



Volunteer Introductory Guide



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Welcome to Animal Aid Unlimited

Volunteering is one of the most rewarding ways to help animals in need. We know from experience that giving animals hands-on love and affection is a wonderful healer, for yourself as much as the animals. At AAU, we strongly believe one of the best ways to heal a sick or injured animal is to help them feel safe, loved and nurtured. We encourage all our visitors and volunteers to spend time socialising with and giving love to our animals, be it brushing a donkey, giving physio to paralysed dogs or feeding orphaned calves.

Our shelter is very different to others in the West, because the animals at Animal Aid were not abandoned by owners, but were rescued from the street because of injury or sickness. This makes every second you give to them even more rewarding.

Some great reasons to volunteer at AAU include:

- ★ Seeing the animals' pure joy from your affection
- ★ Being able to provide dogs on bedrest the benefit of a loving interaction - imagine for many it is the most positive part of their day
- ★ Being able to walk dogs who are restricted to kennels because of injuries
- ★ Being able to spend time with old dogs who have often had difficult lives
- ★ Giving cows a second chance at survival by helping to lift them and giving physio
- ★ The chance to experience another culture through working alongside local staff
- ★ Meeting other like-minded people from all over the world

Our volunteer coordinators will keep you busy giving hands-on help and loving care to dozens of animals every day, making all the difference to their recovery.

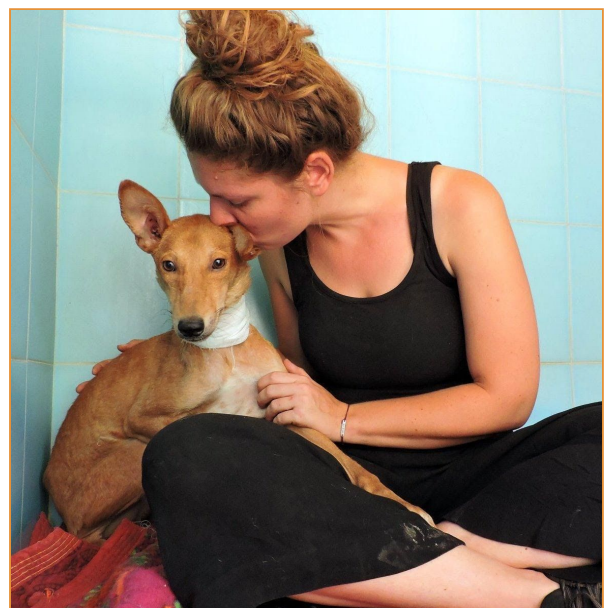
If you don't have time to stay long, make the most of whatever time you do have and know that your kindness matters greatly to each animal that you spend time with.

By volunteering at Animal Aid you are joining the team of dedicated animal protectors working to transform Udaipur into a city of compassion.

What will I do?

When you first arrive at AAU, you will be given a tour around the hospital to give you an idea of what to expect and how you can help. A volunteer coordinator will then meet with you and create a personalised schedule for you to follow, with some variations each day, making sure that you know what you can do to help and when.

Volunteer duties vary day to day with the demands from the hospital. Volunteers are not involved in giving medical treatment to animals - we are very fortunate to have this covered by our fantastic staff. Volunteers help us to take animal care to the next level, giving the animals love and affection so that



we can be much more than just a hospital. This includes activities such as giving physical therapy to dogs, cows and donkeys, hydrotherapy for paralysed dogs in the warmer months, bathing dogs with skin infections, sitting with animals receiving a drip, and giving orphaned calves the one-on-one time that they so desperately need (among many other things!).

For volunteers who have had their full rabies vaccinations, you will also be given access to our Dog Hospital. Once the volunteer coordinators introduce you to the area, you will be able to sit with and walk dogs who need special care.

There are break times from 11.00 - 11.20, lunch between 1.00 and 2.00 pm and a final break

between 3.45 and 4.00 pm. We do request that volunteers and visitors leave the areas at these times as our staff need a break too.



Please note, puppies are kept separate from adults due to the fact most are too young to effectively receive the rabies inoculation making them much higher risk than most of the other animals at AAU. Infectious diseases are also much more likely to be spread by puppies than adult dogs, so volunteers will not be given access to the puppy area. However, there are so many other animals who would love your affection that you won't even notice!

What should I expect at AAU?

AAU is a busy animal hospital, the only one of its kind in Udaipur and for several hundred kilometres. There will be animals admitted with severe injuries, animals who might not make it despite our best efforts, animals who have only ever seen the bad side of people, alongside disabled permanent residents such as our paralysed dogs. Equally, you will see animals make miraculous recoveries, animals who go from being terrified to thriving on human affection, and animals released in better condition than any of us could ever have hoped.

However, the initial introduction can be overwhelming to some. The best step is to focus on what you can do to help. We are here for the animals, so focus on the action of providing loving comfort and care. Most volunteers find that after the first couple of days, witnessing the dedication of our staff and other volunteers, and seeing the healing process in action, makes the whole experience so worthwhile.

When can I come to Animal Aid?

Visitors are welcome at AAU all year round, 365 days a year. It is worth checking the weather in Udaipur to see what suits you best.

From March to June it is summer, with temperatures averaging 40°C, so we tend to have less volunteers during this time. We ensure there is plenty of shade and filtered water on tap, and encourage volunteers to help with dog hydrotherapy in our designated pool in these months.

July to September brings the monsoon, so although the temperature is cooler, the humidity is higher and you can expect heavy rainfall a few hours each day on most days. Udaipur is also

exceptionally beautiful during the monsoon, with the mountains becoming lush and green and the lakes filling up again.

In winter (October to March), the weather is much cooler again, and can be positively chilly (especially at night) around December and January so do bring some warm clothes if you plan to visit then. October to March is when we usually see the highest number of visitors and volunteers.

We are open for visitors and volunteers between 10 am and 4 pm (please note lunchtime is between 1 and 2 pm and tea breaks are between 11 to 11.20 am and 3.45 to 4 pm - volunteering or visits will not be possible during this time). Every visitor, whether volunteering or just visiting, will be given a tour so that they have a good idea of what we do. Tours run at set times, so it is a good idea to schedule your arrival around one of these times:

- ★ 10:30 am
- ★ 12:00 pm
- ★ 2:30 pm
- ★ 3:30 pm

Many visitors stay and volunteer for just a few hours, some visitors come just for a tour and stay for a few weeks! Even those who have very limited time can help animals whilst they are here. Any time you can give is valuable to us - stay for as long as you wish.

We welcome children over 8 years old for a visit, however please be aware the tour will be modified to ensure the safety of the child, and certain areas will be restricted to children. Due to the sensitive nature of many areas and the potential for getting hurt, volunteering is not possible for under 14s (please do get in touch if you feel strongly that you have a child who is very mature and could cope with everything that a busy animal hospital has to deal with). 14-18 year olds are welcome to volunteer provided they have a parent or guardian who can accompany them at all times.



Do I have to register in advance to volunteer or pay?

Volunteering at AAU is free and all year round. There is no requirement to register beforehand - just turn up!

However, it is useful (but not essential) to email us at volunteering@animalaidunlimited.org if you plan on staying for a longer period, and notifying us of your arrival date so we can plan for your being here and make the most of it!

What should I wear?

Make sure to check the weather for the time you are there and dress accordingly. Layers are useful especially in winter when the day starts off cold and can become hot by lunchtime. We recommend closed shoes (walking shoes or similar are even better!), long and loose-fitting trousers or knee length shorts to help prevent scratches from excited dogs, and a loose fitting top that covers the shoulders. We do recommend basic modesty for both men and women to respect the culture of our staff. Be prepared to get a little bit dirty - dogs will want to climb on your lap, calves will want to lick your arms, donkeys might shed some hair when you brush them.

Revealing clothes (very short shorts, crop tops, very baggy tank tops) are not considered appropriate wear in India - you may get a few stares from the locals if you choose to wear these anyway. Tight yoga pants may also be a little bit too revealing - you will be doing lots of bending at AAU so bear this in mind.

It's a good idea to bring sunscreen and a hat no-matter what season it is. A waterproof might be useful during monsoon season, and bring a reusable water bottle that you can fill from our filtered water machine as you will be drinking a lot of water!



Where can I stay? How do I get there?

The best place for recommendations is our [Animal Aid Unlimited Volunteers](#) group on Facebook, where many past and future volunteers share experiences about where they have previously stayed or will stay.

We recommend staying in the Old City where you can meet with other volunteers and easily take an auto-rickshaw (tuk-tuk) to AAU and back for around Rs 400 per day (make sure you don't pay the driver until you've arrived back at your destination in the city) - it's worth sharing with other volunteers to split the fare. AAU is in Badi, around a 20 minute drive from the Old City.

There are dozens of popular options which are within easy walking distance of good restaurants and attractions such as the City Palace.

There is a resort called The Rustic Pines within very easy walking distance of AAU (5 minutes walk) which is basic but pleasant enough, but do be aware they often hold loud parties at weekends

which can run into the early hours. It is also difficult to get transport to the city from here in the evenings.

If you don't want to travel via auto-rickshaw, a bus is available which costs just Rs 15 each way and often other volunteers take the bus too. It is available at the Chetak bus stand and Delhi Gate. You need to ask people which bus goes to Badi TB Hospital. After doing this once, you'll get the hang of it. It goes about every half hour.

There are taxi services such as Uber and India's version, Ola, which are cheap and easy to use within the city, however will rarely travel out to Badi and are not reliable to pick up from Badi either.

Scooter rental is possible in Udaipur but if this is your first time to India or if you're not accustomed to riding a scooter, we don't recommend travelling via a scooter. Road manners and habits are much different in India than in many countries in the west.

What about food?

There is a small shop outside of the AAU entrance which sells (vegan-friendly) snacks such as samosas and kachori for Rs 10 each and they will make black chai tea on request. The Rustic Pines also offer a vegan thali (2 curries, rice and chapatis) for Rs 70 at lunchtimes and many volunteers walk here at lunchtimes to eat. Alternatively, many guesthouses will happily provide a packed lunch at a small cost, and many volunteers bring fruit and biscuits or bread to snack on during the day.

Do I need to be vaccinated against rabies?

Please look at [WHO website](#) for the most up to date information about rabies in India.

It is not essential to be vaccinated against rabies to volunteer with us. For volunteers planning more than a few days volunteering at AAU, it is highly recommended that you have the vaccinations to allow access to dogs in our Dog Hospital (where newly rescued dogs are housed who have an unknown vaccination status).

If you are coming for a long time, it is cheap and easy to get the rabies vaccinations (a series of 3 injections over 3 weeks) in India. In Udaipur, we recommend going to Aravali Hospital, where it is around Rs 800 per dose.

What can I bring as donations?



Monetary donations are always preferred to allow us to best plan and manage our resources. However, there are certain items which can be difficult to get hold of in India, so we are always grateful to volunteers outside of India who can bring these.

Please have a look at the [in-kind donations page](#) on our website for up to date details about specific items we need.

Some items such as blankets, towels and dog bowls are easy to get hold of here in India and are gratefully received!

What should I do if I see an animal on the street who needs help?

There are many street animals around India and unfortunately it is quite possible that you will see an animal that is sick or injured.

OUTSIDE UDAIPUR

If you see an animal in need in another part of India, go online and search “Animal Rescue / Veterinary Clinic/Hospital” + the city you are in or contact FIAPPO (Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations - website: www.fiapo.org, email: mail@fiapo.org, please use “Animal Problem in <your city>” as subject line). They have names of many shelters and individual animal rescue activists in India and will give you phone numbers if available.

If there is no shelter or veterinary clinic, the last option is to take the animal to the government veterinary hospital. Every city in India has a government animal hospital but they are usually not very equipped for helping strays and almost never have kennels or a place to admit an animal. However, they still may be able to help, so if the animal is really serious and you think they cannot survive without medical attention do take them there.

IN UDAIPUR

If you see an animal in need in Udaipur (especially seriously injured animals - hit by a car, severely wounded, bleeding, collapsed, stuck etc.) you can call our Outreach Officer Raj on 09950531639. Alternatively, for Hindi speakers you can call one of our emergency line operators on 09829843726, 09784005989 or 09602325253. It's best to find a local who can tell you exactly where you are before you call, and look for shops or hotels or other landmarks nearby to help our ambulance drivers get there as soon as possible. You will need to stay with the animal until our ambulance arrives, and while we'll do our best to reach as soon as possible, please bear in mind that we have many emergency request calls and it may take longer than expected. It usually takes within 30 to 60 minutes for one of our ambulances to arrive.

If the injury is not very serious or you aren't sure, take a photo and a screenshot of the location where you last saw the animal, and you can show it to a volunteer coordinator when you arrive, or email it to us on info@animalaidunlimited.org.

You will very likely see one or more animals with some hair loss or who is a bit underweight, but unfortunately this is simply the norm for many street animals and it is difficult for us to attend to animals like this while we have so many more serious animals in need of rescue.

If you see cruelty (someone throwing a stone at a dog, etc) feel confident in speaking out. Cruelty has no culture and the animals need your voice. Animals are protected under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, and if you see malicious cruelty and are able to obtain the name and address of the



perpetrator with any photos and videos if possible, you can go to the nearest police station to register the cruelty. No matter what city in India you are in the police are obligated to register your complaint and you can call Raj for assistance. If you are not able to speak out, let us know what you have seen and where at the first possible instance and we will do everything we can to ensure the perpetrator is reported.

Thank you!

Animal Aid Unlimited wouldn't be where it is today without volunteers. We can't thank you enough for volunteering with us! We hope this guide covers the main questions you might have about volunteering, but please do get in touch at volunteering@animalaidunlimited.org if you do have any more queries.



Additional information: how can I be a responsible tourist in India?

It can be difficult to navigate your way through India and Asia whilst being a responsible tourist. Here are some of the best ways that you can make a difference, for the animals, for the environment, and for your own conscience.

Feeding stray dogs - We love that people who visit AAU care so much that they want to help as many animals as they can. We recommend that if you feed any street animals, you ensure they don't become dependent on you for food. If you are just visiting for a few days that won't be a problem, but if you are here for many weeks, make sure that the food you give is only a bonus and they are getting their main food from a local source so that when you leave they won't suffer any consequences. Please also be aware of where you are feeding them - feeding dogs in a busy place where they might be considered a nuisance could annoy locals and put the dogs more at risk.

Animal rides - Many tourist sites will offer elephant, camel or horse rides. We strongly recommend you do not ride them. These animals are tied almost constantly, never let roam free with another of their kind, usually tied in the hot sun on cement, they have been taken out of their native habitat and "broken" which literally means their spirits and will to be who they really are has been destroyed.

Consuming animal products - Avoid milk, eggs and leather. India is one of the world's largest producers of milk and one of the biggest leather exporters. If you are drinking milk in India because you believe cows are treated better here it is not the case. Every glass of milk tea or lassi is the milk that belonged to a mother's baby and is being starved and tied, killed or abandoned on the road.

80% of eggs in India were laid by hens confined in factory farm battery cages. These hens will live their whole lives, about 2 years, in awful confinement until they are slaughtered. Chickens are every bit as maternal as other animals are but are robbed of their every mothering need to nest and care for their babies.

Leather - Leather is a huge industry across India, used to make bags, shoes and cover items such as notepads. Many shopkeepers will try and persuade you that this is "ethical" leather that comes from an animal who died naturally. This is absolutely not the case. Some will deny that an item is real leather when it clearly is (basically they will tell you whatever they think will make a sale!). Being slaughtered for leather is the fate of many unwanted male calves and bulls, many of whom are bred only for this purpose, so avoiding leather products is the only way to avoid contributing to this cruel industry.

Snake charmers - Don't give money to so-called "snake charmers". Cobras in a basket are always kept in that basket until they die about a month or so later after their venom glands have been burned or cut out. Their salivary glands are injured in this barbaric process and they cannot survive. Forced to live curled up in a tiny basket and only taken on to be surrounded by crowds and taunted is the cruelest abuse and must not be entertained. It is also illegal under the Wildlife Protection Act.

Begging monkeys - You might be unfortunate enough to come across monkeys being used to "beg" for money or perform in other ways. Captive monkeys are trained by being beaten and being deprived of food, and will have their teeth pulled out so they can't attack their owner. Not only are these monkeys forced to endure immense suffering in order for a human to make money, keeping and using monkeys in such a way is actually illegal in India. If you do come across this, absolutely do not give money and if you are able, report it to the police and/or PETA India.

Zoos - You will find many zoos in India, sometimes under the name of a "biological park". These zoos are notorious for keeping majestic animals such as tigers and leopards in completely inadequate conditions, with the animals often malnourished and psychologically damaged from being kept in spaces that are too small with no enrichment. The only way to improve the situation for these animals is to show that there is no demand to see them in captivity. Don't visit these places. You can see tigers, elephants, leopards etc. in the wild in India on a safari in one of India's many national parks.

Animal souvenirs - Avoid purchasing camel or other bone. You might be told that there is bone inlaid in a table top and that it has come from a camel or other animal who died a natural death. This is not true. Every time you purchase an animal product you are sponsoring an animal's death.

Don't buy or take shells. They should be left on the shore for the role they play in the ecosystem for thousands of species. Buying shells contributes to the degradation of the ocean floor and animals.

Don't purchase peacock feathers. You will be told that these feathers were collected from natural moulting/shedding but just think about it: millions of peacock feathers are sold across the country

and it is extremely difficult to find even a single full length feather even in areas where peacocks live. There are no legal peacock farms so these gorgeous birds are being killed for their feathers.

Plastic - Try to avoid plastic - especially single use plastic. Many places in India do not have a robust waste-management system, so plastic garbage often stays littered on the ground or in open garbage bins and can very easily end up in a cow's stomach. Plastic bags are one of the biggest killers of cows on the street who eat them especially if they have remnants of food inside. Reuse plastic bottles, refuse plastic straws, try to take your own bags when shopping, snack on fresh fruits in peel (bananas, oranges etc.) rather than crisps and other cheap snacks, and if you do end up with plastic then make sure it goes in a bin rather than on the street.