

## Feasts

When we were in Fujairah, my father used to cook the meat on special occasions. We would get a goat locally, and it would be killed in the Muslim tradition by one of our servants who knew the prayers required for Halal. Then the servant and my father would prepare and cook the meat together. It would be a feast. Meanwhile, my mother and all the females, including me, would pick fruits, cook vegetables and lay out the blankets. Everyone sat on the ground, on big blankets; the men on one blanket and the women on another. Even though we were not Muslims, we followed the local traditions.

The feast would be served in large platters, placed in the middle of the blanket, including a huge tray of rice. Everyone ate from the same platters. It was really great. Then, once everyone was full, someone from the men's side would start off the entertainment by telling a story. We had some stories which everyone knew, and as the day progressed, the men would start new ones. Sometimes, when one person finished telling a new story, someone else would continue with it, even though they had never heard it before. Soon, the stories would get too funny and difficult to believe and everyone would just laugh and roll around and bang their fists on the ground.

The women never told stories in these kinds of parties, but sometimes we had female only get-togethers which were just about the same except there were no men. I think our stories were more believable. They were about families and marriages and people mainly. The men's stories could be about anything but usually involved camel caravans in the desert, impossible bravery, and supernatural experiences.