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A Week In Fez, Morocco

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The city of Fez.

Greetings from Africa!

The AUCP Marseille students are required to spend a week in Morocco and I just got back from ours. I learned a lot; the food isn't as tasty as what is prepared in Moroccan restaurants, Moroccans are very generous and welcoming, Fez is surprisingly progressive city... The list goes on.

Al-hamdilillah, we all stayed with host families and each of the American students had a Moroccan correspondent. This was by far my favorite part of our experience. I got to experience Morocco in a very authentic way. Rajaa, my correspondent, took me to the local Hammam (bathing house) and introduced me to real Berber dance. Also the women in an Arabic society have their own little world where beauty is hidden and secrets are shared, and I was fortunate to be adopted into this world for a week. I chatted all night with my host sister and her friend as we all shared the same room to sleep in.

Fez is divided as a city. There is the Medina which is the ancient village and the Nouvelle Ville, which was created by French colonization. The Medina is absolutely charming; the roads are small and full of life, as in the Disney movie Aladdin. The Nouvelle Ville has many impressive boulevards that are very French-looking indeed. Our conferences and meetings were held at INLAC, an exchange program with facilities located in the Medina. We learned how the veil that many Muslim women wear is now a personal choice rather than something forced, but there are still many opinions and interpretations on the matter. Fez is a progressive city - there are many women wearing tight western style clothing and the people are more open-minded, as expressed by my correspondent.

Overall Fez was an experience that broadened my horizons and I am thankful for that.