

# St. Somewhere Times

**Time For Some Shopping!** No, we didn't just go down to the local market. Paul and I decided to go across Saudi Arabia to Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, U.A.E. The "playground of the Arabs".



Cairo is all the way across Saudi Arabia from this map. It took us 3 1/2 hours by plane to get there.

We had gotten tickets from a local travel agent that booked us on Egypt Air. The problem with that is Egypt Air has made it a point NOT to honor us as residents unless we have lived in Egypt for five years. That means tourist tax on all plane flights. There is a vast difference between local and tourist prices.

Many Americans don't know anything about Dubai. It lies along the coastline of the arab states known as the United Arab Emirates. It is close to Quatar, the base of American Armed forces from the Saudi War and the present occupation in Iraqu. Dubai is a man-made city in the middle of the desert. It started as a bedouin camp but a lot of money has been poured into it. Especially in the last fifteen years, construction and investments have turned Dubai into a sort of Las Vegas, except for the Gambling, liquor, prostitution, shows, or high cost of living. Dubai is a desert city that attracts Arabs and tourists from all over the world.

## The Palm Resort and More!



The Palm Resort (seen here from the air) is currently under construction. Perhaps you have heard of some world class resort shaped like a palm tree with underwater views in the hotel rooms. That is the plan.

**The following excerpt is from the website:**

[http://guide.theemiratesnetwork.com/living/dubai/the\\_palm\\_islands.php](http://guide.theemiratesnetwork.com/living/dubai/the_palm_islands.php) :

The Palm Islands, also referred to as The Palm Dubai and The Palms, are the world's two largest man-made islands, which are being built on the coast of the emirate of Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The project is being handled by Al Nakheel Properties (Nakheel Corporation), which will increase Dubai's shoreline by 120km (72 miles) and create a large number of residential, leisure, and entertainment areas. The idea was first announced in May 2002 and the two manmade freehold artificial palm tree-shaped resort islands are expected to maintain Dubai's position as a premium tourist destination. The Palms are already touted as the "Eighth Wonder of the World".

The two Dubai islands, The Palm Jumeirah and The Palm Jebel Ali, will be built in the shape of date palm trees and consist of a trunk; a crown with 17 fronds; and a surrounding crescent island - the back of which forms the breakwater. Collectively, the island will support more than 60 luxury hotels, 4,000 exclusive residential villas (sale), 1,000 unique water homes (sale), 5,000 shoreline apartments (sale), marinas, water theme parks, restaurants, shopping malls, sports facilities, health spas, cinemas and various dive sites.

**Note:** There is a second plan in action as the Palm is being built. A world resort is planned next to the palm that will consist of islands that form a map of the world.

## The Dubai Top 10

10. The cars stay in their own lanes at least a meter apart (you would NEVER see this in Cairo)
9. There are computer and electronic stores on every street corner
8. All different Arab nationalities go to Dubai, you are always surrounded by a variety of Arab dress
7. English is prevalent. Arabic and English are everywhere
6. Taxis are specific rates according to distance.
5. One might hear Indian Languages, Arabic, English, German, Thai, Chinese, or any number of languages
4. If you like shopping, there are malls on every corner of downtown.
3. The technologies are recent. (i.e. some taxis have video inside)
2. There is a DUTY FREE MALL inside of the airport (anything from a Porsche to alcohol to electronics)
1. The air is still clean, it is right on the water, and there is great diving

## Hail? Rain?



We never expected to be caught in a hail storm in the deserts of the Arab world! Yet, see the evidence. I am standing in a kitchen with hail as big as pieces of candy. The thunderstorm lasted for about an hour. It brought enough rain to flood the streets and hail big enough to dent unwary cars.

I know of only two people that voluntarily ran out INTO the storm. Paul and I got soaked as we picked up hail, splashed in the puddles, and screamed with delight as the rain poured down.

Please remember, rain is not usually something I rave about. But did you know, Cairo averages a few inches ANNUALLY? I hadn't seen rain, much less hail, since I got here.

Guess what happens to traffic when it sprinkles? Traffic stops. Even on a sunny day, if someone is washing their car, another driver will swerve in an effort to completely avoid water on the road. Water is danger for a driver. Now, imagine if there were a

thunderstorm dumping inches of water on the roads? Now imagine hail. Truly the end of the world!

One of the things I really missed in Honduras was culture. This city is full of all kinds. I naturally hold music dear to my heart. Wednesday nights will be AUC night from now on, for me. This last week was a concert at the AUC in honor of Frank Sinatra. There are a lot of us fans out there. Face it.

The school sponsored a bus, after school, to take us to the American University of Cairo (AUC). Bill Barrazzoul, an English teacher for high school, set up a tour of AUC for us. The tour was basic, but we decided to stay in the city and have dinner before the concert in the evening. What a great night!

It was a well put together concert. The sound men were idiots. It is too bad. They just don't understand that if the show features a single singer with a band, the singer should be the loudest. There was too much band. The singer did a fantastic job dancing and singing like Frank. The piano player and guitarist were right on! There was also a clarinet, bass, percussion, trombone, and a wailing trumpet. Someone had a great idea to project a slideshow of Frank's life on a large white backdrop. Each time the band started a song, a picture of Frank would come up. They would wait until a few bars into the tune before they flashed up the name of that particular song. Well done! The only problem was the sleazy, poorly trained dancers in skimpy clothes that came out for one of the numbers. They were terrible. I considered only one of the women truly "eye candy". The rest were truly a bad idea.

I have rambled on enough. See you next issue. Ma salama.

*That's All Folks*