

2012_Oman_Maschinenbau_Kuba

I just finished my internship in the Oman and can now look back upon 2 months of extraordinary experiences, which one may not find anywhere else in the world. Before going there, my whole social environment was rather surprised, and some even scared, about me leaving for such an exotic country.

So I tried to prepare the best I could for Oman, taking rather moderate clothing with me and preparing myself for 2 months of living modest. But upon arriving in Oman, all the expectations were overthrown and I could not help myself but be astonished upon how different everything seemed around there. The most obvious thing was that I left Hamburg at 15° C and arrived in Muscat in the morning at 42° C. But the coolest thing was how friendly and generous the Omanis are, especially if you are a lost foreigner at the airport. Having no Visa and only office contact dates, which does not help on a Friday (weekend), some officials from the airport took care of me and organized everything, so that I can enter the country. They brought me straight to the apartment, which turned out to be a big house filled with IAESTE students, all-in-all almost 30. It was a nice welcoming around there and they immediately took me with them to one of their friends. His family invited all of us for a big lunch, our girls had to go to the left living room and all the boys were led into the right wing. Being completely exhausted from the long trip, it was still pretty cool sitting on the floor and eating one of the first big rice meals (rice was served later at least twice a day).

That's just for the arrival, but I figured it would be a nice example for how life works over in Oman. Events like these kept on for the rest of my stay. If you just stood outside of your apartment smoking, some neighbors would approach you and start talking to you. Being able to speak the smallest amount of Arabic, they start to invite you over for dinner or just offer you their telephone number if you should need any kind of help in the future. This did not just happen once, but happened to every one of us all the time. This just shows how nice and open hearted the Omanis are.

My work started on the first day of the Ramadan at 8 a.m., and it turned out that my supervisor had a perfect project for me and gave me a lot of new and interesting papers, some not even published, to get used to the project. Working speed seems to be different in Oman, as he was always surprised and happy when you reached in the assignment he handed out the next day, which seems not to be usual in Oman, especially not during Ramadan.

The project was quite fulfilling during the day, but the best part of course were the nights, when the Omanis and some of my fellow students had broke their fast in the evening and everybody went out. Going out in Oman is different than going out in Hamburg, but fun nonetheless. Some fellow Omani students took you out for Shisha, Billiard, for the beach or for barbecue almost every evening, and took you on nice trips to different Wadis (springs in the mountains around the deserts) on weekend, or for just driving around in big cars in the desert and sleeping there under the open sky watching stars.

During the celebrations after Ramadan the IAESTE officials invited all of us to a trip down to Salalah, 1000 km south of Muscat. They organized and paid for the plane, accommodations and 2 big busses to show us around. That was one of the nicest experiences around there, but anyhow, I can just recommend this country and internship to anyone who thinks he can handle some weeks without alcohol and talking to every women you see. But the cultural experience you make should be worth the while, and the friendships you find there are something special.