

(Read free ebook) The Other Side of the Mirror: An American Travels Through Syria by Brooke Allen  
(2011-04-05)

## **The Other Side of the Mirror: An American Travels Through Syria by Brooke Allen (2011-04-05)**

*Brooke Allen*

*ePub | \*DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF*

 Download

 Read Online

#7324432 in Books 1763 #File Name: B01FIW67NI | File size: 44.Mb

**Brooke Allen : The Other Side of the Mirror: An American Travels Through Syria by Brooke Allen (2011-04-05)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Other Side of the Mirror: An American Travels Through Syria by Brooke Allen (2011-04-05):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Insightful and Expansive Travel Memoir of the Syria That Americans Should Have Seen.By mirasreviewsI discovered The Other Side of the Mirror: An American Travels Through Syria after reading Brooke Allens balanced short biography of Benazir Bhutto for s icon series, and Im really glad that I did. I admired Allens ability to create a complex portrait against a tumultuous background in a short space in Benazir Bhutto. The Other Side of the Mirror allows her more freedom to let her thoughts flow but also features extensive research. This is a travel memoir, in the tradition of countless other travel memoirs. There is a bit of intrepidness to it, not because it is in any way difficult to travel in Syria, but because Americans usually dont. I was last in Syria as a child in the 1970s, when my family lived in Lebanon. Before the Lebanese Civil War, it was more common for Americans to visit Syria, and I was curious to know what the country is like now.Or rather, I was curious to know what Syria was like before the Civil War that began in 2011, about the time this book was published. Brooke Allen made two trips to Syria in 2009, one in the spring with her husband and teenaged daughters and one in the fall with a female friend, who had a particular interest in St. Simeon Stylites, an ascetic monk from 5th century Aleppo. Syria is as rich in history as any country could be, and Allen and her companions trekked all over in search of the

cultures ancient and modern history. There is quite a lot of it. Allen offers historical background, literary references, sometimes the accounts of travelers from other eras for comparison, and her own experiences and observations about the places she visits, people she meets, and culture that surrounds her as she visits markets, museums, hotels, ruins, churches, mosques, and restaurants. The book is organized loosely by topic: The Destination, Time, Ruins, Faith, Fighting, Leaders. Allen doesn't follow a chronological order. Her two trips are presented more or less as one, not sequentially. Faith is by far the longest chapter and includes some history of Syria's heterogeneous religious communities, from now-extinct pagan cults through Christianity, the Middle Ages, and the spread of Islam, visiting churches, monasteries, mosques, and museums. The introductory chapter includes Allen's thoughts on the warm welcome she received and some of the obvious problems facing modern Syria, like suburban sprawl. The chapter entitled Time catches some topics that didn't fit elsewhere but are evidence of Syria's extraordinary history. Damascus and Aleppo have been inhabited for 8 millennia, after all, and Syria is a direct heir to Greco-Roman culture. Ruins is self-explanatory, though it doesn't confine itself to Roman ruins. Allen begins with the story of the Baron Hotel, in which she stayed, nice enough but past its heyday. She visits Palmyra, Mari, Dura Europos, Ugarit, Bosra. The chapter on Fighting begins with the Tishreen Panorama Museum and its peculiar North Korean design- and moves on to sites from the Crusades: Krak des Chevaliers, Qalaat Saladin, Aleppo Citadel, Damascus Citadel, the mosaic museum at Maarat al-Numan. In her final chapter, Leaders, Allen addresses the origins of the ubiquitous presidential portraits, which seem at odds with the image Bashar al-Assad has tried to cultivate, at least before the war. She touches on the history of the first four Caliphs and the balance of the qualities of invincibility and humility that Muslim cultures still expect in their leaders. Brooke Allen didn't expect what she found in Syria, a country whose reality confounded all my preconceived notions and inspired me to seek out many historical and literary sources for enlightenment. That makes this travel memoir all the more poignant and, since Syria has been in the news, all the more relevant. In some instances, we see the seeds of discontent that turned to protest that opened the door to violence in the many over-educated but unemployed men forced to scrape together a living any way they can. They are the casualties of the rapid adoption of neo-liberal economic policies under Pres. Bashar al-Assad, which eroded social safety nets, sanctions against Syria since it refused to support the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and 1.5 million Iraqi refugees that subsequently poured in. A sad predicament for a country with so much potential.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Do read this written by an American Jew who took ...By Chief Tatelli  
Do read this written by an American Jew who took her family with rebellious looking teen age children to Syria and was welcome everywhere. She returned months later with a woman friend and traveled the whole country unmolested. After reading this you will understand that the so called civil war in Syria was instigated from forces outside the country that funnelled arms and foreign fighters into the country to create another so called Arab Spring.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Syria: A changing perspective  
By Thomas W. Mulkey  
In 1982, I saw beautiful land filled with a generous, industrious people. One could easily trace the history of numerous people of antiquity through its treasure trove of archaeological sites. At the time, I felt many of its treasures had been looted. Seeing the destruction and chaos currently underway, it is comforting to know that many of those splendid artifacts are safely on display in museums and art galleries in other countries.