

Hello Family and Friends



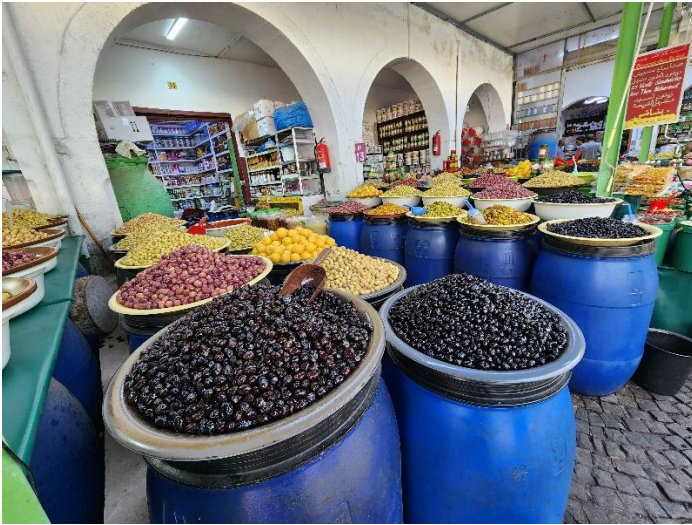
First and foremost, the bridge program is off and running very well despite some serious issues. The Silver Spirit was in dry dock for renovation prior to this voyage. Apparently, many of the bridge supplies were lost. We had to create makeshift boards out of envelopes and recreate some supplies. It's been challenging but we're making it work. We are on for five segments and the first day of every segment, we are required to be on stage under the lights at the opening program to introduce ourselves as the bridge hosts and invite guests to join us for the fun. We've been challenged to say the least.

We arrived in Lisbon, Portugal three days before embarkation on Silversea's Silver Spirit ship to relax and enjoy the sites. Lisbon is known for its seven hills and boy are they steep and hilly! I estimate we walked over 20 miles through narrow, steep streets immersing ourselves in the neighborhoods, restaurants and culture. We rode the Hop on Hop off bus for two days. We discovered pasteis de natas, custard-filled tarts, in Maputo, Mozambique, a couple years ago and just loved them. They originated in Portugal so we got our fill of the originals. Yum! We also got to ride the famed #28 tram that travels around the city through the traffic and within inches of buildings and vendors. What a ride!



We headed next to exotic Morocco where we visited the famous ports of Casablanca and Tangier. The olives, dates and figs in this area explode with flavor. Did you know that no scene from the

famous Casablanca movie was shot in Casablanca? Dr. Zhivago , the movie that featured famous bridge player, Omar Sharif, was shot there, however.



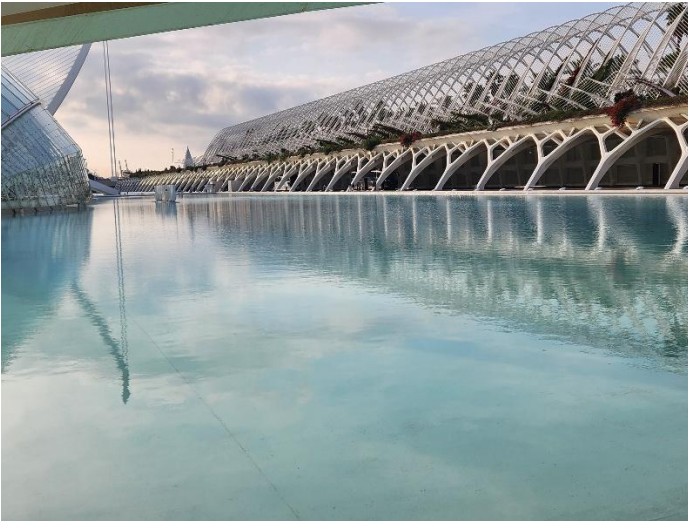
One of the expected highlights for us on this cruise was to go through the Pillars of Hercules, in other words, the Strait of Gibraltar and to visit the Rock of Gibraltar. But first, we visited Cadiz, Spain. We were treated to an intimate Flamenco show complete with tapas and drinks at La Cava. It was beautiful and loud. Then we toured the old walled city. We were thrilled with our visit to the Rock of Gibraltar. We learned so much about. The British carved out 34 miles of tunnels to defend the area. Soldiers could live in the tunnels for up to two years. There are over 200 caves in the Rock. There are apes and monkeys on the Rock. This is the only area in all of Europe where apes and monkeys live.





Our next port was Malaga, Spain, where we drove one hour high into the mountains to go to the quaint little town of Mijas. We were later treated to a whole troupe of Flamenco dancers. Valencia, Spain was next. We toured the beautiful Arts and Sciences district and the old town area. We drank local beverage, horchata, a deliciously sweet, creamy, cold drink and had a hot pastry. We stumbled onto a crowded plaza where a concert was being performed. These events are always exciting.





Barcelona was the final port of the first segment. We made it to the city's most famous two locations, The Basilica of the Sagrada Familia and Park Guell. Both these locations are world-renowned Antoni Gaudi creations, one of Spain's most well-known artists, architects and designers. Even though it wasn't summer, tours at these locations are sold out far in advance. The Basilica of the Sagrada Familia has been under construction for over 140 years. It's too large to get a picture of it from street level.



Our first port on the second segment was Palma de Mallorca, Spain. This island is small but well known for tourism. Rafael Nadal, the most famous tennis player in the history of Spain, was born and lives here. We wanted to tour his academy and museum but unfortunately, our afternoon bridge responsibilities kept us from going. Instead, we went on ship excursions where we walked the city, toured Bellver Castle which later served as a prison, toured Cathedral-Basilica de Santa Maria de Mallorca, a huge cathedral and rode bikes.

We took the day off from excursions and stayed on the ship when we went to the next port, Palamos, Spain. We got laundry done and caught up on some bridge program items needing our attention.

Our next port was Sete, France, a fishing village that sees very few cruise ships. It was a quaint town that quickly rose up the mountainside providing extremely steep, narrow streets. We discovered Chapelle Notre-Dame-de-la-Salette was located two miles straight up the mountain and challenged

ourselves to walk up the steepest hike we have had so far on the cruise, much steeper than the hills of Lisbon. We successfully made it to the top, toured the church and enjoyed the vistas.



We hope you enjoy the pictures and the commentary. Stay in touch!

Love and hugs from the Mediterranean.

David (Dave/Dad) and Dianne