

Lady Kendal Jaggar

A Journey of Diversity, Rich Culture & Asian Cuisine Whilst Travelling the Varying Terrains of

PAKISTAN

As I approached the immigration officer after a long flight I felt anxious for the first time since taking on my assignment with my producer and crew to explore Pakistan. As a journalist I had applied online for my visa which in fact was quite an easy process due to Pakistan's new approach regarding travel and tourism and encouraging both media & travel writers, to explore this beautiful terrain encouraging the foreigner to seek the wonders of their homeland with their E-Visa system now in place.

Life as a Pakistan woman would be a completely different world than that of my own western life, where not only was I a strong western woman with a curious mind, I had the freedom to explore fashion and wear non traditional clothes as I explored the wonders of the world.

I had a suitcase offering a diverse range of colours, fabrics and beautiful silk thread offering my new wardrobe of Kurtz, Panama, Shalwar and kameez. **Rawaaj uk** presented a vast range and were extremely helpful so my attire was fitting to explore Pakistan and also informed me of some of the customs I should abide by.

For instance I should never shake a man's hand first, I was told that I would have to place my hand over my heart as my greeting, then if the man offered his hand I could then do so. How very different from my strong western female leader approach. I would only be able to enjoy my Gin & Fever tree aromatic tonic in my Luxury hotel due to 96% of Pakistanis being Muslim, and therefore would receive 80 lashes if they were to be caught and the punishment enforced. Also not to

expect a traditional English breakfast, like most luxury hotel's offer around the globe as Pork is banned and seen as a dirty animal to the Muslim culture.

The horrible stigma that had been placed for too many years that this was a country full of Terrorists and frightening the common tourist away with the negative western media reporting. Like any country we travel to as a foreigner, a female solo traveller, a journalist or explorer or even a family there are dangerous areas in certain countries. Crime is a big player in our world of travel and there are of course radical groups around the globe that have tried to dictate leadership and create fear, but should we refrain from travelling to such beautiful countries around the world?

Ali Kazim Abidi would be our assigned tour guide throughout my intense tour of **Interior Sindh** where I would capture the true beauty of its historical sites alongside the cuisine.

We seemed to have been travelling for ages across the dark bumpy roads, as we headed from Karachi which is where our hotel was based and also the country's main industrial hub, towards our filming locations Ali informed me that the trip would be approximately 1100km in total and 18 hours on the road with a two day stay in each location that we would be filming in. I was beginning to feel a little agitated and worried as I could not see any road signs and felt completely out of my depth. As we suddenly stopped, Ali approached a gentleman carrying a paraffin lamp. Shad by my producer, the gang jumped out the back of the jeep with the security behind us leading us into the small village located in the depths of a terrain and the interior Sindh. The smell was intense and drew us in like a piper's tune to a cobra, the spices combined to infuse a smell of pure lust to taste this local dish of '**Nihari**' a stew based meat along with bone marrow.

Ali led me to my tent that had two security guards by the entrance as the flickering of the paraffin lamp shone through. I was completely exhausted as I removed my hijab which I decided to wear as I would be in unknown territory, this combination of head covering and scarf that would cover my head and neck whilst my Jilbab/abaya covered the shape of my exhausted body as I lay on the foam mattress and drifted off to sleep. I had a busy schedule filming over the next 10 days, we

would be visiting the **Malik Graveyard, The Great Shah Jahan Mosque in Thatta, Ranifort and Mohenjo Daro.**

As we travelled recording our documentary and stayed around the varying terrains within the interior Sindh and eating with the locals whilst sampling the real Pakistan cuisine the '**cumin seed**' that exploded with pleasure in the '**Biryani**', and the '**Haleem**', which my taste buds were introduced to 'goats meat' infused with spices and lentils that accompanied the dish.

My parrain lamp led me off to sleep after drinking the chai tea and spent in a country that did not quite 'seem real', with the magnificent landscapes and colours that breathed on the overwhelming mosques also it's well known historical ruins of the Indus Valley Civilization in upper Sindh.

The wonderful chai tea that was served as I chatted for hours in the evening to the most hospitable and humble pakistan people even though I could not speak Urdu or Punjabi they made a way to make me feel comfortable and relaxed but most of all welcome in their country, as life now for me in Pakistan was entrancing and with my fear gone the noise of the western world was now replaced with simplicity, nature architecture and peace within myself after I had taken in the most spectacular landscapes in the upper Sindh region during Warm temperature of upper 70 degrees in heat, the coolness of my jaiib and hijab protecting my skin for the suns rays.