

Hi Everybody,

We've more or less settled into our life in Delhi, so we thought we'd send you another update. If you can't remember (and we have a hard enough time remembering ourselves where we are and what we're doing) we are at Nehru International School. In any case Nehru is not just the school, but the actual building in which we live and study. There are about ten little apartments for international students, one of which Susan and I inhabit.

The kitchen isn't bad although we had to add some cooking implements. There's a kettle (i.e. a pot with integrated heating element) to heat water quickly. Unlike English kettles, however, it does not switch off on its own when the water is boiling, so there's an unofficial competition in the building about who can destroy the most kettles by forgetting that they are on (and burning them). Gail from Australia is currently in the lead at two, Christine from the UK in second place with one, while Dowd from Baltimore threw in the towel and bought a good one after he had burnt one out. We're in pathetic last place with none burnt yet but it's only a matter of time. After strenuous commute of about 30 seconds we make it to the classroom where there are two computers with Internet and access. (We actually also have Internet and access from our room but Susan usually uses that.) However, the power goes out about once a day for an hour, so you have to be careful not to lose work. (Side note: Is it just us or do we always hear in the U.S. how India is some kind of Mecca of technology? Yet here we are at one of India's top schools, and even the teachers have a hard time getting on the Internet regularly.) Nehru International also supplies some daily newspapers and weekly magazines so at least there's something to read when the power goes out.

Not that we're complaining – when we're homesick we can go to Pizza Hut. McDonald's though doesn't sell 'real' burgers (no beef pretty much anywhere in India), but things like the McAlloo Tikki (potato pancake in a bun) and the McMaharaja (some kind of veggie burger).

Honestly we've only just figured out most things on campus, so we're still exploring things off campus. (That means we're still a bit lonely and dying for news from back home). One of the fun things though is just getting off campus. Our preferred mode of transportation is the scooter rickshaw (called a 'tuktuk'), a little yellow and green vehicle that has the motor of a scooter (I think) but a covered seat in the back that can seat two to three people (if they're good friends). These rickshaws drive around campus randomly (or wait systematically at the campus entrance, but that's a 25 minute walk) and usually stop and ask if you want to go anywhere.

Then, the negotiation starts. Before you even start, you have to make sure they know where you want to go. First, because drivers don't all speak English and second because Indian facial expressions and gestures are so different that a confirmation is not always recognizable to us. Then, they give you

a price, which is usually about 50-100 % too high. (This isn't just our impression people with lots more experience in India have confirmed this. For one thing, they're obviously starting the negotiation high; for another we're paying what's known as the 'white tax'. In response you can laugh and walk away, offer a lower price, or just gawk in amazement. It's a back and forth that's sometimes fun and sometimes just plain annoying when they're clearly trying to rip you off. If you've gone to the market for 20-30 rupees three times and suddenly someone asks for 50 rupees, you know they're messing with you. But we're taking it as a challenge to develop negotiation strategies that end with a fair price!

Anyway, we have to finish our report just now as we are going to meet up with some interesting guys from Germany. We'll tell you more about what we've been discovering here in India next time. We hope you're doing well, and we'd love to hear from you!

CU Guys

Caroline and Susan