

Theresa Tonozzi is an Environmental Health major and is Studying Abroad in India for a semester.



Today I have been in India for a month. I am getting a little homesick which I know is probably normal. At the beginning of the trip the group of students in the program stayed in a residence house. I was going to stay there the whole semester but soon realized I would only be conversing with Americans and probably would not get out much, so I took up opportunity to live with an Indian family. I call my host mom and dad Auntie Ji and Uncle Ji because it is not polite to call them by name. They in turn call me Dede which means sister. They have a 2 year old granddaughter that is very spoiled and cries all the time and steals my soccer ball and lip gloss. She's ok. It is also the norm to have help here so my family has a maid and cook-two young girls that like to see my pictures of Auggie and John. I think I made the right choice with a homestay. Also, there are two other girls from the program that live a few houses down and we have all become good friends.

I have also become a vegetarian because my family is. Most Indians are here because of their religious beliefs. Therefore, there are fat cows everywhere just wandering for food and being fed by restaurants. There are lots of fried things and sweet things here which I try to stay away from but if you are served something it is impolite to not finish what is on your plate-this is kind of a problem because I am finding myself stuffing my face and then they think I want more. The masala (spice) chai is something that was easy to get used to though!! I have also been buying a pomegranate a day from the market for about 20 rupees (less than 50 cents!). So far I have been to Agra to see the Taj Mahal (truly amazing and I hope my dad can see it someday) and a bird sanctuary, Jasilimer to go camel riding, and next week we are going on a 'rural excursion' meaning we are going to stay in a village for the weekend. I am looking forward to seeing what the public health issues are in the villages. Especially see what the prevalence of polio and other diseases are due to lack of vaccines.

School started last week. I am taking Hindi (I refer to the title as Hindi the Hardest Language in the World Class), Visual Narratives of Hinduism, Microeconomics of India, and Cities of Delhi (my awesome class because we tour the city relics). These are all at the study abroad center. At Jawaharlal Nehru University I am taking Soil Pollution/Waste Management. I haven't started this class and I am extremely nervous

because Indians are intense with chemistry and math. My professor might go easy on me though because he has been to CSU and has colleagues there!! Small world.

The other day I saw two huge elephants walking down the HIGHWAY. I couldn't believe my eyes! It was very surreal to see them in the middle of a huge, polluted city. I was wondering what Auggie would do if she saw one. Probably have a nervous breakdown! Other than that, Delhi is a normal metropolitan city. They have a nice metro system here and the buses and auto rickshaws are powered by clean fuel sources. Unfortunately, there is a big population of homeless people and most NGOs have boy shelters, not ones for girls-"but they say it's changing."
I hope this gives you a little insight into what it's like here.