

Sunday, February 22, 2009
Paris, France

Dear Friends,

It is 2am now and in five hours the American Team and I will take leave Paris for Libya. (I have actually just spent an hour writing a note to you all just for the computer to shut down right before I hit send) So, here we go again.....

In an effort to keep you all informed we are making every effort to post through out this race when ever possible. Considering there is no internet or much of anything that resembles technology where we will be running we will see how these updates go. I've asked a friend to post on facebook for me...so if you see a post the chances are I have managed to download video/photos at an aid station and some benevolent soul has taking it from there.

Before we take off I just wanted to give you a little update of where we will be the next few days.....Please note that I got the historical information below from Lonely Planet for Libya...so Do Not quote me! When traveling on a flash these guidebooks are essential.

Right now the history of these places though interesting is nothing more than words on a page.....However, the objective is to bring these places and the journey of the First American team in Libya to life through stories, pictures, and video the next few days.

I'd love to hear from you and feel so blessed to have this opportunity. Check out our schedule below.

Day 1 Sunday Feb 22

8:00 Chartered flight from Paris to Sebha with Libyan Challenge participants

Sebha: Sebha is the largest settlement in the Libyan Sahara and has become a sprawling garrison town. The city is an important transit point for Saharan travel rather by tourists or trucks bearing human and other cargo often bound for Chad, Niger, and Algeria. A shopping trip of sorts the Sub Saharan travelers here are usually lugging their goods (often smuggled), which have arrived from across the desert.

Sebha is also the city where Qaddafi went to secondary school before he was allegedly expelled most likely for rioting against the Libyan's governments in action during the 1956 Suez crisis. In 1969 then in his late twenties, General Qaddafi the son of a desert nomad came to power in a bloodless coup in against the King Idris.

From Sebha we will take a bus for 6 hours through the desert to our race camp which is right outside Ghat. We will either sleeps in tents or in mud brick huts at the camp.

Day 2 Monday Feb 23

Prepare for race and visit Ghat

History: Ghat the ancient Tuareg capital was built in the Garamates in the 1st century BC atop the ruins of another earlier settlement known as Rana. Most of what we now see in Ghat dates from the 12th century. The Tuaregs referred to Ghat as the "Land of Peace" and it was known in the Libyan language as the "Land of the Sun." The Tuaregs of Tassili-n-Ajjer used the town as "free-trade-zone" of sorts. But this trade zone was only ensured if you paid a bribe to the local Tuaregs who ruled the area. In the 19th century Ghat lost its autonomy and was taken over by the Ottomans before it passed into the hands of the French and the Italians. But until tourist recently started coming to the area non-Muslim visitors were rare.

Day 3 Tuesday Feb 24

9:00am race starts

(Well, it should start. According to Laurent Locke a runner from last year the bus full of competitors got stuck in the sand on the way to a race. "The Tuareg's saved the day as they toted runners in their old pick up trucks to the start of the race. Enshallah (God Willing) we will not have that problem.

Day 3 - 5 Tues Feb 24 - Friday 27 6:00pm

First American Team takes on the Libyan Challenge

We hope to be done by Thursday but who knows

Day 6 Feb 28 CELEBRATE

Day 7 March 1 I head to Tripoli

Rebecca Byerly

Paris, France

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