

Marc Mullinax: Around the World

Mediterranean Life Mixes Freedom, 'Inexpensive Loving'

Editors' Note:

Marc Mullinax, a senior history major from Raleigh, is traveling around the world by air and bus September 9--December 13. In addition to keeping his own journal, Marc is sending students at Mars Hill a record of his travels, hoping that more of them will see the exciting possibilities for gaining credit through independent study projects and travel.

Turkey is almost over and I am sorry to see it go. Right after my last report, I came under the hospitality of one Turk after another. They regard me as a guest in their country and treat me as such, under threat of hurting their feelings. I spent over a week on the south coast of Turkey--Anamur, Silifke--all these towns have the friendliest people. For more times than I can count, I was practically dragged into someone's shop and looked over, given cai (tea) and sweets, and made the center of attention. I think their hearts go out to visitors, who make an attempt (poor as it may be) to speak the language. The three words for "hello", "where is", and "good" were the passwords that I used. I was taken from there. The people are friendly to each other as well. Every morning there is a ritual of handshakes to your friends. Many times I went into town after sunrise to watch it wake up and make friends over cai.

The food is another thing worth returning to. Sis kebab, eggplant, salads, rice pudding, and especially the yogurt (1 kilo for 40¢) make up my extremely tasty diet. One can get very full for a dollar at the cafes. I've fallen in love with dried figs and the haluah (egg whites, sesame seeds and sugar all mixed together). The cai is so good I've bought a box for home use. The last two weeks have seen me gain five pounds at least.

The Mediterranean life is one of care-free living as well as inexpensive loving. I've spent about forty dollars in sixteen to seventeen days. I have the best tan in years. Swimming in blue seas does wonders for the body, soul, and outlook. In Silifke, I went out with a local fisherman to cast his nets and accompanied him the next morning when he pulled them in. Only twelve fish, one ray and a shark (baby) in 500 meters of nets. It was really eye-opening to see a local person dance his dance and face the luck the world gives him.

The Goreme valley is a little known, mystical wonderland that has been forgotten by time, and seemingly the rest

of the world. A volcano erupted in ages past and the soft volcanic ash has eroded quite strangely. There were actually two eruptions and the top layer is harder than the bottom. Cone shaped formations (bottom layer) topped by hard, wide rocks grace a whole valley. Also, in the soft ash, ancient peoples have burrowed into the mountain sides, making dwellings (and often cities) that hold 10,000 and go down into the earth for nine floors. The most interesting were old christian churches, built into the ash with frescoes adorning them. Once there were 360 of these churches, but the quick erosion has eradicated 352 of them off the face of the earth.

Islam is a way of life here. Mosques and minarets are present in the smallest of towns. Five times a day, the caller (now through a loudspeaker) calls the people to prayer. Every morning I am awakened by the chanting that goes on from three to fifteen minutes. In the stillness it sounds like the voice of God calling to do his bidding. The religion has made the people very honest and friendly, but they keep it to themselves. It is not an evangelical religion as mine claims to be, so I was not even allowed to see the *Koran*.

The eastern Turks are less friendly than the southern Turks. The men get very personal with the ladies on our tour. I got spit upon and had a firecracker thrown at me. The ladies have it bad. It is a man's world here (as in all Turkey). Women are never seen unless in pairs or heavily veiled. Rural areas

are worse than the cosmopolitan places. Turkish television is heavily accented with Turkish art. Dancing, singing and opera are on evening television. Six out of ten commercials are from the three main banks in Turkey.

Also, in east Turkey the roads are bad. We spent half of today on dirt roads. Imagine international trucking on one and half lane roads that climb and descend mountain passes of 8,000 feet!

Today I bought something after haggling over the price--the first time for an actual purchase. The man told me that he thought America was a capitalistic place which he didn't like at all. He was a fighter of the Kurdistan cause; that being a race of people situated in west Iran and east Turkey who want independence. He was also a communist. Only after I assured him that I was sympathetic to socialist ideals did he sell the shirt to me for \$1.50 less than advertised.

You don't know what you have until it's gone--and then you tend not to miss it. I've become very used to and happy with the life I lead. Showers may be every other day, wondering where your food will come from, worrying about the food and water, are all integral parts of my existence. It's been two weeks since I've seen hot water and there is none in sight. I have not seen ice since I left home. Really, you don't know how well Americans live. In my case the only way I could be convinced was to see it. I'm convinced.



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