

# Pooppallys on the backwaters

*Allappuzha, India - February 26, 2008*

Amy:

We woke up early, and Brent went for a walk down the path along the water. I stayed in bed for a while, then woke up and went outside, where the sun almost blinded me. It was already humid and starting to heat up, so Brent was very hot and sticky when he came back from his walk, just in time for breakfast. We've forgotten to write that we have loaded up with insect repellent (100% deet, which is probably going to make our skin slough off) most of the day and at night. There are also plug-in mosquito repellent thingys, but we're not sure how effective they are. We've seen many mosquitos and have heard that these ones carry malaria – there is lots of stagnant, still water, too, so we're trying to be extra careful.

We ate breakfast with Mark and Kelly – egg curry, boiled bananas, tea, coffee, and toast with pineapple jelly (possibly the best thing I've had in India). **(PIX OF BREAKFAST)** We've really enjoyed getting to know them and hanging out with them – they're really fun and we've gotten to share lots of stories about home and India with them (and vice-versa).

We thought about taking a 10:45 ferry into Alleppy, but it came early and we missed it. (I was secretly glad b/c I wanted to hang out at Pooppallys)

After breakfast, Joseph asked us if we wanted a tour of the place, so he showed us around the property. **(PIX OF JOSEPH AND WALK)** We were fascinated to learn how many edible foods & spices are grown on the premises. Several times, Joseph picked a leaf of a plant, crushed it in his hand, and asked us to identify it. One was cinnamon, one was allspice, one curry, and one was lemongrass (we got 1 out of 4). He showed us his mango tree, jackfruit tree (and root), nutmeg, cacao plants, coffee plants, vanilla plants, cashews (we guessed that one correctly from the shape) and several medicinal plants: “saw palmeido” for prostate problems, “Aevertas Natana” for kidney stones, an insulin plant for lowering blood sugar/controlling diabetes, and “Salacious Eschellius (?) or something like that, for memory. Many of the non- medicinal food are used in the dishes prepared there. **(PIX OF PLANTS AT POOPPALLYS)**

After our walk, we relaxed by the water until the heat and humidity tired us out and we moved inside under a fan. Before lunch, we took a walk along the riverside path to the Hindu temple. Brent decided not to wear shoes (getting back to his American roots and all) but regretted the decision when the path became rocky, and the asphalt on the street heated by the sun. We walked back to Pooppallys on the road, taking many breaks to

rest in the shade of the road. We saw rice workers in the fields, wearing cone-shaped umbrella-like hats on their heads.

Joseph mentioned that guests at Pooppallys were the only foreigners/westerners that the neighbors saw, so we were able to have a non-touristy view of backwater life and culture.

We had to get \$ from the atm (to pay for the homestay), batteries, and perhaps trying to find an internet connection, so we decided to go into the town of Alleppy. Mark and Kelly also had to do some errands, but they decided to take a taxi into town. Because of our love of buses and our now-adeptness, we decided to take a bus into town. We put on bug spray (the dusk is bad for bugs) and walked the ½ kilometer to the main road to catch the bus. We hopped on the bus and rode to Alleppy, a short 7-9 kilometer ride. We got off the bus downtown (before the bus station) and stopped immediately to buy some jalebis (sweets) for Mark and Kelly (and us). We had been talking about the deliciousness of jalebis (honey-covered sweet fried things) with Mark and Kelly, so we were excited to see some for sale in a sweet shop. Unfortunately, these jalebis were not nearly as good as the jalebis in Rajasthan L (yes, we sampled them before giving handing them over to Mark and Kelly). We walked further and found an internet place, so Brent went in and started his online business, while I walked to find an atm. I bought water before walking to the atm b/c it was 1000 degrees outside. While I was walking, a parade of many men wearing white shirts and carrying flags passed by. They were yelling something, but I couldn't understand, so I asked one of the men why they were having the parade. He looked at me strangely and said something in Malayalam. It turns out that it was a rally, not a parade, to protest the gas prices. They were trying to organize a strike (we learned much more about this later) and therefore were parading/rallying in the streets. No fun parade at all! I found an atm with a guard posted in front, as is the case with all atms. This particular atm didn't work, so he motioned for me to go across the street to try another one, which worked. I walked back to Brent at the internet place, and we walked to the bus station to catch the bus back to Pooppallys.

On the bus, Brent talked to the bus-taker man and told him that we were going to Nedumuddy bridge. At this point, it was dark outside, and we were disoriented and not able to see any landmarks, so we were relying solely on the man to tell the driver to stop the bus. I looked out at one point and saw a Vodafone logo on a building, which was my landmark for the Pooppally junction/intersection/Nedumuddy bridge, where we should have gotten off the bus. The next thing we knew, we were going over the bridge, driving away from

Pooppallys! On the other side of the bridge, the bus stopped and we got off. It was pitch black and there were no lights on the road or the bridge, so I wanted to take a rickshaw or taxi back over the bridge, up the road to Pooppallys. Brent decided that we should walk over the bridge (there were others walking over the bridge) so we walked, then caught a rickshaw the remainder of the way to Pooppallys. I'm omitting the part where Brent and I had a few cross words, b/c that's not very interesting...Needless to say, it was hot, we were both annoyed, and we were in a foreign, dark place.

Back safely at Pooppallys, we walked directly in to dinner – another feast, this time with chicken and fish, and dishes with jackfruit, rice, curry, and homemade pudding desert. We ate and talked with Mark and Kelly and another couple from Panama who were in Kerala for an ayurvedic clinic. We showed Mark and Kelly our pictures on the computer from the earlier parts of our trip and from home, until it was very late. (I hope we didn't bore them...) Then we put on the fan, plugged in the insect repellent thingy, and went to sleep.

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