



Jeff Dokmo

Albania March 2010



Instead of the usual email update, I wanted to give you a brief visual tour. So here's a little glimpse into my life and some of the experiences I've had since arriving just over 2 months ago. Take a look...



My life in Albania. The front page included a photo of some quality graffiti in the alley that leads to my house. It has taken a little while, but slowly I have warmed to the idea of Che welcoming me home every day. The smaller photos on the front page displayed some old hidden tunnels and ruins in the foothills...

On the left, you can see Genta and Stela, two of my co-workers who love to go for 2-3 coffees almost everyday. A strong cultural tradition in Albania, coffee is where business actually happens most of the time. Plus you can't beat just sitting and talking over some coffee on a rainy day.

One of the most gratifying experiences is the market. There's nothing more fun than walking through a market where you pass stacks of carrots, mounds of lemons, and piles of tomatoes amidst a flurry of activity. The vegetables tend to be the most fresh and flavorful you'll find anywhere...seeing as most are locally grown and without chemicals.





Microfinance at work.

Mereme has been a widow for over 10 years. She took a loan from VisionFund and has worked very hard to fend for herself in the mountains outside of Librazhd, building a barn and improving her house. As you can see, Mereme has a unique sparkle in her eye that proves quite contagious. In the photo above, we paid a visit in hopes of grasping what impact the loan she took has had on her life and even her children (and grandchildren). Needless to say, the results were extremely positive. What an incredible and inspiring thing...to help one person come one step closer to helping themselves out of poverty.



Travels

From the castle of Kruja (left) to a gorge just outside of Tirana (center) to the cathedral of Korça (right), my travels within the country have led me to some very interesting places. The dynamics of this country are astounding as you go from sprawling farm fields into the mountains that soar up from seemingly nowhere. Exploring beyond the city's limits sometimes leads to cement remnants of communist memories or hidden gorges with pristine rivers or panoramas that leave you standing in awe. Albania, despite its small size, claims a bit of every landscape...from rugged mountains to the sandy beaches. Although my pictures paint a pristine picture of Albania, I don't want to fool you. If I were to turn around, you would see piles of garbage carelessly tossed on the ground, it's quite sad but it is the reality.



Thanks for coming on my visual tour of Albania.

I know that my journey has only just begun and I hope you continue to follow my tracks in whatever way suits you best...

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email

website

This park, right in the middle of the city, is a great refuge for those who live in Tirana (like me).