

Clean pants day

Udaipur, Rajasthan, India - January 31, 2008

Amy:

We have clean clothes! We have clean clothes! We gave some of our clothes to the hotel laundry yesterday and got a nice clean bundle back today. Yay! We hadn't realized quite how dirty our clothes had become.

We learned about tipping on the way to the airport from the tour representative. It turns out, we've been grossly undertipping all of our guides (if he's telling the truth), so I gave the tour guy money to give to Mangu, our guide the day before.

We were 2 out of about 8 passengers in a plane seating over a hundred. Kingfisher Airlines is the way to travel. We got a delicious lunch on the plane (a sandwich with crusts cut off, as is the custom in India) and were also given apple juice, hard candy, and a pen. We heart Kingfisher Airlines!

After walking off the plane to the runway and into the small airport, we gathered our bags from the luggage conveyer, and walked outside. We were met by 2 men, a driver and a tour representative who had a sign that read "Mr. Amy Newman, Trail Blazer Tour". I meant to ask him if I could keep the sign, but I forgot. Poor Brent has been called "Mr. Newman" so many times now. We drove through the city, past the fancy Ambassador Hotels, where our tour guide attempted to book, but it was completely booked for a wedding.

We drove for about 30 minutes, through the city of Aurangabad, past a Christian cemetery the British built, past many factories (Aurangabad is the fastest growing city in India and has the most factories – mainly car and pharmaceuticals). We arrived at our hotel, which was called "The Meadows" and was small cottages in a garden setting. Each cottage is actually 4 separate apartment-style units, each with a small bathroom and large 50s-style bedroom.

We walked around the hotel grounds and found a pool and recreation center, with a spa, gym, and ping-pong. After a strenuous game of ping-pong (which I won, btw) we went back to the room and I unpacked while Brent went to the gym. He loves his gym, I'll tell you what!



ping pong champion

The hotel also had several restaurants, and we decided to order room service. I called to see if we could get a menu, but the guy didn't understand what I was asking, so I hung up. A few minutes later, a man walked into our room, which was unlocked, and gave



Brent at the gym

us menus and stood there, waiting to take our order. I should mention that we were in bed, wearing very few clothes.... It was a very surreal experience, ordering room service from our bed (!). We looked at each other, then ordered food: momos, (Tibetan dumplings) rice, spinach and potato dish, and moussaka. I was excited to eat beef, so I went a little overboard. Why Greek food, I don't know. (perhaps this was a mistake ordering greek food in India :))

[Naresh: Amy did not mention—was perhaps ashamed to mention—what may have been a factor in our weird dinner decisions. The day before we'd been walking down a street and stopped at a small "English Wine" stand ("English Wine shops sell liquor). There we bought a small bottle of amazingly cheap whiskey called "Old McDonald" or something like that. That night we'd decided to drink it. Wow, that was some nasty ass shit! We're lucky we didn't go blind.]



It's worth mentioning that many restaurants have food in 3 categories:

Indian, Continental, and Chinese. We haven't had Chinese food yet, but I'm wondering what the Indian take on that food group will be... "Continental" seems to include any non-Indian and non-Chinese food, including pasta, pizza, French fries & fish and chips. Here in Aurangabad, there's a large Muslim population, so there's a lot more chicken and mutton on menus than we've seen in other cities.

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