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Using sign language to communicate and handing out free books, three friends navigated them and their wheels through 15 countries.

Adventure touring group Let's Drive took 21 days to make the trip from Dubai to Switzerland, via countries including Iran and Russia.

Now the trio of driving enthusiasts are back in Dubai and eagerly planning their next trip.

Jamal Khan, Abdul Shamim and Haris Anwar began their grand tour on 28th August, stocking up their FJ Cruiser with souvenirs from Dubai and books to give away along the route.



Hold ups at the border controls and baffled officials were overcome with a genuine interest in why three men from Dubai were driving across Europe – the first time the friends had attempted a trip of that length.

Although they were held up for eight hours at the crossing between Russia and Azerbaijan, the gang only took positive experiences from it.

“The best experience was when you go across the border,” Jamal says, “because when you go across the border, this is a no man’s land of about two kilometres.

“That drive is hardly two minutes, but in those two minutes, the whole world changes – the time zone, the language, people’s faces.”

Although the friends encountered so much diversity along the way, one thing united the new friends they made.

Jamal, a banker who has daughters aged eight and two-and-a-half, told us: “In almost every country we visited, we met people who were amazed and overwhelmed to see a car in their homelands with a Dubai number plate.

“They had heard a lot about Dubai already and were just looking for a reason to visit, which we boosted by offering an invitation to join us on one of our local drives in UAE to experience local culture and tradition, along with our Emirati group members.”

To break the ice and celebrate the UAE Reading Year 2016, the group passed out books to the people they befriended, along with models of Dubai landmarks the Burj Al Arab and Burj Khalifa.



"The world is a small place," says Jamal. "The team met a small business owner in Azerbaijan who had worked in Dubai.

"He spoke about his experiences and cherished the memories of his time in UAE when presented with a Dubai souvenir and a book marking the reading year."

Abdul added: "The majority of people are nice in all these countries, as long as we respect the law of the land.

"Life is a journey for everyone, so taking breaks is essential to reach your destination safely."

Once their journey was over, the trio were met by 15 fellow Let's Drive members, who flew into Switzerland to welcome to touring car to Zurich.

Then the team led a convoy of rental cars on a grand tour of Switzerland, organised by Switzerland Tourism, before cars and people travelled home to Dubai separately.

Although their engines have barely cooled down from their epic adventure, Jamal says the group is already planning another epic drive, through Mongolia in one direction, or Africa in the other.

Join Let's Drive at www.facebook.com/letsdrivegroup or www.meetup.com/LetsDrive. You don't even need a 4x4, as friendly members will be happy to carpool!