

Information for visiting surgeons to Jodhpur.

[A]. Travel Plans / Customs / Documents.

1. Visiting surgeons are requested to confirm their itinerary at the earliest because camp dates have to be arranged weeks to months in advance.
2. We need your **CV**, copies of **Highest Degree in Ophthalmology**, copy of **license to practice** and a **photo** [preferably B/W]. These documents will go to the local health authorities that will then give permission for visiting surgeons to operate in our eye camps.
3. Visiting surgeons need to get a temporary registration with the National Medical Council [NMC] at least 3 months in advance. The website is www.nmc.org.in and it costs about Rs 6000.
4. If you have any travel related queries or need help, please feel free to talk to us at : +91-291-2771388 or +91-9772214418. Or, please send an Email at : Dr_S_Desai@yahoo.com.
5. Customs is handled at the international airport on arrival [New Delhi or Mumbai]. We are too far away from these cities to be of any help to visiting surgeons.
6. Customs is generally not a problem if you have the necessary paperwork from SEE international and the donor companies. The Indian representatives of your travel agency often help in custom clearance if you send a request in advance.

The papers you need include : **(1)** letter from SEEI that you are on a voluntary, charitable surgical mission to perform free cataract surgery in eye camps to help the poor and aged blind people of Rajasthan and the supplies you are carrying have no commercial values **(2)** Letter from donor [if you are getting additional supplies] that the material you are carrying is donated material meant for free use in eye camps and is of no commercial value

There has been one instance when a visiting surgeon was pestered by the customs officer for the IOL's / viscoat. Even when the above paperwork was shown, he still wouldn't let go of the baggage. The obvious intention was to take a bribe. But the surgeon raised his voice and said sternly that he was here for the good of the country and if the officer did not like that, then he would just walk away leaving the donated items behind for whatever good it did to the officer. He was promptly let off with all his bags intact. So this is a trick worth trying if one is stuck up in a rare situation like this.

[B]. Local Hospitality.

1. We offer free lodging and boarding to SEEI visiting surgeons, while they are in Jodhpur.
2. In Jodhpur we book rooms in a decent hotel with clean rooms and toilet.
3. At the rural camp site the arrangement is a bit rustic and only basic amenities are available as one would expect.
4. The **food is vegetarian** and prepared in the traditional Indian style. Hot meals are served and bottled water is provided which add to the unique experience of eating Rajasthani food. Fork and knives are not available at rural camp sites and its acceptable to eat with one's fingers or with spoons. **Alcoholic beverages are not served.**
5. Transport to and from hotel to hospital and to the rural camp site is provided gratis by the hospital.
6. A free day will be incorporated in the schedule for local sight seeing.

[C]. Surgical Technique / Instrumentation.

1. Local & visiting surgeons can do cataract surgery with **any technique with which they are most comfortable and confident**. It maybe ECCE, SICS or Phaco. The idea is that a practiced and

- time-tested surgical technique will reduce chances of complications and provide a better outcome to the patients in the camps. Camps are not a place to learn new techniques and hone skills and so we do not encourage novice surgeons and residents to participate in camps.
2. **We don't encourage surgeons without prior experience in SICS to practice the technique here.** We have had one incident in the past with disastrous consequences and are therefore wary of surgeons who want to come here just to practice a new technique. So in hospital-based surgery volunteer surgeons are expected to do phaco.
 3. We also believe that free eye camps are also not places for residents to practice. So we don't permit residents to operate in eye camps. If they wish to participate as assistants only to the SEEI volunteer surgeon, then it is fine with us. We do not offer free lodging and boarding to residents who accompany SEEI eye surgeons.
 4. The basic IOL used in our camps is PMMA rigid lens [6mm dia.][5mm dia. for phaco cases] and now also foldable IOL's which are Rayner clones..
 5. We have two microscopes for use at the hospital [Zeiss Lumera I and Leica M822].
 6. Our two microscopes have been in use for several years and have been in scores of camps and are not in pristine condition. Their external appearance is battered and unsightly, which has put off a team of guest surgeons in the recent past. **However the optics are reasonably good** and all guest surgeons [except the above mentioned team] have adapted well to them. The microscopes are serviced once a year in September before the camp season begins.
 7. Its desirable for visiting surgeons to bring at least one set of their favorite cataract surgical instruments.
 8. **Visiting surgeons must get at least one pair of scrub clothes** [and slippers if they prefer].
 9. All instruments and linen is autoclaved at the base hospital.
 10. Sharp instruments are sterilized in methylated spirit.

[D]. Work schedule.

The basic idea of an eye camp is to provide quality surgery to a high volume of patients. While SEEI International volunteers are here we utilize their services in **two to three eye camps**. So a lot of work tends to be compressed in a short period of time. In a typical camp one may has to screen and treat about 200 – 600 patients and operate from 50 to 100 cataract cases. We finish the outpatient exams by 3-4 PM and start surgery the same evening. Surgical sessions are long in eye camps and often last until well past midnight.

A dedicated staff of **two ophthalmic assistants and 6 paramedicals** helps us in our work. A scan biometry is done on all cataract patients & is performed by trained staff. Two operating tables are available in the OR per surgeon. While the surgeon is operating on one table the assistant gives a peri-bulbar block and prepares the next case.

[E]. Weather.

Eye camps are traditionally held in north India in the wintertime. The eye camp season begins from October and lasts until April. December to February are cold in Jodhpur and one requires appropriate winter wear as the mercury often drops to single digit values for several days at a stretch. On rare days the temperature may be zero or sub zero. In the other months light woollens are suitable.

[F]. Annoyances.

India is a peaceful country and crime is very low. The state of Rajasthan, where Jodhpur is located, has **very friendly people** and even petty crime is very rare. Terrorism is virtually unheard of and foreigners are treated well by people.

[G]. Lectures / Misc.

1. We welcome lectures on recent topics, research work or any subject of the visiting surgeon's choice. Please inform and we will be glad to arrange a meeting for local ophthalmologists and residents.
2. Please inform if you team specializes in **vitreo-retinal surgery** or **oculoplastic surgery**. We might like to keep 2 –3 days of the clinic for this work.

[H]. Getting to Jodhpur

Jodhpur is well connected by Air, rail and Road to all major cities of India.

There are daily flights from Delhi and Mumbai to Jodhpur. Three airlines operated flights to Jodhpur

From Delhi one can also come via an overnight train, which is very convenient and safe.

[I]. Bringing the Family

Some volunteers like to bring their families along and want to know how they could be gainfully occupied. Bringing the family over for the volunteer experience is a great idea. **There are lots of sights, sounds and smells to savor** - especially if its the first time they are going to be in India. Beware that once in a while visiting guests are shocked at the poverty they see around - so be prepared. **The family members can also do volunteer work at the camps** - recording patient data, helping them to move around, admissions, urine sugar testing, opening and handing over IOL's in the OR. If the spouse is a professional, it may be possible to arrange a talk for in schools etc.

[J]. Queries.

For any query regarding your stay, work, accommodation etc. please do not hesitate to ask. Please call or mail Dr. Sanjiv Desai. The contact address is :

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