



Kuwaiti dates are now coming into season though these are not yet ready for harvest. — Photo by Ahmed Srour/Kuna

In my view

BE AN AMBASSADOR WHILE ON HOLIDAY



By Nawara Fattahova

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When police in a European country stopped Kuwaiti student Mohammed during a routine inspection, they allegedly tried hard to find any violation to make him pay a fine, as he is from an oil-rich country. When Emily goes on vacation back home to the US, she regularly faces comments that she must be rich because she is working in Kuwait, although she is not even Kuwaiti. People from her town have based these prejudices on the experience of just three people who worked in Kuwait for really high salaries.

Ghada, an Arab expat living in Kuwait, experiences similar situations every time she visits her home country. "People think I'm rich just because I work in Kuwait. They think money is raining here, and don't know that I'm just a normal employee," she told Kuwait Times.

Such preconceived notions can be annoying or embarrassing, but the matter does not stop here. Some people get a wrong opinion about an entire nation based on the actions of a few. Kuwaitis are known for travelling to almost every corner of the globe. As some of these places are not very popular with tourists, residents there have only met a few Kuwaitis, and they have built a view about the nation based on the behavior of these tourists. So if these tourists do not behave properly, people will think all Kuwaitis are the same.

Many Europeans have negative views about Arabs and Muslims in general, especially after the spate of terrorist attacks in the past few years. And indeed, the behavior of many Arab tourists is unacceptable when they visit Europe. With the advent of social media, many boorish acts in public have been amplified, with people whipping out their smartphones and recording

them. For instance, last year the most popular video was of young guys who hunted a duck in a lake in Austria, which is banned there. Another video was of children riding a hoverboard in the lobby of a luxury hotel in London, with a security guard in pursuit. The most disgusting video this year was of a group of Saudi tourists who hunted a giraffe in a park in an African country, then ate it after skinning it.

Many people act uncivilized when they go on vacation. There's something about being a tourist that causes you to forget common sense and basic manners. We are no exception to the rule. Throwing waste in public places is common for some Arab tourists, who think that cleaners will always pick it up, and don't consider it a serious issue. Also, they think the same when leaving a hotel or apartment they've rented in an untidy condition. But the people of these countries view these as very negative actions by uncivilized people, tarring everyone with the same brush.

On the other hand, a Kuwaiti young woman was involved in a very positive act in the Czech Republic, volunteering to clean up a public park in Teplice, a popular destination for Kuwaiti patients and tourists. She described this as an initiative by her and some other volunteers to change the opinion of the local people about Kuwaitis and Arabs in general, as they are known for leaving a mess after them.

Every tourist should always behave as the ambassador of his or her country.

Local Spotlight

FORGERY OF KD 20!



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Two years ago, there was a video on the social media showing the difference between the real 20 Kuwaiti dinar and the fake note. The woman in the video placed the two notes under a UV light and it was clear for all to see the difference. The effect of this was to raise concerns about the safety of the Kuwaiti dinar and some people were even arrested for being involved in counterfeiting schemes. Kuwait's Central Bank, around the same period, addressed the issue of counterfeit currency by launching a new currency design with improved safety features.

Two years on and people have mostly forgotten this issue. A few weeks ago, a taxi driver made another video - which quickly circulated over the social media about being cheated by someone who paid him with a fake KD 20. The man was incensed and eventually he tore up the counterfeit note.

Counterfeiting is a major issue. Many countries, especially those with strong currencies, face this problem and it can have impacts on the stability and confidence in the currency. The problem is even worse for small business owners and those who deal mostly in cash. They rarely have the equipment accessible to check notes for authenticity and typically have no records of their customers. At the end of the day, taxi drivers, baqalas, small restaurants and other cash-only businesses often become key targets for counterfeiters seeking to break fakes into the market because they are more likely to go unchecked.

The most important question is how to distinguish between the real and fake currency? The current currency is not easy to be faked. Here are a few tips to check the authenticity: When you 'scrub' the paper with your finger, counterfeit colors may bleed, but in a real dinar the colors will not bleed. Also, be familiar with security features on the real currency and check for these features on the fake one. The more security features you know, the more likely you are to spot a counterfeit. Pay careful attention to the higher denominations, especially KD 20 as counterfeiters will often try to pass these off in order to get real money back as change. Visit the Central Bank website to learn more about the notes security features' and how to report counterfeits.

<http://www.cbk.gov.kw/en/banknotes-and-coins/banknotes/sixth-issue.jsp>