

# AVENTURA 2014



Abhinand M T  
E8



**C**hange is the only thing that never fails to fascinate people. May be we had many explorers and travellers.

Since the prehistoric times due to this, because when we travel, we relentlessly press ourselves against change. Everything around us happens to change when we travel. From the physical surroundings to even our mindset.

Let me tell you, with 29 states and 100 plus languages, India was perfect for experiencing this change. Discussions started as early as April, 2014 and difficulties followed. There were lot of them to deal with, even during the planning phase-primary one being the number of people in our group, as high as about 100.

It took a great deal of paperworks and a "filefull" of permission letters before finally we were ready to go. I still remember that previous day. There was excitement everywhere. People

around me never seemed to be walking or talking. They were just flying and singing.

Indian railway is and will always be a mystery. Anything and everything about it is unpredictable and we enjoyed every bit of this very unpredictability. Day 1 and 2 went just as it was planned and then the heavens opened up, it was raining like there was no tomorrow. Fortunately or unfortunately, we were stuck, somewhere in the heart of India, tracks covered up, disconnected from the grid. There began the excitement, which never seemed to end.

Next morning, we were in Agra and met her evergreen boyfriend, the Taj Mahal. Nothing more, nothing less, Taj Mahal made our day. Each and every bit about it was magnificent from the architectural brilliance to the well kept gardens and the fountain.

Whenever we visit Agra-Delhi express way is well known for its cleanliness and the way it is maintained. It is one of the best motorways

in India. Next morning we found ourselves right in the middle of this express highway, travelling towards Delhi, the National Capital territory.

For me personally, the greatest city I had ever visited was Cochin, or Trivandrum till that day. I am sure it would not have been much different with the other people around me too. On that scale, Delhi was too much awesomeness, be it the size of the city, its architecture as a whole, the ever so beautiful roads and pathways or the full fledged metro network. We spent days admiring all those beautiful gardens and monuments and during the nights, which clearly seemed to have an added charm, we went out shopping. Budget shopping is something you can never miss, once in New Delhi. The thing is you get almost everything under the sun and you get it at the cheapest rates. 'Kerala House' at New Delhi was a great relief, our taste buds were excited again by the very own, very delicious Kerala meals and fish curry. We got only a day less at Delhi due to the rain delay midway. Leaving Delhi was never easy because we had almost fell in love with that city. But the thoughts of Manali waiting pushed us through.

Manali was at her 16. She still is and always will be. She had always kept herself hidden among the clouds, from the rights of men. It made sure that air around her always had a sense of freshness in it. Nearest large city being Delhi, almost 700km away, Manali is one of the most smoothening cities in India. Only thing about Manali which is not so great is the 18 hour journey from Delhi via bus. Flights are available from Delhi, Agra and Amritsar to Kull but are too costly.

Once you reach Manali though, you won't regret and tell yourselves that it was worth the ride. First night, we went shopping. Next day, we visited the Rohthang pass, which is one of the most important passes in the Manali-Leh route. It was so beautiful that I made myself believe that the road we were walking through was immediately below the heavens.

We walked in groups of 4 or 5, randomly formed. We walked in search of snow clad mountains. We saw them out there, and walked in directions we thought were easiest to reach them. Each of the teams believed in different directions, and eventually we split up. Some found vehicles on reached destination earlier, the easier way, our particular group, we persisted with walking, believed in our direction. But unlike

some typical inspirational bollywood movies, we were there was that no matter what, we were going to walk back the whole path, no vehicles strict. We never enjoyed the photo session or the petty snow games there, all excited about the walk back. Well, that walk was intoxicating indeed. Everything about it was so perfect, the climate, the music, the thoughts we had, the company, even the jackets and the shoes. Our cell phones were out by that time, which made it even "perfecter". Next day, we tried our hands at paragliding which was also very exciting. When we were leaving Manali, I thought to myself that I had this same feeling in my childhood when my mother used to call me out loud while I was outplaying with my friends. Nevertheless I consoled myself that I should never be sad that I am leaving, but I should always be happy that I came. We had an end to that epic journey at Bangalore on 21st September 2015. For the few subsequent days of my boring lecture classes, I felt how much I missed those places. Gradually, my thoughts reformed, I came to the realisation that it is just a matter of a train ticket and couple of bus tickets to reach Manali again which would cost me less than 5000 only. But I would miss the company, I would miss the people around me. It is not the places that I miss, it is the people. I still !

