

Internship at the Manipal Institute of Technology, India

Arrival in Manipal

In Manipal, a small university city in the south-west of India, I completed an internship for two months in the Manipal Institute of Technology (MIT), which is a part of the Manipal University. My internship started on 1 June and I arrived a couple of days earlier. I arrived at Mangalore airport where I was immediately collected by a university cab, organized by the IAESTE team of Manipal. The guys I met from IAESTE were very friendly and helped me a lot. For example they organized an Indian SIM card for me and showed me where to exchange money. It is a good advise not to change money at the airport because of not so good exchange rates.

The house where I would stay for the duration of my internship was a shared apartment for eight people. I lived there with other IAESTE interns of the MIT, therefore it didn't get boring.

The internship itself

My internship started with the meeting of my professor. The internship in the physics department was about thin films of semiconductors which were produced by a method called SILAR (successive ionic layer adsorption and reaction). My job was to perform the experiment that consisted of a device dipping the substrate repeatedly into two solutions. For this, I had to prepare the substrates and the solutions.

My professor gave me the freedom to work as much as I wanted. For me this was fine because in the beginning, I had some projects to do on my own. On the other hand, when I wanted to work more I had to look for it on my own. Therefore, after a couple of weeks, I asked for more work and my professor gave me another experiment to work on. Unfortunately, as it is often the case in physics, the experiment didn't work out very well, but I could at least learn some new methods.

Differences in culture

On arriving in India, the first difference I noticed was the traffic. There are lots of motorbikes and other vehicles on the streets. Not only that they are driving on the wrong side of the street but everyone seems to be driving after his own rules. Honking all the time is mandatory to be noticed by other vehicles. Thus, the amount of noise is very high.

Of course, India is different from most European countries. India is still a developing country, not only because many people in India live below the poverty limit. Also, there is less technology and more often people can be seen working in places where in Europe machines would be used, for example for cleaning the streets. However, people seem to be more friendly, curious and open mind-

ed; it happened several times that random people came to me and asked me about my origin.

Spending time in Manipal

Manipal is a rather small city, so there are not so much things that I could do during my internship. But some things are worth being mentioned: There is a modern, state of the art gym called Marena which is comparable to European ones. Comparable is also the fee for the membership there; it is about 1600 Rs. per month. Moreover, there is a small swimming pool which is open for men and women at different times.

For going out in the evening there are also some possibilities like a club and some bars. But parties usually end at 11 pm which seems to be due to the university.

Weather

The weather in Manipal is determined by the monsoon. Before the rain season, temperatures are constantly around 34°C with high humidity. When the rain starts in June this drops by about 5°C but the humidity is still high and it will rain every day several times, most of the time heavily. The best protection against it is a big umbrella (buy one on arrival) as breathable rain coats are useless due to high humidity.

Food

Now here is one of the cheerful things of India: The Indian food is great. And best of all, it is cheap. For about 2-3 € per meal you can eat properly in a restaurant. Due to the lack of a kitchen and a fridge, I went almost every day to a restaurant or the food court of the university with other interns.

As long as you are not used to spicy food you should be careful eating it otherwise you will feel the acidity a second time on the next day. Throughout the entire duration of my internship I had several times problems with my stomach. But despite of that, it is worth trying as much different dishes as possible.

Traveling

To learn more about Indian culture it is necessary to stay not only in Manipal but to come around and visit different places. Starting from August, the IAESTE team is organizing trips on the weekends which I definitely would have joined if I was staying longer. Up until then I was going for one day trips with other interns.

Traveling in India is what made my stay here so interesting. As the colorful temples and statues are a main part of the Indian culture I visited lots of them in the cities near to Manipal. Furthermore, I went to Kerala, the adjacent state to Karnataka, where cows aren't holy anymore, so that

people eat them. One of my personal favorites was a trip to an elephant camp with the ride on an elephant.

Conclusion

All in all, my time here in India was really great. I met lots of interesting people from different countries, learned something about a completely different culture and I could improve my English. During my internship I could learn some new experimental methods. However, for me, the fact that I had to adapt to a new situation and met people of different cultural background, which gave me some valuable intercultural competence, was the most important part of my experiences gained.

Therefore, if you want to not only gain credits in your CV but rather learn for your life, I would highly recommend to go to a country like India. Also traveling around India is one good reason to come here.