

Discover India Camp – Frequently Asked Questions

What does Discover India Camp teach my child?

Discover India Camp is meant to empower your child with information about India. Its aim is to help your child understand India's ancient history and diversity, to learn about India's role in the world. Your child will also have fun exploring India's multi-faceted culture. Our hope is that when they next visit India, they do so with a better understanding and appreciation.

How long has this camp been held?

This is the fourth summer that the camp is being offered. Originally held at Palo Alto, this camp is being offered in the summer of 2009 in San Jose, Fremont and San Mateo/Foster City, by popular demand.

Who are the teachers?

This camp is entirely volunteer-run, by dedicated teachers. The teachers come from varied backgrounds, they all have some experience teaching children either in local schools or in Balvihar. Classes are taught by adults, not high-school volunteers.

Ruchita Parat: Designed and developed the camp curriculum and taught in the previous three Discover India camps. A former software engineer, she is the founder of US Hindi Association (USHA), which teaches Hindi in after-school programs and also conducts summer camps in Hindi.

Aarti Johri: Designed and developed the curriculum and taught in the previous Discover India camps. A former engineering professional, she has taught Hindi in CMSJ for 6 years. Aarti is also currently working on a Masters in Liberal Arts at Stanford University.

What does a typical day consist of?

The day starts with discussions about India. Children are involved in a number of hands-on activities. The afternoons consist of games, dances, crafts and several projects. There are sufficient breaks for snacks, refreshments and fun time.

My child already knows a lot about India, what will he gain from the camp?

Many children attending the camp have roots in India, and come with some unique perspective. Sharing this perspective makes the camp a more special place. We discuss topics related to all of India, not one region, and children leave with a better understanding of India's great diversity. Since the topics are far ranging, your child will learn many new things and enjoy sharing his knowledge.

My child is new to camp, will he fit in?

Over the past years we have had children from all over the Bay Area attend the camp; from San Jose to Fremont, from Foster City to Saratoga. At the end of a week we find that they leave with warm friendships made, an exchange of emails and a desire to remain in touch. We ensure that all children participate in the different activities and feel included in the camp. If you have any concerns regarding your child, please share them with us.

My child does not attend Chinmaya Mission Balavihar; can he/she still attend?

Yes, this is not a religious camp and requires no background in Indian religion.

Is this a secular camp?

Yes, it is. While we do touch upon all religions of India, and discuss the Indian festivals, we do not teach any particular religious thought to the children.

Will my 10th grader fit in? Will my first-grader fit in?

Yes, we divide the campers into age-based groups. Each group is given material appropriate to his/her age. The campers vary in age but we ensure they all have a good time.

What should my camper bring from home?

Please send your camper with a packed lunch and a drink. We do provide snacks and drinks also. Your camper is provided with all the material he/she will need during the camp.

What are the camp timings?

The camp hours are from 9 am to 4 pm. We offer extended care up to 5 pm with an additional charge of \$35 for the entire week. We hope you drop your child on time. A late pick up fee of \$1 per minute will be charged after 5.05 pm. In case of an emergency please call the teacher whose number will be provided to you before the camp.
