

Service in the Himalayan Clouds India



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Explore Tibetan, Nepali, and Indian cultures in this intensive cultural immersion and service experience. Immerse yourself in two Himalayan villages where you will live with Indian and Tibetan homestay families. Help Tibetan refugees improve their English skills and work on infrastructure projects in the village community. When not immersed in service work, you'll be involved in cultural activities such as practicing yoga and meditation. Learn about Buddhism, Tibetan history, international development, and current issues from poets, political activists, and NGO guest speakers through a series of interactive presentations and open dialogues.

What you can expect on a typical day:

Morning

Yoga/Meditation session

Breakfast

Visiting Lecturer from village

Service Project

AFTERNOON

Lunch

Service Project

Activity or Free time

Journaling

EVENING

Dinner

Home Stay time

Evening event

Day 1 – April 16, 2017

Today is the day you've been waiting for! It's time to board your flight to New Delhi and begin your Himalayan adventures. Make sure to wear comfortable clothes, pack a good book, and buckle in for the trip of a lifetime. Goodbye for now, San Francisco.

Flight Details: TBD

Day 2 – April 17, 2017

Arrive into New Delhi International Airport where you will find your Rustic Pathways leaders waiting for you outside of baggage claim. From the airport you will transport to our base hotel in Delhi. After a quick introduction by your program leaders, head to bed! Sleep well and get oriented to the new time zone.

Overnight: Hotel MaanK, New Delhi

Day 3 – April 18, 2017

After a good night sleep, wake up in one of the world's most engaging cities and prepare for a full day exploring India's vibrant capital. Dive straight in to Delhi with a cultural scavenger hunt, then explore Punjabi cuisine over lunch as you debrief your experience. Walk in the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi, marvel at the famed Lotus Temple, and help make chapatti bread at the Sikh temple.

After a full day in the city, you'll head to the train station to catch your overnight train to Pathankot. A train ride is a quintessential Indian experience and one that creates lots of memories.

Train Details:

Overnight: Train



Day 4 – April 19, 2017

Arrive early morning at Pathankot, get down from the train and drive through the foothills of Kangra Valley to the nearby village Balla. Have breakfast on the way. Peacefully nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas, Balla is home to Gaddi and Gurkha communities – two different Himalayan cultures with their own dialects and histories. The Gurkha are Nepalese, and they speak Nepali (though they have been living in India for generations). Arrive to Balla in the early afternoon and be welcomed into the community by the village families.

Get oriented to the village, meet your homestay families, and then dig into your service project in the early evening. In Balla, your time will be spent on an ongoing health and sanitation service project that is working to construct toilets for a variety of families in the village.

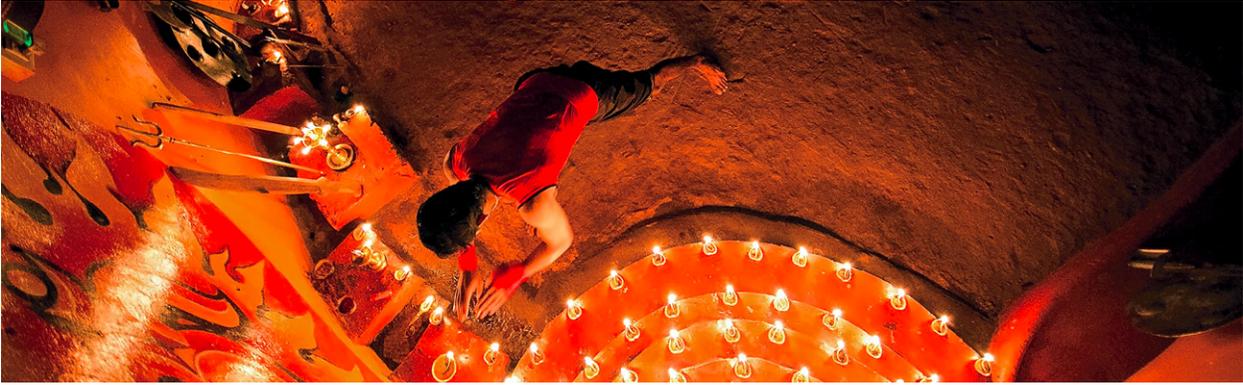
At least 636 million Indians lack toilets (that's 50% of the population and two times the size of the USA), according to the latest census data. The sanitation and health implications contribute to disease, childhood malnutrition, loss of economic output and, as highlighted recently, violence against women. Reducing open defecation is also a key goal of the Indian government and one of the UN Sustainable Development targets for 2030.

Most residents of Balla rely on agriculture for their livelihood, cultivating small farms with wheat and maize, and raising dairy producing livestock. Insufficient land, soil erosion and lack of water for irrigation significantly impacts income opportunities for many residents. Access to safe drinking water as well as quality education are major barriers faced by residents. Increasing access to toilets to improve sanitation and reduce pollution of local waterways, as well as reduce risks women face of potential assault from open defecation is a priority for residents here. However, many families lack sufficient funds to build their own toilets. In Balla, the local government has also made it a requirement that families have some kind of toilet in their home to access a ration card. Without the card, families cannot access the card, and therefore their food security is compromised.

Rustic Pathways has partnered with the community of Balla since 2012, and has been working to construct toilets for families in the village since 2014.

After a group reflection, head back to your homestays this evening for a delicious home cooked meal and herbal tea before bed!

Overnight: Homestay, Balla



Day 5 - April 20, 2017

Begin the day with a group yoga or meditation session. After breakfast, continue your service work in Balla. You'll need to work hard but the local community will help recharge your energy with *garam chai* and *pakore*. In the afternoon, head to one of the local temples for a quick lesson on Hinduism, or head to the nearby river for a quick dip in the stream.

After a morning and afternoon of service, take off your shoes to shake a leg – Bollywood style! A local dance instructor will help you get some essential Indian dance moves down, which you can then show to your homestay family at night.

Overnight: Homestay, Balla



Day 6 - April 21, 2017

Begin the day with a group yoga or meditation session. This morning you will take a break from your service in Balla to head to a nearby school for students with special needs. After learning about the

school with one of the staff members, play games and interact with the students for the morning. The students love these visits and the rooms are filled with smiles at the end of the interaction. Head back to Balla in the afternoon to complete your service project in the village.

This is your last night in Balla so get ready to celebrate! Share a final dinner with your homestay family, then come together at the community hall for a night of music, dancing, and food. Perform your new Bollywood dance for your family, then get them to show you some of their own moves. Close the evening out with a group reflection on the service work that you've completed and your time spent in the community.

Overnight: Homestay, Balla

Day 7 – April 22, 2017

Round out your service in Balla this morning then head back to your homestays for lunch and to pack up your gear. Enjoy your last meal with your families and then load into the vehicles after lunch and depart for the nearby town of McLeod Ganj. Home to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in exile, McLeod Ganj will be your home for the next few days. Living and working alongside Tibetan families in this eclectic town, students will get first-hand exposure to Tibetan culture and an opportunity to understand what the Tibetan conflict has meant for these families.

Arrive in McLeod Ganj in the early evening and get introduced to your Tibetan homestay families. Head back to their homes for dinner and get oriented to the new culture that surrounds you.

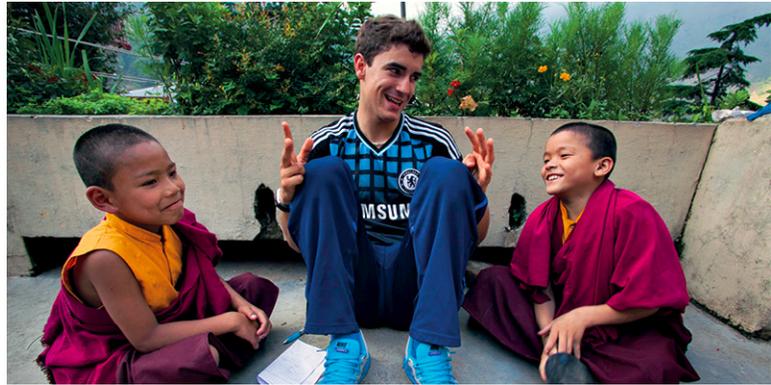
Overnight: Homestay, McLeod Ganj

Day 8 - April 23, 2017

Wake up to the cool mountain air of the magnificent Himalayas! Today you will begin your service project working with Tibetan Refugees. Rustic Pathways currently partners with LHA, a community organization offering English language and life skill development training to Tibetan refugees living in McLeod Ganj. Meet your Tibetan mutual learning partner at LHA and go on a scavenger hunt through the town while helping your learning partner practice English. You'll meet up at the Dalai Lama's temple and debrief the experience with the group.

After a day of teaching and learning, enjoy a rooftop yoga class with your friends or warm up over a bowl of Tibetan *thukpa* and debrief the day.

Overnight: Homestay, McLeod Ganj



Day 9 - April 24, 2017

Wake up for breakfast with your homestay family and then head out for a morning group session of meditation or yoga. Next visit the Tibet museum, which highlights aspects of Tibet's history and the more current occupation by China. After lunch, you will meet with your language partner at LHA and spend the afternoon in English conversation and cultural learning activities.

In the evening, you will hear from a Tibetan community activist and receive an inside perspective on the struggles of the Tibetan community and his life's work. Head back to your homestay for cooking lessons from your Ama La and learn how to make dishes like *momos* and *thukpa*!

Overnight: Homestay, McLeod Ganj

Day 10 - April 25, 2017

After breakfast with your homestay family this morning, meet up with the group for a yoga and meditation session. Next you'll have a talk by a guest speaker, such as a poet, former political prisoner, or monk, who will talk about Tibet, life as a refugee, and Buddhism. This afternoon you will continue your service with your language partners.

After service, bid farewell to your language partners and hit the streets for some shopping in the local *bazaars*. Look for thangka paintings, singing bowls, and knitted gloves in the street stalls and shops and stop for a quick chai before heading back to your homestays and packing up. This evening you'll head to the train station in Pathankot to catch your overnight train back to Delhi.

Overnight: Train, Pathankot to Delhi

Day 11 - April 26, 2017

Arrive in Delhi in the early morning and transition to the hotel. Freshen up and have breakfast and then head out into the city for your last full day in India. Explore some of the sights of Delhi through the afternoon and then settle in for a closing ceremony and dinner this evening. You'll look back over your program and recap all the learning and new experiences you encountered in the Himalayas.

Overnight: Hotel MaanK

Day 12 - April 27, 2017

Today you will spend your day visiting a few markets in Delhi and doing your last minute souvenir shopping. Later in the afternoon drive to a resort in South Delhi to relax in a pool and have final dinner before heading to the airport to catch your flight home.

After a group photograph and some *Namastes* with Team India, it will be time to board your flight home. We hope the people you've met, experiences you've had and lessons you've learned will help guide you in all future endeavors. Safe travels and we hope to see you again soon!

Flight Details: Flight details will be provided once all participants are enrolled.



Program Details

Program Cost:

\$1,920.00 + international airfare (estimated at \$800.00) We will organize the international airfare for you.

Program Includes

- 11 nights of accommodation
- All meals all days
- All transportation
- Rustic Pathways fulltime international and local guides
- All activities as detailed in your itinerary
- Single point of contact from Rustic Pathways for support leading up to the program
- Rustic Pathways 24-hour emergency support throughout program
- HX Global emergency evacuation insurance
- All airport taxes and departure fees
- All fees, community service donations, and tour guide tips

An Important Note about Schedule Changes:

Rustic Pathways reserves the right to change, alter, or amend the daily itinerary for this trip at any time. Changes can be made for various reasons including changes in flight or program schedules, changes in the schedules of various external operators or partner organizations, changes due to weather or safety concerns, the addition of new activities into a trip, or the substitution of a new activity for an old activity. The itinerary shown here provides our best projection of the daily schedule for this program. As with any travel program, some changes may occur.