

POSTCARD FROM



Return of the Native

Anke Stirner spent four months in India. In this article she writes about how she felt on her return to Germany. This is the first of a series of 'postcards' she will be sending from Germany on various subjects.

Finally I'm back in Germany. Now it's time recap of experiences since I left India. Well, Dubai was a shock, I cannot explain how I was staring at all those busy people at the airport in their tiny shorts and skirts - the cultural shock which came slowly in India hit me to the fullest in Dubai. For a few minutes I was unable even to move. I was just standing and staring. India and the rest of the world are not on the same planet, I'm sure! People who are kissing in public!

When Dubai was strange, Düsseldorf, the airport near the place I live, was worst. So familiar after all the months and so different on the other side - I

have never recognized the richness and the artificiality of my home country. Everything was so clean, the air so dust free, my parents and friends falling around my neck, hugging me why I was touching the marble ground just to get a feeling for being back in Europe.

The first days after arriving were not easy, to be frank. Because of the jetlag I was always tired and hours awake before the others even moved in their beds, and I couldn't eat the food here. Too oily, too heavy for me, I was dying for dosa, chapathi and rice! Thank god that we have big supermarkets here with a big selection of rice and vegetables.

You will ask if I'm glad to be

back in good old Germany. Well, that's difficult to explain but I try it. Most people go to India as a tourist (of course, not everybody can do an internship there), the mind full of imaginations of the Taj Mahal, Bollywood and Goa. I have to say, India is so much more, if you let it be. Of course is being and living there pretty tough for a stranger, but you'll get the chance to see both sides of the story and to learn. After a few weeks back I'm also back in my former lifestyle - stress, stress, stress, being busy, hurrying from one appointment to the next, life is a rollercoaster here and I'm really exhausted. Take your time is a reason to be fired here if you

have a job. So I miss India, of course I do it, although I enjoy also the liberality Germany is offering me. Be a woman and equal to men is great, coming home alone at 2 o'clock at night and nobody cares is freedom I have never seen before, and make my decision where I will shift alone in my own apartment after getting a job is heaven on earth. But I know it now, a few months ago it was obvious and nothing to think about it. I will visit in the next months and weeks a few towns in Germany and send you more postcards to convince you, how beautiful my country is, ok? 'Life on the other side' I will name it. ■

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