

Relaxing in the Golden City

Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, India - January 27, 2008

Amy:



The front of our hotel

After an extremely long and restful sleep, we awoke in our comfortable bed, warm and cozy from the many blankets and the heater on the floor (the weather has been unseasonably

cold). We went down to the restaurant for breakfast, where there was only one other couple who left shortly after we arrived. There was a large breakfast buffet prepared with potato casserole wedges, tomatoes, a variety of cereals, pancakes, rice dish, pineapple & mango juice, and hard-boiled eggs. We were offered tea or coffee (we chose coffee) with warmed milk, and some slices of bread were toasted for us. The waiter came by and offered eggs to order, so I ordered a cheese omelet (even though I wasn't hungry) and Brent ordered 2 eggs, sunny-side up. A few minutes later, a huge tray came to our table with 4 eggs for Brent and a large omelet for me. We chatted with the waiters for a while, practicing our Hindi and learning new phrases, and we pretended to sit at a long table, so they could take our picture there...(nerd alert) We had a free day (our train wasn't scheduled to leave 'til 4:00 pm.) so

Brent sat in the sun and blogged a bit, and I went back to the room to watch

TV (a Lindsay Lohan movie). We ended up hanging out at

the hotel for most of the day, relaxing and getting ready for our next journey.



our own private resort



Pass the salt, luv

A few hours later, we decided to walk to the internet café close to the hotel to try to post our blogs (we're getting behind in the blog!). Unfortunately, the café was closed but the weather was warm and the walk through the desert was pleasant. We passed some kids playing cricket in a parking lot – cricket is huge in India and there's a channel devoted entirely to the sport! They mean business. Oh – Brent forgot to mention in his blog yesterday that the guide asked about that big red thing in his eye! It was really funny, I thought... [Brent: I had really been looking forward to finding other desert people, such as myself, who had jelly things in their eyes from growing up in the sun and sand—it was to be such a bonding communal experience. But. Nothing. I saw no jelly in anyone's eye and they didn't know what I was talking about... as usual.]

Back at the hotel, we decided to ask the hotel manager if we could plug our laptop in and use his internet, and he told us that we couldn't use our computer, but could use his computer instead. So we checked our email. He showed us about 400 pictures of Rajasthan and his family's house, his cousin's farm, horses, etc. He told us

that each city is famous for not only colors, but animals; Jaisalmer is the Golden City and is famous for camels, Jodhpur is the blue city and is famous for horses, Jaipur is the red city and it's famous for elephants. Our next stop was Jodhpur, so I was interested to see if this was true...

After leaving the hotel (and filling out the requisite feedback forms that we've been asked for in every restaurant and hotel) we met our driver and a man from the travel company, and drove to the railway station. On the way, we saw a store called "Dilip" and tried to take a picture, but it didn't come out. (sorry, Dilip!) Brent also pointed out that "Anand" is a very common name of stores and rickshaw enterprises and we've seen that name often (but no pictures b/c we're usually moving speedily down the road).

At the station, the train was late, so we waited on the platform for about an hour. The sun was shining down on us, so we were warm and the wait was pleasant. There were lots of other tourists (whiteys) on the platform with us. It's strange to see so many foreigners; they look very ragged compared to the elegantly dressed Indian men & women. Luckily, we don't look like that at all :)

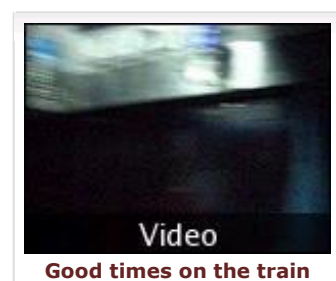
On the train, we were seated next to a couple from Bihar and an army man from Kashmir, who told us that



Kashmir is safe for tourists and that the U.S. embassy (and other gov't agencies warning against travel there) are wrong. He was a one-man-Kashmiri- tourism board, and he went on and on about the beauties of

Kashmir, and had us promise that we would tell everyone to visit Kashmir, the paradise of the world, so here it is: Hey everyone, visit Kashmir. We shared stories and took pictures with our new train friends. We showed them many pictures from America (Kansas cornfields, Mount Rushmore, Golden Gate Bridge), they laughed out our mispronunciations of Hindi, and we all shared a common dislike for America's "Uncle Bush" as they called him.

Our train stopped many times inexplicably, so we arrived at Jodhpur at 1:00 AM instead of 10:00 PM. Walking up to the platform to cross from the train to the station, we heard a man call "Miss Amy?" – he was the travel agency contact in Jodhpur assigned to meet us at the station and drive us to our hotel. He carried our bags for us and his driver drove us about 20 minutes outside the city to our hotel, which was palatial and had an armed guard manning the gate.



We checked in and went to sleep.

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