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The Lonely Planet Guide to My Apartment

FROM *The New Yorker*

Orientation

MY APARTMENT'S VAST EXPANSE of unfurnished space can be daunting at first, and its population of one difficult to communicate with. After going through customs, you'll see a large area with a couch to the left. Much of My Apartment's "television viewing" occurs here, as does the very occasional **making out with a girl** (see "Festivals"). To the north is the **food district**, with its colorful cereal boxes and **antojitos**, or "little whims."

What to Bring

A good rule of thumb is "If it's something you'll want, you have to bring it in yourself." This applies to water, as well as to toilet paper and English-language periodicals. Most important, come with plenty of cash, as there's sure to be someone with his hand out. In My Apartment, it's axiomatic that you have to grease the wheels to make the engine run.

When to Go

The best time to travel to My Apartment is typically after most people in their twenties are already showered and dressed and at a job. Visits on Saturdays and Sundays before 2:00 P.M. are highly

discouraged, and can result in lengthy delays at the border (see "Getting There and Away").

Local Customs

The population of My Apartment has a daily ritual of **bitching**, which occurs at the end of the workday and prior to ordering in food. Usually, meals are taken during reruns of *Stargate Atlantis*. Don't be put off by impulsive sobbing or unprovoked rages. These traits have been passed down through generations and are part of the colorful heritage of My Apartment's people. The annual **Birthday Meltdown** (see "Festivals") is a tour de force of recrimination and self-loathing, highlighted by fanciful stilt-walkers and dancers wearing hand-sewn headdresses.

Health

Rabies and hepatitis have almost completely been eradicated from My Apartment, owing to an intensive program of medication and education. However, travelers must still be wary of **sexually transmitted diseases**. While abstinence is the only certain preventative, it is strenuously not endorsed by the My Apartment government. Condoms and antibiotics are available on most evenings (see "Medical Services").

Society & Culture

The inhabitants of My Apartment tend to be insecure and combative. This is likely the result of living under the thumb of a series of **illegitimate dictators** (see "History") that have dominated the citizens in recent years. Since the Breakup of 2004 and the ensuing electoral reforms, the situation has become more democratic.

Women Travelers

Solo female travelers are often subjected to excessive unwanted male attention. Normally, these men only want to talk to you, but their entreaties can quickly become tiresome. Don't be afraid to be rude. Even a mild polite response can be perceived as an expres-

sion of interest. The best approach is to avoid eye contact, always wear a bra, and talk incessantly about your “fiancé, Neil.”

Dangers & Annoyances

The ongoing economic recession has led to a large increase in **petty crime**. For the most part, this is limited to the “borrowing” of personal items and the occasional accidental disappearance of the neighbor’s newspaper. However, the U.S. Department of State has issued a warning about several common cons — such as the “I’m out of small bills” scam, typically perpetrated when the delivery guy arrives.

Volunteer Organizations

Various international agencies can place volunteers in projects working on areas such as job training, doing my laundry, election monitoring, developing opportunities for young women, running to the deli for me, and therapeutic massage.

Things to See & Do

A ten-foot walk to the nonworking fireplace brings musically inclined visitors to the popular **collection of novelty records**, which includes *Leonard Nimoy Sings*. The north-facing section of My Apartment is divided into two districts. In the lively Bedroom District, the excellent **drawer of snapshots of ex-girlfriends naked** is a good way to gain a deeper understanding of the history of the people, and is open for guided tours on most Saturdays between 2:00 A.M. and 3:00 A.M. The Western Quarter is home to the **bathtub with one working spa jet**, in which the recreation commissioner of My Apartment plans to hold an **international jello-wrestling tournament** in the spring of 2007.

Places to Eat

Tourists often flock to the **salvaged wooden telephone-cable spool** in front of the TV as a convenient dining spot. More adventurous eaters might try **standing over the sink**, as the locals do. If you’re

willing to venture off the beaten track, there’s **balancing your plate on the arm of the couch** or **using the toilet lid as a makeshift table**.

Night Life

The music on offer tends toward late-seventies disco recordings, but they are sometimes embellished with impromptu live vocal performances. There was once a cockfight in My Apartment, **though** it was unplanned and will likely never happen again (see “Law Enforcement”).

Sports & Outdoor Activities

The **air-hockey table** probably still works.

Excursions

A short trip in almost any direction will bring travelers to **one** of many unique **Starbucks** outlets. Or try one of the nightly **walking** tours to the sidewalk in front of the brownstone across the street to watch **that redhead** getting out of the shower with her curtains open. And tourists are often sent around the corner to visit the **ATM machine** in order to stock up for the rigorous financial demands of a trip to My Apartment.

Mule Rental

Mules can be rented by the hour or the day and are situated **near the main closet**. Prices vary with the season and it’s best to **reserve** in advance, since My Apartment’s stable of twenty-six mules **books** up fast. They may not be the quickest form of transportation, but they provide a wonderful way to see My Apartment up close.

Wildlife

The dog’s name is **Sadie**. Don’t touch her.