



On a recent long flight back to Jordan, we had the delightful opportunity of chatting with a young Arab father who had won the visa lottery to the US several years ago. He was now coming back to Jordan with his family for his brother's wedding. He appreciates his life in the US, building a thriving landscaping business there, but he also shared his love for certain things in Jordan that bring him joy each time he returns. As we talked, we realized that we also loved many of the same things that he did, so then decided to share some of these things with you. (Living in Jordan for over 50 years, we are very aware of the challenges, difficulties, distresses and disappointments in being here, but that is another story. This letter is about the positives!)

Summer Evenings

For about 6 months out of the year, you can sit outside in the evenings—on your roof, in your garden, or at an outdoor restaurant. No fog, no smog, no bugs, no slugs! The air is dry, the city is cooling off and a simple sitting area outside under the stars is where you want to be.



Love of family, kids and Tayta

Arab families are large and very connected; our friend on the plane was happy to be the “ATM Card” for his brother's wedding expenses. He and his wife had decided early that they wanted a dozen kids; their 3 boys so far were a good start. Kids are included in nearly all events; you often see them falling asleep in their mother's arms at late night weddings or engagements. The grandmother, or Tayta, is a beloved member of the family, dispensing kisses and toffees and chocolates constantly, and making huge pots of favorite foods for weekly Friday family lunches.

Arabic language, Arabic music

Arabic is one of the most difficult, yet most beautiful and expressive languages in the world. Along with the equally beautiful Arabic music, Arabic holds a very special place in our hearts. Actually, a very deep place in Bob's soul! We both love singing Arabic worship songs with their energy, firm beat, clapping and meaningful Arabic lyrics. Bob's Arabic oud is the first thing he would rescue in any crisis!



Coffee culture, Arabic food



Coffee was discovered in Ethiopia, then the Yemenis learned how to roast and grind it. The rest has been a glorious history. We have everything from Bedouin coffee to Starbucks here

in Jordan, with coffee remaining a social connector for signing deals, reconciling problems, sealing marriage contracts and starting the morning. For Arabic food, every returning Arab young man has a favorite shawarma sandwich place to stop at on his way home from the airport, right before he gets to his Mama's house for mansaf! These tastes cannot be duplicated anywhere else,,,ever.

Red Keffiyehs, the World Cup

For sure, the most joyous event Jordanians have had in recent difficult times was our team's participation in the World Cup. While they were playing in the US, watch parties were held in the early mornings downtown in the ancient Roman Stadium. There were some hard losses, but the team played well. They made a great impression on the international stage, with the red keffiyeh a bright, cheery symbol.



Showing up

Perhaps more than anything, we love the way Arabs show up in person when you are sick or sorrowful, joyful or mourning~~they come to join you and encourage your heart. We are grateful to God for this blessed companionship on our Jordan journey!

Bob and Suzanne