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When I decided to take part in the double degree program I was conscious that I will get to know a completely different culture. This will be a chance to have a new and exciting experience of life as well as double Master's Degree in one time. Together with five fellow German students we went to India at the beginning of January and got experience in different ways. The biggest challenge for me was the food or more precisely: how to handle the food without any cutlery?

Traditionally you eat with the right hand as the left hand is considered as unclean and offensive. There is not any cutlery for eating. Rice may be eaten with a spoon but not everybody uses it. Sometimes it looks very silly when Europeans tries to eat the very hot food with one hand. But practice makes perfect and after some time you copy some tips and tricks of your Indian classmates who taught us very helpfully and patiently. Eating outside (in a restaurant) with friends



or classmates is also very different. We are used to order our dish and get it served directly on personal plates. The Indians share the food with anyone who wants it. Everyone orders something different. The food is then placed in small extra bowls. The advantage is that everyone can eat everything. This is a very nice tradition of being together and sharing food.

You get a carafe of tap water for free. Additionally you can order any drinks you like but only non-alcoholic ones. Only in a few "dark" restaurants you get served beer to the dish as alcohol is also frowned upon. Every meal we had been warm even the breakfast. In the morning you could have alternately omelet, fried pasta and rice products as well as typical south Indian dishes like idli or dosa. In addition there was always a kind of toast with syrup or jam. A typical lunch and dinner consisted of rice and Dahl (legumes) or curry, Subzhi (vegetables) or paneer (cheese) and, of course, the small round chapati breads are not allowed to miss at any meal. I personally found the Indian food very spicy. When you think of Indian food as a European, probably rice and curry come first into your mind. But the Indian cuisine is

incredibly varied in ingredients and spices. I remember my first three months in India: I did my best to try the different dishes ordered by our Indian friends and other classmates. But at some point I gave it up trying as I really missed my brown bread and some other traditional German food.

Alcohol is only available in special liquor stores that have a license to sell. And the liquor stores close early in the evening.



Lime Juice and Lassi are typical drinks. The first one is squeezed juice of lime diluted with water and is most drunk without sugar. Especially on hot summer days it is very refreshing and is also sold at many street stalls and rolling cart. Lassi is a cold-served drink made of yoghurt and milk or water. You can drink it either to spicy food to neutralize or just for refresh.

Usually you get it natural but in Indian it is often drunk salty. However I have not seen at all that the Indians drink mango lassi, which you can get in restaurants in this country.

Often, in this context, the question of tolerance food arises. I tolerate the food and drinks well. You should not drink water which comes straight from the tap. There are special filters which are connected to the taps in kitchens and purify the water. If you stick to this filtered water, there should be no problems. For meat you should make sure that it is cooked well-done and you should keep your hands off strongly overripe fruit. I had been able to eat and drink street food that was sold on the roadside, especially fruits or fresh juices, without any problems.

The time in India has been definitely one of my best experiences so far. Everything had been very different from what I was used to from Germany. There had been so many new impressions.

Thus I have begun to evaluate the own culture by some distance and I also to take a critical look at the things that I took for granted all the time. But while living in another culture you have to come to terms with it. Anyway five months had passed by too fast. And I would like to thank the Chemnitz University of Technology and the Manipal Institute of Technology that I got the opportunity to take part in the double degree program.



