

My Project GO Story

Today I went to the Red Fort with Bryce, my roommate, and Yash, a local friend. Yash, a history buff, gave us a personal tour of the Red Fort and showed us his favorite places. Personally, I found the defensive strategies to be the most interesting. For example, they purposely built curves on the path that lead to the fort in order to break the momentum of charging elephants. It was a fun day, and I learned a lot about the Mughal period in Indian history.



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Memorable Moments

Funniest: When Bryce and I visited Kolkata, my aunt took us to see Victoria Memorial. She got the bright idea of trying to pass Bryce off as an Indian to save money by buying discounted Indian national tickets! She didn't get away with it and eventually had to buy the correct full-priced ticket.

Most challenging: It was challenging to bargain with shop keepers. Besides the language barrier I faced, I also had to break with American cultural norms. I initially found this hard, as it felt wrong.

Favorite: Watching Bryce make a fool of himself when he was peer pressured to eat with his hands by my family!

Cultural Differences

Something I found interesting was... a lot of Indians have a "good enough" mentality. For example, Bryce and I had Uber drivers who knew they were 250 meters from our destination, but simply ended the trip then and there and made us walk.

A "must see/do"... Make friends with the locals. I saw things I would have never found on my own.

New Perspective

What I learned from my homestay family... I learned a lot about Indian politics and how the Bharatiya Janata Party is wielding Hindu nationalism as a weapon to beat Congress, their main opposition party, in elections.

Advice to students considering this program: Go out to historical sites, there is a lot to learn about Indian culture. Double check what you are being charged, Indians will try to up-charge foreigners. Make Indian friends, it will pay dividends.

How this experience will help me in my future career: I now really want to be a Foreign Area Officer in India!