn from peoples settled in the subcontinent before the dawn of history or from invaders whose history is well known. Northern India is the heartland within which Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and, much later, Sikhism originated. These indigenous faiths have been supplemented by Islam and Christianity as a result of external contacts over the last two millennia. Hinduism, whose roots in India run deepest, accounts for approximately four-fifths of the population, while Muslims, India’s largest minority, constitute nearly one-eighth of the population, followed by Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains. Tribal animists, though numerous, are for the most part counted as Hindus. Approximately a sixth of the population are counted as “Scheduled Castes,” the official designation for the formerly untouchable groups, that Gandhi referred to as Harijans (children of God) and who now call themselves Dalits (oppressed). These groups and the tribal peoples are legally entitled to various quota-based benefits of a type that might be described in the US by the term “affirmative action.”

India’s linguistic diversity is extreme. Three-fourths of the population speak languages belonging to the Indo-Aryan group of the Indo-European family, which are all ultimately descended from Sanskrit. These include the national language, Hindi, as well as Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kashmiri, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sindhi, and Urdu, all enjoying official status. Nearly one-fourth of all Indians speak languages belonging to the Dravidian family, among which Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, and Telugu have official status. Hundreds of additional languages, grouped in several families, account for less than 5% of the population. English, an auxiliary language, serves as an all-Indian lingua franca.

There are proper hospitals and doctors available in Jaipur. Students who anticipate needing regular medical support and services should stay in Jaipur during their internship/research phase.

Living in Jaipur

Jaipur is only 270 kilometers southwest of Delhi by express road and 305 kilometers by train. It takes six hours by bus and five hours by car. A variety of trains offer an alternative. There are morning and evening daily flights from Delhi.

Jaipur is a major educational center of the state of Rajasthan. Its university is one of the oldest in India. There are many colleges, schools, and research centers, and some medical colleges.

The heart of the city, despite its wide roads, is like most other Indian marketplaces: congested, and chaotic—but also rich in color, movement, sounds, and smells. Some residents
try to avoid trips into town at all cost, patronizing local
neighborhood shops as much as possible; others thrive on the
liveliness and spontaneity of the center. The outer city, which
feels less Indian, has modern shopping centers selling most
goods available in the US.

Transportation in & Near Jaipur
The most commonly used form of transport in Jaipur is the
mini-bus (18–20 people), with a cheap, fixed route. There are
also city buses that run fixed routes and are more spacious.
The city also has a large number of auto-rickshaws (three
seaters) that run from fixed points to anywhere in the city on
routes mutually decided. The main bus station and train station
have pre-paid auto-rickshaws. Cycle rickshaws manually
driven are the slowest mode of transport. Fares are mutually
agreed upon before the trip depending on the distance. The
fare varies between Rs.5 to Rs.50 (US $0.10 to US $1). Major
areas in the city are serviced by these vehicles. Some students
feel reluctant to ask these drivers to carry them, given the size
of a typical US person and the sometimes small and thin cycle
driver. One ride may be the only income for that driver for
the day and can make the difference between the possibility
of a decent meal or not. If you are worried about the physical
demand of pedaling you, consider hiring a cycle rickshaw just
for short distances. The on-site staff will provide you with a list
of common rates for major destinations around town.

Buses and mini-buses are no doubt cheap, but they have
the disadvantages of being crowded and a hazard for female
passengers since it leaves them vulnerable to physical
harassment. Alternatively, taking an auto-rickshaw or cycle
rickshaw can be a good option. Some students have rented
bicycles to commute to and from the homestay and class,
but students should keep in mind that traffic in India is very
hectic and chaotic, and students need to use extreme caution.
A second-hand bike can be purchased cheaply, then sold
before leaving the country.

By US standards, both the auto-rickshaws and the rickshaws
are tiny. They run on two-cylinder engines and move at speeds
not much faster than most bicycles; the first time you get into
one you may feel a little as if you were riding a lawn mower.
Yet they have their advantages: they occupy little space on
the street, are highly maneuverable, and get several times
the gas mileage of cars. (Unfortunately, they also contribute
disproportionately to air pollution.)

Rounding out the traffic are an infinite number of mopeds
(with as many as four people on each), bicycles, camel carts,
and pedestrians.

India has one of the highest traffic fatality rates in the world.
Traffic is chaotic and frustrating, and you should be constantly
vigilant. Vehicles of all kinds dart from lane to lane—or
what would be lanes if lanes existed—with reckless abandon.
Turn signals are rarely used. Camel carts, bicycles, and even
many trucks and rickshaws have no tail-lights at night—on
highways as well as city streets. Drivers interpret red lights as

suggestions rather than mandates. Indians seem to regard the
horn as the most important part of any motorized vehicle.
Although accidents by some miracle are usually averted, near
misses—“near” meaning by literally an inch or two—are
common. Moreover, serious accidents do occur far more
frequently than in the US.

Traffic instincts developed in the West are almost irrelevant
in India. Plan to move about with extreme caution and
remember that the pedestrian never has the right of way. Also,
remember that traffic moves on the left side of the road, as in
Britain. Develop the habit of looking to the right as you step
off a curb.

Gender in India
Female students should be prepared for frequent “cat calls”,
stares, and approaches by males and vendors as both a female
and a foreigner. Students have commented that this occurs on
a daily basis and can feel quite frustrating. It can help to dress
conservatively or in local dress and have a head covering in
order to avoid being as visible. Students should not hesitate to
be loud and assertive to draw attention to the situation if they
feel that their safety is at risk.

Tips from Students
Past students have compiled the following list of additional
information:

• Especially if you are female, expect to be harassed and to
  receive comments constantly. Ignore these comments and
develop a thick skin.
• Women need to be prepared to have a less active night-
  life. It is part of Indian culture to be protective of young
women. If you do go out at night, travel in pairs, prefer-
ably with a male student.
• Be prepared for the amount of poverty that you will see.
  It is part of being in India, but it is also an adjustment.
• Spend time with your host family. Indian families are
  extended families with relatives always present. Take the
time to get to know your host family and the relatives.
• Tea drinking is a regular activity and a form of socializing.
  Enjoy it!
• Hindi is essential.
Temperature (°F) & Rainfall (inches) in Jaipur

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Appendix

Packing Checklist

The following is a list developed by past MSID students and in-country staff. Adapt it to suit your own style and priorities. You will not need all the items on the packing list, they are only suggestions.

Women should bring fewer clothes because Indian clothing is far more practical, more comfortable, and attract far less attention.

Clothing
- 1 pair of comfortable shoes
- 1 pair of sandals
- 2 dress outfits for women, buy Indian clothes
- 7 pairs of underwear, durable bras
- Lightweight socks
- T-shirts
- Tank tops
- Skirts/dresses that extend below the knee
- 3–4 pairs of pants (jeans, khakis, etc.)
- 1–2 long-sleeve lightweight shirts
- Several short-sleeve shirts
- 1 long-sleeve warm top
- Sweat pants (light-weight)
- Shorts (hiking/sport style) for beach and sports wear
- Bathing suit—one-piece for women
- Bandanas or handkerchiefs
- Lightweight waterproof jacket
- Lightweight sweater
- Lightweight long-sleeve, long-leg pajamas
- Sun hat/cap
- Scarf and knit hat for chilly weather

Household/Personal Items
- Money belt containing passport, international immunization record, credit card, cash card, traveler’s checks, any dollars you are taking in cash, etc.
- 1 or 2 towels and washcloths
- Umbrella
- Travel alarm
- Digital camera with extra batteries (recharging is only possible with a voltage converter)
- Film or digital flashcards (most film/batteries/developing are available in country)
- Many Ziplock plastic baggies
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Sleeping bag, lightweight sleep sack (handy for travel, sometimes necessary for rural or even urban homestay)
- 1 or 2 water bottles
- Sewing kit, safety pins
- Wristwatch
- Music player
- Electric converter and adapter if you are taking electrical items
- Contact information of friends/family/academic contacts
- Guide book (e.g. Lonely Planet or Rough Guide)
- Pocket knife
- Photographs of friends and family, your house, your community, etc.
- Locks for luggage
- Combo lock/padlock for locking room at NGO
- Zip/flash drive
- Journal
- Clothesline

Health Items & Toiletries
- A full supply of prescription drugs in original bottles (in case customs needs documentation); include one prescription for bacterial dysentery and directions for its use; malaria medications
- First aid kit
- Insect repellent (at least 21% DEET)
- Anti-itch gel for misquito bites
- Condoms, birth control
- Tampons (expensive or unavailable in country), cardboard because Indian's burn trash and plastic won't burn, or a Diva Cup
- Bladder infection medication, yeast infection medication
- Anti-diarrheal medicine
- Pepto Bismol or similar stomach settler, Imodium
- Laxatives
- Small packages of tissue or toilet paper
- Pain medicines
- Sunscreen (high SPF)
- Anti-itch cream
- Aloe vera gel for sunburns
- Eye drops
- Ear plugs
- Sunglasses
- Lip balm with sunscreen
- Vitamins
- Hand sanitizer
- All contact lens materials needed for your stay
- An extra pair of glasses and a copy of your prescription
- Sanitary moist wipes
- Toiletries: soap, deodorant, shampoo, and toothpaste are all easily available in country (but take enough for first few weeks); dental floss (take enough for your stay), nail clippers, toothbrush, hairbrush or comb, razor
- Thermometer to detect a fever. In hot climates, it is very difficult to assess a fever independently.
- Granola bars
- Water filter/purifier, iodine tablets