

Ministering in Guinea-Bissau
www.jasonandemilyatkins.com
jasonpatkins@gmail.com
emilymarieatkins@gmail.com



The Atkins Family

Settling In *by Emily*

It always takes some time for the flow of life here to feel normal again. The loud markets, the animals crowding the streets, the surprise visits by friends, the constant clouds of dust, the amazing tropical fruit, the fish looking up at me from my plate, it's just different in so many ways! Thank you for praying for us during the transition. Even though it has been exhausting it's nice that normal life here is starting to feel a little bit normal again ☺.



Nothing says "we're back" like a picture of baby taking a bath in bucket ☺.



Jason repairing the Youth Center's gate.



Cheers!



Sunday morning breakfast picnic.



The front of the giant maze that is the main market here in Bissau. Under every one of those umbrellas is someone with a table selling something and once you get behind those buildings the real maze begins!



Dugout canoes fishing on a Guinean river – what a beautiful country!

Fellowship *by Emily*

Because we live right next door to a guest house there isn't a week that goes by where someone isn't eating with us. Most of the people who grace our table are missionaries - either short-term teams (from all over the world), or people who live in various villages and have come to the capital to shop, see a doctor, or just fill out one of the billion annual forms required for life here.

We've always loved eating together with people who've just arrived, seeing Guinea-Bissau again through the eyes of a first timer, hearing grand plans and dreams of people who haven't had time to get discouraged; and it's just as refreshing to have time to talk and process with people who've been here a while, who understand the joys and difficulties of daily life and work in a third world country.

Over this past month I've been thinking about how much God has used those times with fellow missionaries to encourage, challenge, and change me, and I started thinking about all of the Guineans who work here at the Youth Center with us

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Enjoying lunch with the National Director of Youth for Christ in Guinea-Bissau and his family.



When good friends who have four little girls stopped over for a visit the other day Savannah was so excited she could hardly sit still ☺.



Even Nathaniel likes to entertain our guests with his awesomeness.

everyday and the people we go to church with. Passing a coworker and asking about his weekend and his family or asking a friend at church how his job is going isn't the same as sharing a meal and hearing stories about his childhood, and talking about his dreams for his children.

So, we started inviting Guinean friends over to eat at our house at least once a week. Sometimes for meals, sometimes for a snack, but the important thing is to take time to sit and talk, to learn about each other and encourage one another. As a stay-at-home mom, sometimes it's hard for me to get out of the house to attend meetings and teach classes, but I can throw a few more handfuls of something into the pot, pull an extra chair or two up to our foldout table, and hear someone else's story.

Be Our Guest by Emily

Sometimes it's so hard to describe all of the ways that life is different here (wonderful and terrible, hehe) and we long for some of our family and friends to be able to come over and experience it firsthand. A few weeks ago one of our good friends from Simpson Park Camp did just that.

During his two-week stay Brandon got to experience many of the unexpected frustrations of life here – a flight cancellation for no reason giving him a 25-hour layover in a tiny African airport, a boat that broke down stranding him and Jason on the Atlantic Ocean turning a 4-hour trip into 13 hours. He even tagged along on one of the four trips downtown Jason has taken to try and pay the road tax required of every driver in the country every January (which we still haven't finished because the government still hasn't printed the 2014 forms yet...) All part of the adventure, right?

He got to experience some of the things that we love – coconuts off of our tree, eager students in our English classes, friendly people, and the sheer variety of different things and different ways to do familiar things that are included in our days here. He also had fun helping Jason get started building a metal tubing bender out of a piece of a salvaged barge, and he even escaped from a gigantic snow storm in Michigan into the 80 degree paradise we call winter ☺.

So, anyone else interested in seeing life a little differently after a trip to Guinea-Bissau? We'd love to have you!

Jason + Emily



Brandon and the family, I don't know who's missing him more, us or our kids!!!



Brandon talked Jason into doing a few touristy things, including taking a picture standing on a termite mound. They are pretty impressive!

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