

Clare's Diary

10 November 2010

Wednesday

My family are convinced that I am not eating properly so I am forced by my aunt to sit and eat piles of steaming hot dosa (my favourite Indian dish ever) first thing this morning. They are like a buttery pancake stuffed with spicy potato and are a typical south Indian breakfast. When in Rome and all that! It is so good to be with my family, the older I get the more important the link between my life in Ireland and my family in India becomes. It is wonderful to reconnect with my cousins and chat about all that's passed since the last time I have visited. I meet the latest addition to the family, Ishan, my cousins son is now one and has the cheekiest grin I have ever seen.

Thursday

India is a country of such great extremes, today I am finding it difficult to reconcile the poverty that I have witnessed to the comfortable life which is led by far too few. I am disgusted to hear that a well known hotel group have bought a site just outside Hyderabad where they are intending to build the most opulent of hotels; the curtains will be decorated by hand with gold filigree. Literally outside its great doors, people are dying of starvation and forced to endure horrific conditions in order to even survive. It seems so unjust. I think the poverty is so evident here because the difference between rich and poor is so stark. I have to remind myself that we are guilty of the same things at home but because there are more people who live somewhere in the middle, it doesn't feel as bad.

Friday

I feel very well travelled today visiting four countries in a few hours, mind you it is just the airports but never mind! We leave Hyderabad and fly via Dubai. Here we board our flight to Heathrow before connecting to Dublin and then home. It is good to see Mum, both Dad and I really missed her on our trip but someone had to stay at home to look after the horse!

Saturday

Jet lag jet lag jet lag, usually I don't feel so bad but I have also got a temperature and a sore throat, nothing like these symptoms to bring on attack of malaria/TB/ infectious disease related paranoia!!!

Sunday

Feeling marginally better today, this is the unglamorous side of Rose Life. However there is no better person to care for a sick Rose than my very own Irish Mammy. Irish Mammies are known throughout the world for their ability to make their children feel better through a combination of home cooked food, copious cups of tea and a few prayers thrown in for good measure. And you know what it works!

Monday

Am almost restored to full throttle today although I am definitely still acclimatizing to the temperature drop. I go for a walk with the dogs. Under my fleece I am wearing a vest, two t-shirts, a hoodie and two scarves. I look like the Michelin Man. I do a couple of local interviews telling them of my experiences in India.

Tuesday

PhD application closing date is dawning so I go shopping. Everywhere I go Christmas music is being blasted out of speakers, there is tinsel and elves and Christmas trees galore. I am firmly on the 'I love Christmas' team but this year it all feels very early. Again I have difficulty reconciling the differences between this time of year for people all over the world. I will spend this festive season with people I love, eating far too much cake, going to Mass, unwrapping presents as well as giving them, singing Fairytale of New York etc etc. Many of the people I met in India have never experienced the simple things that I will take for granted. Plenty of food, clean water, a warm safe bed. I make a decision and head for home without buying a thing. Charity Christmas Presents here I come!