

My Nostalgic Trip to NASA

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On the first of October in the year 2019, I got the opportunity to visit National Aeronautics and Space Administration commonly known as NASA. I was one of the best performers in international National Space Science Contest 2019, an online essay writing contest conducted earlier this year by the US-based Go4Guru, an online tutoring and educational tour services company. It was a 16hour long arduous journey to Miami, Florida via Doha, Qatar and cruising at an altitude of 40,000 ft, I was awed by the mesmerizing views of the land below. Then we travelled to Kissimmee to stay at Holiday Inn Resort.

On the day 1, we visited the John F Kennedy Space Center in Florida. It was a great learning experience while visiting NASA because we explored various places including the Atlantis space shuttle gallery. Then we headed to watch a 3D movie about Space. After having delicious food at Cosmic Ray Restaurant we went for shopping. The souvenir store at NASA was every shoppers delight.

The Day 2 was as exciting and memorable as the first one. We met an astronaut who had been on 2 space shuttle missions. Captain Winston Scott was not only inspirational but also gave us many insights about life in space. He told us about the special lightweight EVA suits that the astronauts. He also told us about his colleague Kalpana Chawla, a women par excellence. Later in the afternoon we took the bus tour and visited several restricted areas of NASA. We first visited the headquarters of NASA. Then we saw the assembly building which is the sixth largest building by volume in the earth. Then we saw the cryogenic labs as well as the launch pads. The launch complex 39A and 39 B was a spectacular sight which made the visit very purposeful. I was enchanted by the site of the Space X office, a company which works to spend common people as tourists to space which was newest addition to NASA. There were Florida's famous Alligators in water-bodies all along the way exciting the students as NASA is situated in a national refuge for animals called as Merritt Island.

On the day 3 days we were very nervous as we had to head for the essay writing contest final round to be held in the conference room of another holiday inn across the city. The essay writing competition went better than expected and then we had a PowerPoint presentation by the admissions in charge of the Florida Institute of technology who briefed us about the admissions procedures for international students. Then astronaut Winston Scott visited us to give us brief insights about various expeditions to space. Then the winners were announced. After the photography session with Winston Scott we headed back to the hotel.

On the day 4 we found ourselves relaxing by the swimming pool and having a good time with each other. Then we headed to the Cici's pizza to have wonderful lunch with friends. Then we filled our evening hours with endless laughter and nonstop conversations.

On the day 5 I got to fulfill my childhood dream. We visited the Disney World's Magic Kingdom. The rides called Prince Charming Regal Carrousel, Tomorrowland's Speedway, Peter Pan haunted Mansion, "it's a small world after all" and The seven dwarfs mine train was splendid. The trademark Disney Parade was a spectacle to watch. The fireworks were the icing on the cake.

The next day we visited University of Miami to understand about the courses offered for undergraduate students for a US education. We were also informed about the examinations one needs to take up for studying abroad.

In the evening we commenced our return journey to our home country with our hearts full of lifetime memoirs. From this trip I learnt to be independent and accept all the challenges that life has to offer. I made some wonderful friends for life. **I also learnt to value the privileges, but not be carried away by them as they are not permanent.**

