

The Yze Ye Ye Hashish Holiday ~ Morocco, November 1980 to February 1981

By Denise Rosenberg (from questions asked by Michael Buckley 40 years later)

M: What made you head to Morocco?

D: Stuart and I went to Morocco in late November 1980 - for a hash holiday. Also, to get away from the European winter. A few English people (who were working at the Dutch flower/plant factory with us) told us to come with them to Morocco (they had been there the year before). As winter was fast approaching, we decided to do that. We had to wait a few weeks for our final holiday payment from where we were working in Heemstede, (Stuart had a UK passport, I had a French one) so we arranged for the bank to send the \$\$\$s owing to us to a bank in Morocco ... but it took 2 and a half months to get there.

Once we got to Fez, the Englishmen convinced us to buy a large amount of pretty bad hashish so most of our money was gone within the first 2 weeks. We finally arrived at Taghazout, a fishing village loved by hippies, about 600km south/west of Fez. At first, we all camped together but when they realized we were running out of money, they packed up and moved away from us. Bloody Englishmen.

Luckily, due to the Islamic rule of giving aid to the poor, and even though we were first world tourists, we were supported, fed, housed (in a tent area) and generally looked after. Gotta love Muslims. The alternative would have been to hitchhike back to Holland in the middle of winter ... with no money. Yikes!!! We were very lucky.

But if we hadn't run out of money, we would never have met Mohammad, his brother, his weekend bed-mates and his many, many dogs. So, it was definitely worth running out of \$\$\$s.

M: Where did you live and sleep?

D: At first, we lived in our tent with other young tourists close by, but after the first week there, most things in our tent were stolen while we were out getting dinner one night. They stole most of our clothes and my vibrator too.

We had an air mattress (which luckily didn't get stolen). Once we got rescued by Mohammad (who was the town fence too), we moved into what was known as a Moroccan summer holiday area, where rich-ish Moroccans would come and pitch tents and enjoy the summer. It was an area blocked off by wooden fencing (no doors though) and there were lots of different areas to set up tents. It could hold about 10 families. Mohammad was employed to look after that area. Being winter time, there was no one else using that area while we were there.

Mohammad had come from Sudan to Morocco in the early 70s with 2 dogs. By the time we got there, there were at least 30 dogs or even more! They made sure nothing

bad happened in the area. We even had one dog that slept out the front of our tent every night ... hence lots of flea bites. The top dog got to sleep in Mohammad's room most nights. We learnt a lot about dogs during our time there.

We didn't shower for months (there was no running water, electricity or toilets back in the early 80s in that town) and we generally just hung out with the pack of dogs ... I do remember itching a LOT!

Every night Mohammad cooked tagine food. Sometimes meat, sometimes eel but mostly fish, sometimes not. Pretty much lots of carrots, maybe camel. It was good food, shared in Mohammad's small room (he didn't have a tent).

M: Why was he kind to you?

D: Mohammad would pick a couple of tourists to befriend every year and he would invite them to come and stay with him. I think he liked the company and to be able to speak English/German/whatever when he could. It was also a way for him to learn about the world from a different viewpoint. We provided a first world view of things. I think we were the first Australians he had met. We would hitchhike into Agadir (about 20 kms south) every week as he would give us money to buy him booze. He couldn't do that.

He did have a brother (can't remember his name) who visited often, but the brother didn't like Stuart and gave him a hard time, especially after a few drinks. But Mohammad would then give his brother a hard time.

M: What did you do during the day?

D: We wandered around the area, the town of Taghazout was about a km or two from the area we stayed at. We would also clean the dishes and collect firewood every day. We got up early in the mornings and went to bed early at night.

The dogs would follow us into the small town centre when we headed there, to make sure we were safe. I remember one night walking back from the town and seeing a French guy running up the beach calling out "John Lennon mort, John Lennon mort!!". So that is how we found out that John Lennon had been shot dead. So weird.

Every weekend Mohammad would have someone come and stay with him, in his room. One week it was a young woman (probably a prostitute and always the same woman) and the next week a young man would stay with him. Once they both turned up on the same weekend and it was on! A huge argument followed. It was only then that Stuart and I realized that he was sleeping with both of them.

We were also supplied with hashish every day ... so it's a wonder that I can remember anything! After dinner, Mohammad and his brother would drum different tunes on big empty plastic water containers, and we would join in.

M: What was the sea and weather like?

D: The sea wasn't too rough. We would paddle in and give ourselves a wash. We were pretty unwashed! We were there late November to February, and I can't remember a bad weather day. It was their winter, but we were very far south so weather was always good. 23-25c? Cooler at night.

While doing the booze runs to Agadir, we also checked out the bank ... and finally the \$\$\$'s arrived from Holland ... and just in time, as our 3-month visas were due to expire in the next few weeks.

We were very sad to leave. We had a big party to celebrate, then Mohammad and his friends (new young tourists) gave us a lift in a van to the bus stop. It was like leaving family. That is where the song 'Zye Ye Ye' came from. We headed back to Heemstede to work again, and 6 months later went to England and recorded it (well, Stuart and friends in the UK recorded it. I only paid for it, as I had to work a couple more weeks and Stuart couldn't wait for me to arrive, for some reason).

This is the picture Mohammad gave me as we were leaving. It was taken by another tourist that had stayed with him in the past.



Thank you, Mohammad, for a great experience and a great song too.