

# Trip to Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad, the city founded by Ahmed Shah is a culturally vibrant place. It is also popular because of it being the base city for Gandhiji's nationalist movement for Indian Independence. I came to know these facts recently after visiting the city during our annual class trip.

When our school announced that we will be going to Ahmedabad, I was kind of feeling not so excited as I expected Ahmedabad to be just another city with lots of traffic and excess population, with people hurrying to their destinations without enjoying the beauty provided by God, in form of nature. Our trip, actually scheduled for Sept'2010 was postponed because of some unforeseen reasons and finally we boarded the train to Ahmedabad on 23rd January, 2011. I had no expectations from this trip except that I was going to be with my friends for some days. Also, this was going to be our last trip together as a class before we branch out to follow our respective courses in class eighth.

The train journey was fun as usual, with all of us sitting together and chatting like there is no tomorrow. Everybody was wide awake (through the night) and fully charged. Wish we could have this kind of energy during our exam days too! We reached Ahmedabad early in the morning and after depositing our baggage in the hotel room and freshening ourselves, we headed towards Sabarmati Ashram. The Sabarmati Ashram, so named after the holy river Sabarmati, situated on the river's banks no longer functions as a working ashram, but as a museum and an institution whose aim is to preserve and propagate the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi. Visitors arrive here from all over the world. This Ashram has stood witness to many important happenings in the history of our nation, happenings which were instrumental in shaping Mohandas into Mahatma and the Father of the Nation. Standing there and listening about Gandhiji and his associates made me so proud to be an Indian. By now, my curiosity had increased manifold as to what lay ahead of us to see and explore in the coming days. From Sabarmati Ashram, we went to vintage car museum, which has the largest vintage car collection. It was fun to see cars of different shapes and sizes from the bygone era, imagining ourselves in the drivers' seats and driving these cars on modern Mumbai's pothole lined roads. By the time we finished, we were pretty tired and went back to get some rest in our respective rooms - the evening promising to be even more exciting and fun filled!

Later we went to Vishala. Vishala is a place that provides a live experience of living in a typical Gujarati village. You can find people offering traditional village crafts for sale and there was some traditional music to be heard too. The whole experience was pretty impressive. There was a museum of old utensils, which was worth seeing. The big surprise for me was the extensive variety of food being served, which I found delicious (in spite of me not being too fond of Gujarati food) and the food was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

After coming back from Vishala, everybody was dead-tired and sleepy too, as we had not had enough rest the previous night but our gang of fab four had other plans to execute. We had organized a surprise birthday party for Shreya in our room. We had purchased gifts for her in Mumbai itself and one of us had got a small cake too. It was a pleasure to watch her joyous expression when she saw the decorated room and it was worth all the hard work we had put in to make it a memorable day (night really) for her. Again, we could go to sleep in the wee hours of the morning only but with a big smile-n-a-grin on each of our faces.

Morning, we had to go to Lothal, which is a well known city of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization and also one of the most interesting examples of the Harrapan town planning. It was a like a different world altogether for all of us, as if we had transcended into another world. We had only read about these places in our books till now and visiting Lothal was like reliving that era again, especially after watching a short film and visiting the museum where we saw ruins of famous micaceous clay pottery and other tools; which those people must have used in those days. It was

then that it dawned on me as to why Ahmedabad was chosen for our trip. Seeing all such sites with our own eyes would perhaps not been possible anywhere else. Our next stop was the zoo, which is located on the majestic banks of the tranquil Kankaria Lake. It is always a pleasure to watch animals but somehow I do not enjoy watching caged animals and it pains me to see them in a zoo instead of their natural habitat among their own kind. That night, we had dinner at the hotel only and slept like logs.

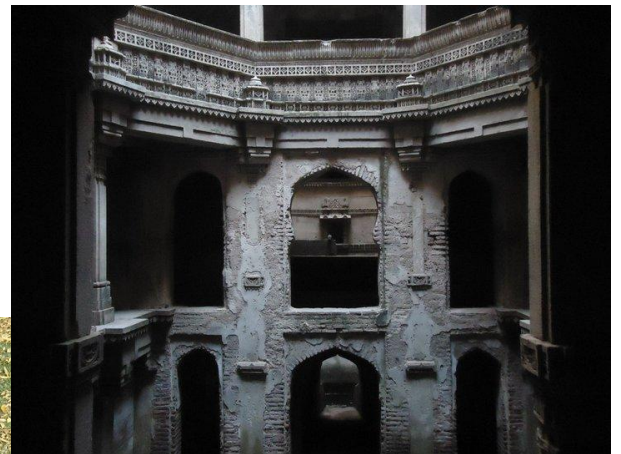
Next day, our first destination was the Step Well - an ancient monument that depicts the art and craft of the bygone eras. Dada Hari Vav or Step Well was built during the reign of Mehmud Begda in the year 1501. This octagonal shaped step well was constructed as a tranquil retreat for the vacationer. It has highly ornamented arches, columns, and panes with exquisite carvings and classy designs. The Step Well boasts of the Indo-Islamic culture. With the marvelous carvings in the background, the setting was perfect for pictures. After seeing such monuments, there is no denying that Ahmedabad is a city of architectural delights. We came back to the hotel to pack our bags and left them in the bus when we went to visit the Science City center, which aims to provide a perfect blend of education and entertainment. It showcases contemporary and imaginative exhibits, working models, virtual reality, activity corners, labs and live demonstrations to provide an understanding of science and technology to the common man. What a contrast from what we had seen in the morning. We had seen the past and also the future on the same day.

Next, we went to one of the malls for shopping so that we could take some gifts and baubles for our family and friends.

Soon, it was time to board the train again for our journey back to Mumbai. It was with a heavy heart that I bade farewell to Ahmedabad. I was taking beautiful memories of this trip with me, which are going to be etched in my mind for a long time to come.

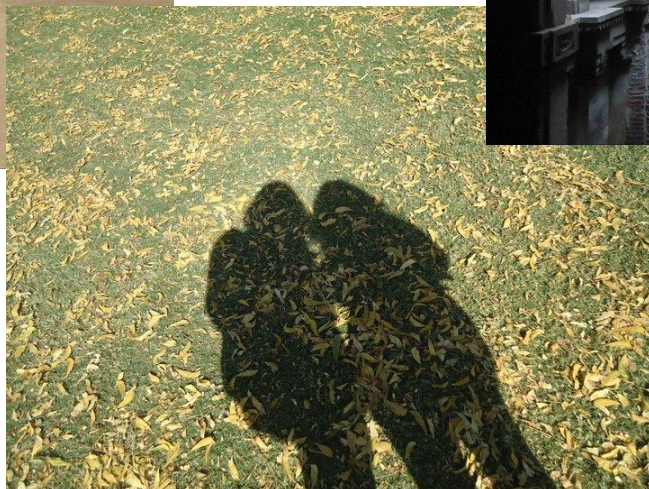


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AHMEDABAD





Ready to step into the Step Well at Adlaj near Ahmedabad



Budding archaeologists at Lothal



Experiencing the Gandhian way of life at Sabarmat



We went, We saw, We learnt at the Sabarmati Ashram