

TRAVELING SOUL WITH THE NCORS



Nighttime view of
the Viceregal
Palace.

TRUE FRIENDSHIP IS HARD TO COME BY, BUT FOR THENOORS, IT'S A WAY OF LIFE. CASSIDY HAZELBAKER MEETS WITH THEM TO HEAR THEIR STORY

A

nyone with social media can post holiday photos but a quick scroll through TheNoors' Instagram account shows that they

are a different type of travel blogger. Instead of the posed sightseeing photos and endless stream of fancy coffees so prevalent online, TheNoors take followers on a down-to-earth and bohemian journey through the idyllic Canadian countryside, around buzzing cities and out to rarely-explored corners of the UAE. The energetic duo is quick to summarize their outlook, saying, "we're not tourists or record-breakers. We're travellers- we collect moments."

Noora Al Romaithi and Noor Salim Al Midfa, the two Ns behind TheNoors, are not your average Emiratis. Speaking with the serenity found only in those who truly pursue what makes them happy, they enthusiastically share their story over tea and scones at Fortnum & Mason. The

best friends seem more like sisters, who can finish each other's sentences with an enthusiasm which is both rare and refreshing. This friendship dates back over a decade, when they

met through mutual friends and realized that besides their similar names, they shared many of the same passions. One of these is photography, and in 2008 they moved to Vancouver to further study the subject. The striking nature they found half a world away, combined with their training in photography and videography, naturally led to creating TheNoors.

Travel has always been close to their hearts, they explain. "My (late) father loved traveling, and I share that connection with him," says Noor. Friendship is also important to them, and serves as a pillar of TheNoors, which illustrates not just the footsteps of an explorer but also the beauty in sharing these experiences with someone you cherish. "We've been friends through all of life's ups and downs," explains Noora. They originally launched TheNoors to provide a wider perspective of Canada, in all



its seasonal glory, to Arab audiences. The two started with streaming Periscope, but later switched to Instagram and Snapchat to give followers a window into their adventures. Together they share the adventure of trying new modes of transportation, such as a local bus in the Cayman Islands, or a new activity, such as storm watching in Tofino, Canada, where they admired the massive waves crashing onto the shore.

TheNoors consider themselves 'travel inspirers,' and love interacting with followers who get travel ideas and feel empowered to venture to new destinations from their posts. They also enjoy sharing the UAE to the international followers they've acquired along the way, and from navigating the dunes of the Rub al Khali to picnicking on the top of Jebel Jais.

Two qualities they've learned to embrace and which they endeavour to spread to all they meet on their journey is positivity and happiness. "Every soul deserves to be happy," declare TheNoors emphatically. It's hard not to feel uplifted while speaking to them, and it's unsurprising that their positivity has led them to make many friends along the way. When asked how it is to be young Emirati women abroad, they explain that their aim is to share with others their love for the UAE and to break stereotypes of Emirati women. "There's nothing an Emirati or a woman can't do," says Noor, crediting the UAE leadership for its support of women and the opportunities provided to its citizens. "The UAE leaders are our role models," Noora adds.

Their account is definitely one to keep tabs on, as TheNoors have more stories to tell and more traveling to come. In fact, they plan to launch even more unique travel services in the future. One of their recent posts proclaims their motto, "We live by: Building an empire, finding ourselves, healing ourselves, loving ourselves, being passionate, getting fit, growing friendships, meeting new people and making memories." What better inspiration than that to keep while they say hello to the rest of the world? *Follow The Noors on Instagram @TheNoors*

Facing page: The Noors at home in Sharjah

Photography by Aasiya Jagadeesh
Above and below: A few of The Noor's favorite places

Above, clockwise: Sir Bani Yas Island; the Liwa Desert; the Cayman Islands; Snow Geese in Stanwood, Washington, US

