

# Kerala Scrapbook

me the seat next to her. Breakfast: dosa, lunch: chapatti, dinner: rice and fish. mmh :). "

I am here now for more than two months and Thiruvananthapuram feels almost like home. Especially when I get several 'Hello, good morning!' at the bus stop in the morning or meet people I know in the city, while I'm shopping or just walking around. Sometimes this place feels so much like home that I'm also staring at people from other countries when I see them; Europe is so far away, not only in the meaning of distance, but also in culture and mentality.

*Anke Stirner*

**April 16, Monday**

"Big clouds but still no rain today. Not easy to sleep, the heat and humidity are disturbing too much. Also the mosquitoes are eating me. Had a nice talk with a very friendly Indian lady in the bus who offered

**April 18, Wednesday**

For me it is still a balance act how to behave. Should I do this, can I say that, what am I allowed to do - my European frankness is suffering badly. 'Funloving and easy going' - there are lots of days when I have to

fight against this prejudice about girls from abroad and I'm getting tired of these discussions, but it seems that it is also a part of a foreign girl in a different country where lots of people get their information through movies or the behaviour of tourists, two worlds who have nothing to do with the usual European life.

Staying here as a girl from abroad is not easy, and there were several times when I felt like packing my bag and going home, where I'm used to everything. But it's not my way to give up just because things are getting difficult, and so I stay and try to enjoy my time in India. And there are so many things to enjoy! The warmth of some people, the beauty of the country, and sometimes there's an unexpected surprise waiting around the next corner like an elephant, what makes me smile every time. India has so many faces, and I haven't seen half of it.

**April 20, Friday**

Going by bus is still an experience and sometimes an adventure, when the bus takes the wrong way and I'm at a place I have never been before, in the middle of palm trees and apparently millions of miles away from civilization, but in the end usually I find home...the luck of the traveller? I will never say, I love going by bus through Thiruvananthapuram, above all I got the worst back pain I ever had in my life, but every time I step out of the bus at the destination I wanted to be, I'm glad that I'm still alive and also a bit proud that I didn't get lost. And that feels really good.

The next big event is only a few days away: the monsoon which I expect with fear, excitement and anticipation.

I try to enjoy the last sunny days, because they will be the last during this stay for me in India. There had been a few heavy summer rains in the last weeks and I was unlucky to walk to my office without an umbrella, when a shower came down and made me looking like a wet cat. There was no place to hide from the rain, so I decided to go on, full of mud. Exactly in that moment I stepped into my office the rain stopped. After spending the next hours shivering in the office because of the cold wind from the fan the next thing I bought was an umbrella after I left office much earlier than usual. Since that afternoon the rain is gone.

The traffic was a mess on that day and still I have no idea what will happen if the monsoon starts. Is the traffic going or does everybody stay at home? Will the power be permanently gone? So many questions, so many things to find out, but one thing is sure: whatever it will be like, it will be an experience because India is never boring.

*(to be continued...)*

