

COMMUNITY BULLETIN

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2002

DIARY OF A TRAVELER: HELPFUL HINTS FOR TRAVELING TO KABUL

BY RAMEEN MOSHREF (CONT ON PAGE 2)

I recently came back from a one-month trip to Afghanistan. This was my second trip in five months. The first time I went to Kabul in May 2002. I was shocked to see how the people, culture and environment had changed. The second time I went to Kabul, I was amazed by the changes that took place in the span of five months.

On the Way to Kabul

As Ariana Airlines is acquiring more airplanes and reactivating old routes, it becomes easier to fly into Afghanistan. The Ariana travel agents in each of the connecting cities will take only cash and will issue tickets two hours before a flight. Ariana does have a web site www.flyariana.com, where you can get schedules and flight maps.

Afghans who are citizens of Western countries do not need a visa, so long as in their passport it says "born in Afghanistan". Those who speak Dari and Pashtu and are of Afghan descent but not born in Afghanistan can probably get away with not



getting a visa.

Be prepared to be shocked and embarrassed by some of their behaviors. Once on the ground, expect some tears to be shed by some returning Afghans who see Kabul for the first time. It truly is

an emotional moment. Get your video camera ready. The airport was once littered with bombed out military hardware and resembled a desert environment. Now it is cleared of landmines and most other evidence of the 23 years of war. Once on the tarmac, feel free to kiss the ground, as I did.

Transportation in Kabul

In the span of 5 months (May-Oct 2002), most of the rocket-ridden, pot-holed roads in Kabul were repaired. There are plans to repair the roads connecting Kabul, Qandahar and Herat. Transportation is still cheap by Western standards, but there are few facilities available outside Kabul for a relatively comfortable stay. If you plan to travel outside Kabul, take bottled water and enough food, as towns are few and far between and the chances of finding a good place to eat are slim.

CHECK OUT THE:

- *Helpful Information for Traveling to Kabul*
- *More Detailed Information on Our Website*
- *Body & Soul Programs Boosts Afghan Women's Morale and the Economy*

TEACHING BEAUTY, NURTURING EMPOWERMENT

(CONT ON PAGE 3)

In the Spring of 2003, the Body & Soul Beauty and Wellness Program will begin rotating teams of educators to Afghanistan, teaching beauty to and nurturing the empowerment of women there. Among the educators are several local Afghan-Americans, including beauty professional Shaima Ali, of Flushing Queens. These teachers hope to renew the morale of Afghan women and to

boost the local economy.

The Body and Soul Program is a joint collaboration between the beauty industry and PARSA, an NGO that has worked in Afghanistan since 1996. Their motto echoes the classic ideology of self-sufficiency: "Give a woman food, she will eat for a day...with self-reliant skills she will eat for a lifetime." Their mission is to

provide women in Afghanistan with access to beauty and wellness-related training, as well as entrepreneurial skills.

The Program will revitalize an industry that had flourished in Afghanistan since the 1940s. The years of war and the oppressive Taliban regime, however, destroyed most aspects of the Afghan economy and salons

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DIARY OF A TRAVELER: HELPFUL HINTS FOR TRAVELING TO KABUL

BY RAMEEN MOSHREF (CONT FROM PAGE 1)

Taxi

It is estimated that over 70,000 taxies work in Kabul, which results in traffic congestion during rush hour inside the city. This is, however, the best way to get around.

Health

Anyone who goes to Afghanistan for the first time usually gets sick from the food or the water. Take some antibiotics and drugs for diarrhea and indigestion. It won't hurt to carry a small first-aid box, along with aspirin, Advil, Alka-Seltzer, iodine tablets for water purification and rubbing alcohol. For a complete list of what vaccinations you need, go to the CDC (Center for Disease Control) website.

Currency Exchange

Afghanistan is going through a transition where the older Afghani is being replaced by the Karzai government issued currency. Because of the instability of the Afghani, many businessmen prefer to perform transactions with the Pakistani Kalder. Pick-pocketing is common so be careful where you put your money!



2 kids washing a car with waste water coming out of a nearby public bath.

Shopping

The most common place to go souvenir shopping is Chicken Street, which is a 1000-ft strip located in Shahr-e Naw. Both sides of



Chicken Street and its adjacent streets are lined with souvenir stores, selling all kinds of goods including jewelry, home decorations, carpets, traditional clothing and animal skins. Shahr-e Naw, in general, has the most modern items and is pricey. For most household needs, you can shop in Mandaii Market, one of the oldest markets in Kabul. It is much fun and plentiful, if you don't mind the mud or dust.

Restaurants

More and more restaurants are opening up all over Kabul. The recent favorite is the Popalono, an Italian restaurant in Shahr-e Naw, near Qowa-e Markaz, offering good atmosphere and attentive waiters. They even offer seafood, recently imported from Dubai. New fast food restaurants have opened up in Micro Rayon and in Shahr-e Naw, offering french fries, hamburgers and hot dogs.

People and Culture

After 23 years of war and 5 years of the oppressive Taliban regime, the people of Kabul are a different people.

The culture that is practiced and the norms that are exercised today are very different from those of Kabul in the 70s and 80s. As people from Iran and Pakistan pour into Kabul, it is gaining a new identity. The young people who grew

up in Pakistan and Iran feel more alien in Afghanistan and bring with them their adopted cultures.

THIS ARTICLE IS AN ABRIDGED VERSION OF WHAT IS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE. FOR MORE DETAILED TRAVEL INFORMATION (AIRPORTS, HOTELS, PHONE SERVICES, ETC.), VISIT US AT WWW.AFGHANCOMMUNICATOR.COM.



A photographer at the Old Micro-Rayon Market. People still take pictures on the street in less than an hour.



A young man giving his mother a ride home. Due to poverty, lack of goods & machinery most Afghans during the Taliban had bi-cycles. Today, bi-cycles are ideal transports in crowded Kabul streets.

TEACHING BEAUTY, NURTURING EMPOWERMENT

(CONT FROM PAGE 1)

were no exception. After the fall of the Taliban, one of the first dramatic signs of liberation was the return of Afghan women to beauty salons.

The training will extend beyond hairdressing to include other fundamental business skills like salon distributorship, management and bookkeeping. For these women, mostly widows, self-reliance and independence are of the utmost importance as it will allow them to provide for their families and to make a tangible impact on the economy.

By March 2003, Body & Soul expects to have completed the renovation and extension of the space that was provided by the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs. The Ministry designated a section of its own space for the use of the program. Of course, there are other major obstacles that the educators must overcome to realize their goals. The years of instability resulted in devastating illiteracy rates and destroyed the sanitation infra-

structure. Furthermore, the program must continually recruit instructors who are willing to rotate through Afghanistan.

In spite of the challenges faced, hairstylist Terri Grauel reports that the women are excited and welcome the program. Grauel spent two weeks in Afghanistan this summer and is a founder of Body & Soul. The other two founders are Mary MacMakin, also the founder of PARSA, and Patricia O'Connor, the Marketing and Operations Director. MacMakin lives most of the year either in Afghanistan or Pakistan. The work of the founders has been largely supported by commercial sponsors including MAC Cosmetics, Matrix and financially by Vogue Editor Anna Wintour. MAC has created instructional videos and brochures teaching basic techniques of make up application.

Body & Soul is not a superficial adventure in hair and makeup. It is a functional means to begin relieving women from the depression created by the Taliban regime and

to provide them with the tools they need to build their own futures.



INTEGRATING THE ART AND COMMERCE OF BEAUTY WILL PROVIDE THE TRAINEES WITH THE TOOLS NECESSARY TO ENTER THE FIELD AND TO THRIVE WITHIN IT, WHILE MAKING A TANGIBLE IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY.



سفر کابل

بعد از سفر یکماهه در کابل، دوباره به نیویورک یک ماه قبل بازگشتم. تغییرات اجتماعی، فرهنگی و کلتوری مسکونین فعلی کابل برای من بکلی تعجب آور بود. با رسیدن به کابل از ریختن چند قطره اشک، بخود تعجب نکنید.

در حدود ۷۰۰۰۰ تکسی در شهر کابل فعال استند، که باعث ازدحام ترافیکی میشوند. یکی از بهترین بازاران خرید توریستی، کوچه مرغان میباشد. هر روز تعداد رستورانها در شهر کابل اضافهتر میشود. یکی از مشهورترین رستورانتهای روز رستورانته اتالیبای پایالونو که در شهر نو موقعیت دارد میباشد.

بعد از ۲۳ سال جنگ متواتر تغییرات بیاندازه در کلتور و عنعنات فعلی مردم کابل دیده میشود. سبب اینهمه تغییرات نتنها جنگ بوده، بلکه آوردن کلتور و عنعنات خارجی با بازگشت مهاجرین افغان از ممالک شرقی و غربی همچنان میباشد.





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CLASSIFIEDS

AC is looking for qualified individuals to translate documents. Interested individuals must have a college degree and must be fluent in both English and either Dari or Pashtu. Work will be compensated.

AC is seeking a responsible part-time assistant for our office. Anyone interested must have experience with computers and basic office skills. Hours may be flexible. Please call AC at 718-445-6438.

Register now for Dari classes, taught by a qualified and experienced instructor. For more information call the AC office at 718-445-6438.

IT'S FLU SEASON!

What is the Flu?

Influenza, commonly called the flu, is always caused by a virus, *so antibiotics are not helpful*. In general, the flu is usually self-limited and not serious. Influenza is a major cause of hospitalization in people with chronic medical conditions, especially the elderly and the very young, and particularly those in low socioeconomic groups.

Vaccines for Viral Influenza

Unfortunately, influenza viruses undergo changes over time, so they are likely to become resistant to a vaccine that worked in the previous year. Vaccines are then redesigned annually to match the current strain.

The injected vaccines that are commonly used employ inactivated (not live) viruses. Flu shots are given in the fall, usually between October and December.

Even in people with a weaker response, however, the vaccine is usually protec-

tive against serious flu complications, particularly pneumonia. (Even vaccinated patients may still experience some flu symptoms, such as nasal congestion or sore throat.)

Who Should Get Vaccinated?

Influenza Vaccine in Children. The following children over six months should be vaccinated against influenza:

Any child with a condition that requires regular medical care.

Children with asthma. Any child who has been hospitalized for a serious illness (particularly lung, kidney, diabetes, sickle-cell, or immune deficiencies.)

Influenza Vaccines in Older Children and Adults. Anyone at risk for serious complications from the flu should be

vaccinated. The following are examples of adults who may require vaccinations.

All adults 65 years and older. Patients with heart disease, lung problems, immune deficiencies, diabetes, kidney disease, or chronic blood disease.

People at risk for complications for influenza and who are traveling to the tropics at any time or to the Southern Hemisphere between April and September.

Pregnant women at risk for complications of influenza. Vaccinations should usually be given after the first trimester unless women are in their first trimester during flu season and their risk from complications of the flu is higher than any theoretical risk to the baby from the vaccine.

Adapted from MDConsult
Patient Information

