

## Reliving the details: Morocco

Anticipating what is said to be one of the worst snow storms that Seattle has seen in decades I find myself sitting on the couch, waiting for the snow with a beer in hand and falling deeply back into the images from Morocco. I have so much more to share with you all and I feel that if I don't do it now it may never happen as February brings with it a new set of fun excursions.

Using my journal from that trip as a guide I'm reliving the details. At the end of each day I made a scattered list of all that that day entailed. I've learned from previous experiences that I tend to quickly forget the details and it's in those where the real journey lies.

Each day was packed full of new sites, new sounds, and not enough sleep, leaving little time to write so what I do have written down is quite cryptic but it's enough to help me return to that place.

On the fourth day we woke up at the Atlas Kasbah in Agadir. The stucco-like facade covered an exterior that resembled a castle. The surrounding landscape reminded me of the Umbrian region of Italy where I would look out over the cliffs of Orvieto and see vineyards, monasteries, and long winding roads leading to places I wanted to explore. Here the rolling hills weren't covered in grape vines but of Argan trees and plants that looked prickly even from the distance of where I stood. The varying brown hues and absence of much green was a welcoming reminder that I was indeed in Africa.

The Atlas Kasbah is the dream of a husband and wife team. The kasbah is welcoming and immediately sets the scene of a place for respite and rejuvenation. I encouraged such behavior and found myself lying by a pale blue pool in the middle of November having just had a traditional Moroccan spa treatment. I lay back in the chaise for a moment soaking in the warmth of the sun and this rare moment of complete and utter relaxation.

You see those moments are a distant memory when three children are my daily routine. I was

torn between the desire to just sit in that moment or record a few of the details in my journal as a way to sort of safe-keep that moment so I could live off of it for the months to come.

I anticipated the points in my days when I would need to stop and find a piece of that sun-filled happy place in order to find perspective in the midst of a messy house, screaming children, and an uncooked dinner.

Briefly I wrote of that hot sun and how the gentle breeze would interrupt at just the right moment, never allowing you to get too hot but making you miss its warmth before it returned. It took only a few seconds but I wrote of the pool and the vibrant gardens, the rosy orange glow of the kasbah at sunset, and the smell of Moroccan basil – softer and more subtle than our varieties. Then I lingered in that place cementing it in my mind and appreciating every aspect of it.

Right after the page in my journal detailing the scene surrounding me and the warm Moroccan sun I wrote, "I'm afraid to leave for fear I'll never return." It goes without saying that I missed my family it's just that I wasn't ready to leave. I wanted them to fetch a plane and meet me in Morocco instead of me heading home.

What better way to leave a place than not wanting to leave? The memories of that place are forever set to induce a pleasant longing. When you talk to others about it your entire face lights up and your insides swell. It becomes a mission, of sorts, to encourage others to venture there and demand they take you with them when they do go.

I do hope to return, but for now I am living in the details and in the feeling of never wanting to leave that place.

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