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Service Wives 
Tag Along 

by Elisa Steidel 
Home Economics Grad.

If the man you marry is in the military service or is planning to be someday, you may live in a foreign country in the future. Living in a land new to you may mean adjusting to new methods of shopping for food, a new language, customs and living conditions.

Patty Wwiefel from Illinois and the wife of an Air Force second Lieutenant, discovered that in Germany and in most of the other European bases the University of Maryland offers courses for college credit. As the wife of a service man, she was eligible to take these courses but her fees were slightly higher than her husband's. German language courses have been the most popular for the wives because of immediate need. Imagine studying for an exam by shopping in some of the local stores!

Patty was one of many American wives stationed in Germany to return home with a complete set of lovely crystal, china, stainless steel, Hummel figurines, and clocks. You may wish to wait until then to start collecting some of these furnishings.

Dampness a Problem

Barbara Stevens, Texas, discovered in certain parts of the Philippines the climate was so damp, mildew created a problem with their furniture. The interior of the wood chest of drawers would mildew quite rapidly during the rainy season. One afternoon she noticed dirty hand prints on her turkey towels shortly after her ten-year-old daughter had washed her hands. Upon closer examination, she discovered that it was not dirt at all, but ants seeking moisture and finding it where hands had been dried. This incident occurred during the "dry season."

She became used to soaking all fresh vegetables in chlorox water to kill the bacteria. Their vegetables tasted like chlorox, but they had the assurance that they were clean. Also due to the dampness, crackers, margarine, flour sugar and soap powder were all sold in tin containers. She said it was interesting to note the advertisements in newspapers from the Philippines with familiar American products pictured in cans.

Another opportunity Barbara enjoyed in the Philippines was the purchase of embroidered yard goods. She had dresses or blouses made from them, finding the hand embroidery unique when we are so accustomed to machine-made garments. Even the men wear an embroidered shirt known as a Barong-Tagalog. This shirt is worn over the trousers rather than tucked in.

Textiles in the Philippines are made from pine-apple and are known as "piña" cloth. Husi is the name given to the cloth made from the banana tree. These fabrics resemble a batiste in weight and weave, but have a more shiny finish. Barbara has several garments made of these lovely fabrics.

Shopping in Spain

The Spanish shop every day Margaret Cahill, California, noticed, because they have no refrigeration in many places. They marvel at the Americans who can shop just once or twice a week. Women are seen in the market place with baskets over each arm to hold their purchases, since paper bags are not available. The meat in odd and assorted pieces hangs on hooks in the market place, and various kinds of fish lie in piles. When Margaret was in Spain there was no base commissary, and so she had to use the local market for her shopping. This is not common but does occur when men are stationed away from a base or when a base is not complete.

Servicemen are stationed in Turkey, Italy, India, North Africa, Hawaii, and many other places around the globe. Their wives and families are able to follow them to most of these places. Maybe you, too, will be making your home in one of these locations soon.

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