Rob Kowalski’s Top 10

1. Start eating dirt well ahead of the time of your departure. I have lived a fairly dirt-filled life (eating things off of the floor, playing in the mud, drinking unfiltered water, uncooked meat and whatnot). I was one of the few who didn't get TERRIBLY sick, although a few poor choices lead to some discomfort. For instance, do not eat ice-cream from a street vendor no matter how hot you are and how enticing it seems (especially if you are lactose-intolerant).

2. Learn the difference between auspicious and inauspicious. Owls are apparently inauspicious. Cow poop is auspicious.

3. Bathe like a crow. Meditate like a crane. Sleep like a dog. Eat very little. Maintain celibacy. These are the qualities of a good student.

4. Start taking lukewarm to cold showers now. You are going to be taking bucket showers. That first splash is the worst. After that you learn to love them.

5. Learn the rules of badminton. Also, know that the Indian men on the farm are ruthless players.

6. If you get anxious on the road (by traffic, speed, bumpiness, etc.), learn ways to cope with that. For instance, I brought a harmonica. Some people choose to listen to music. Others choose to vomit. I utilized all of these.

7. Talk to strangers. You'll meet amazing people and learn crazy things. You will also be uncomfortable MANY TIMES, so just embrace this discomfort and learn from it.

8. There is the romantic India that you've seen in movies, read about, heard from others, and there is another India that will take some patience and effort to truly see. Learn to distinguish the two.


10. If you see something you NEED to buy, don't. You will see it again, and you won't have to carry it as long.

Amy Schweiss’ Top 10

1. If you play an instrument, learn a variety of songs; no one wants to listen to “Another Brick in the Wall” for 30 minutes straight. If you can't play an instrument learn the words to campfire songs.
2. Talk to the people passing through the farm, they’re interesting. Talk to the people working on the farm, they’re amazing. Get on Negiji’s good side, i.e. don’t adopt a puppy.

3. Do not skip yoga; you might miss the “cleansing” demonstration. On a similar note, if you do not enjoy meditation that is an opinion best kept to yourself.

4. Do not go to someone’s cousin’s/uncle’s/brother-in-law’s silk shop. Also, genie pants are not part of a shawlar kamiz.

5. Eat Chinese food in India. Do not eat American food. Go to Rodeo! Do not eat soft serve ice cream, even if all the locals are eating it. If you want ice cream go to Nirula’s.

6. If you are sick, don’t try to hide it. Seriously.

7. When talking to him, refer to Pavlos as Pavlo—no S. Also, he cannot take a joke. This may be because of the language barrier, but maybe not. Be warned: Pavlos is sensitive, very sensitive.

8. Don’t be stuck behind your camera the whole time, but don’t forget to take pictures either. Take public transportation, holding a stranger’s baby is an experience. If at all possible, take a train.

9. You are going o be doing a lot of things that make you very uncomfortable. Take them as opportunities to grow. Don’t dwell on the negative. Be flexible and take it all in.

10. Travis is a PhD not a fucking guru!

Katie Turner’s Top 10

1. The number one rule of going on the India study abroad trip is that no matter how much you prepare, you will never be prepared.

2. Bring extra toilet paper in your suitcase (and don’t tell the good doctors or they will make fun of you). Also, if you choose not to use toilet paper while on the farm, please be courteous and aim to the water into the bowl when rinsing.

3. Expect to be ripped off repeatedly on any purchase that you make for the first half of your trip. Do not be discouraged: by the end you will be a pro at bargaining. You will still probably get ripped off.

4. Expect that if you order a cheese dish, it will most likely be a variation of paneer served with a side of ketchup.
5. Make friends with the person on the trip who packed EVERYTHING because she will be your savior!!

6. BRAT=bananas, apple sauce, rice, toast.

7. Practice the POPER program: positivity, optimism, participation, enthusiasm, and respect for your fellow travelers.

8. Khan market in Delhi is pretty awesome. Touristy, but awesome. Full Circle Books is my favorite because they have a delicious cafe on the third floor.

9. Do not throw caution into the wind during your last days in Delhi by eating whatever you want. It makes for a very uncomfortable thirteen hour flight home. Trust me.

10. Go to the toilet museum in Delhi. I never got a chance to go. Take pictures and email them to me: zutrner@ufl.edu.

Liz Martin’s Top 10

1. Take the journal seriously. It’s an amazing way to look back and reflect on all the things you were too overwhelmed to process in the moment.

2. Be smart about where your water is coming from; there are warnings for a reason, not to be annoying, but to keep you from getting sick.

3. Prepare to lose weight; you’ve probably never been so intimate with your GI system.

4. Pay attention to your body, it knows what’s up. If you’re not feeling well, don’t push yourself; it’ll only make your feel sick longer. TELL someone if your icky feelings persist.

5. Take care of one another, for better for worse, these people will be your family for at least six weeks, if not longer.

6. SHARE! You’ll need things, and so with your companions. Ask around before you assume no one has the item. You’d be surprised.

7. Get over yourself. Go with the flow and learn how to deal with discomfort a bit.


10. Take naps. It’s the only way to deal with the scorching heat.

Hanna Moerland’s Top 10

1. When they tell you don’t drink the water -- just don't. Unless you are really into Hep A.

2. On that note -- Dr.’s Anantharam and Smith don’t talk just to hear themselves. When they give you advice, take it... or regret it later.

3. So, when they 'suggest' wearing kurtas/shalwar kameez or men wearing pants, just do it. A) They are awesome. B) You won’t have to pay to wear an over-garmet at temples/mosques.

4. Navdanya isn’t a hotel - so don’t treat it like one. While you are there, try to enjoy shram daam (spelling?). Go to Yoga every morning! Its not every day you get to do yoga in India with a yogi. Talk to the people who work there and the people passing through.

5. Don’t drink coke, pepsi, eat nestle, etc while you are on the farm or on farm-related excursions: Learn what Dr. Shiva and Navdanya stands for and what they advocate. Purchasing and consuming those products while on a farm-sponsored trip is an affront to everything they stand for.

6. Try and learn a little Hindi. Especially (if you can) try to learn "where is the bus/train/etc to Navdanya/Delhi/Ram Garth/etc.” And all the different varieties of ‘go away’ (esp. if you are female).

7. Be careful about what you say out loud in public. Indians speak English -- they can hear you and understand you. Also - don't talk trash about people. They will understand that too. When haggling in teams - use piglatin or gibberish... I don't think Indians follow that very well, if at all. If you find that no one can understand your English, try it with a British accent. Some people had success with this (maybe its easier to understand since Indian English is more like British English).

8. Write in your journal! The longer you are there, the less you will feel like writing - force yourself to do it. It is easier to remember everything when you write it down and take pictures... And write down the important stuff: the people you talk to and the places you see... try not to focus on the petty arguments that will inevitably break out on the farm.

9. If you do get sick, don't hide it. Get better so you can enjoy yourself. Plus—they hospital really isn't that bad. Actually, its kind of neat. ;-) Say hello to the nurses for me!
10. As far as what to bring: Bring lots of linen pants if you can. I packed very efficiently (3 outfits plus 3 pajamas/lounge clothes plus sweatshirt plus rainjacket plus all sorts of gadgets/meds/toiletries/etc.) and then shopped for lots of kurtas... and really enjoyed it. [Actually -- I got made fun of my extreme packing skills... but it was well worth packing thoroughly and lightly] Burts bees is great -- just not as shampoo. Pack some sort of biodegradable soap to wash clothes with. And bring an extra bag for souveniers. Also, bring an extra memory card for you camera just in case something happens to the other one. It's hard to buy electronics, non-spray on deodorant, feminine products, notepads, among other things in India... so pack accordingly.