

# The Importance of Running Away Every Now and Then

(or how we got to live in Italy)



# THE IMPORTANCE OF RUNNING AWAY EVERY NOW AND THEN (or how we got to live in Italy)

## Introduction

The air was chilly and I was uncomfortable the moment I stepped out the door. I almost went back to put on something warmer, but then I would be late so I continued on my morning routine of a one hour walk. Late in September...the 25th. Connecticut. Leaves falling everywhere and making piles of color in outrageous combinations of scarlet red, sunshine yellow, pale rusty brown. All worries fading as the air, the colors, the smell of fall took over my senses.

Half way into it, I had a thought. A clear thought. I am done with this. It was more than a thought.....it was a declaration so strong that I could feel my heels digging in, even though I was power-walking. And then, of course, one thought led to another. It has to change. No one is going to change anything for me. I have to find a way to do it myself. How can I get out of the life I am leading right now and into the one I want to lead. And what, exactly, would that be anyway?

Hell, it wasn't a bad life.....this union of Miss Smarty Pants and Mr. Big Shot (what our respective parents liked to call us). We married young 25 years ago, had two blonde baby girls right up front, and then proceeded to live life eagerly and happily with some pretty interesting side trips by way of late blooming college degrees and changes of careers. But now, only just now, I was feeling the pull of our original romantic idea of going off together to Italy and France with whatever money we could muster and not coming back until the money ran out. That I was feeling this right now was no mystery to me. Mr. Big Shot himself was nearly a year into recovery from open heart surgery.....recovered well but still suffering from a sucker punch of a depression. Just couldn't get around it. Both of the blondes were gone....moved on to college and the promise of a future outside of our tiny New England town. My dad, my second favorite man in the whole world, had just suffered a stroke and was rebounding, but slowly. Just about the only thing cranking along like always was me. Nice job in a great design firm, but demanding in terms of time because I had to commute nearly an hour each way. Because of the middle age horror fast approaching, exercise had to figure in here somehow hence the morning walk ritual to keep the old frame intact. To this add shopping, cleaning, cooking, maintaining contact with the blondes, parents, friends while gingerly trying to fix a depression that wasn't mine to fix and I think you'll get some idea of where my head was when I walked out the door that morning.

I couldn't have described what I wanted my life to become, I just knew that I was drowning in all the responsibilities, all the "shoulds" that I found myself facing. It seemed as if I was just one track away from my real self, my real thoughts, my real wishes. That's where the answers to all my life questions would be found, I just knew it. But I felt I had to shake things up, flip things upside down for a minute, in order

to switch tracks. I knew I wanted to do it. And the more I thought that way, the bolder I became.

By the time I got back home an hour later, I knew what I had to do. I had an idea. I had a plan. And I already knew that I had a partner in crime who was going to jump at the chance to move on. And boy, did he ever.

The idea was an old one. Right from the start we had wanted to go off to Italy and France together.....to live a somewhat non-traditional life for a while and then come back to make a more traditional life for ourselves. Well.....jobs, babies, life itself, intervened and we never quite got there. Why not do it now, I thought, in my new-found boldness?

The plan, as it turns out, was not as difficult as I thought it would be. As we struggled (for about 8 years running) to come up with college tuitions every year, we used to joke about sending off the final payment and then pretending there was just one more to go.....and then using that sum to reward ourselves for a job well done. Why not embrace that thought and let it be the budget for the adventure?

The last obstacle looming was the timing. When to do this? Since we had lived for a number of years with the curse of a seasonal business, always searching for a pursuit in the off months, the answer was easy. We suddenly saw the situation differently.....it was a gift rather than a curse because it offered us a 3-month window of opportunity.

And so there it was.....all merging together in that one-hour march.....an idea, a plan, a budget, a time frame.

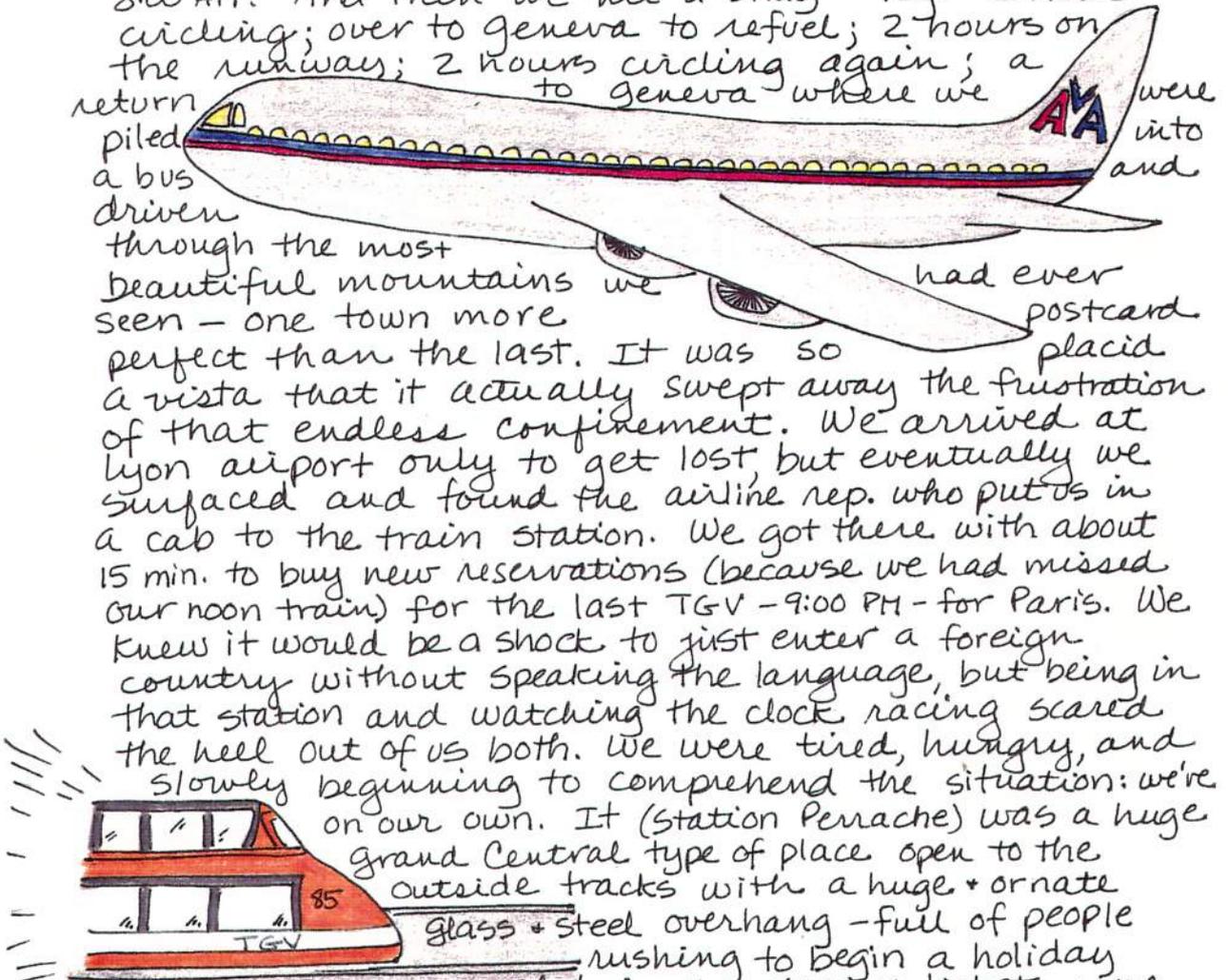
Three months later we were on our way.

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Thursday 12/28/89 to  
Friday 12/29/89

It was just suddenly time to go - and we watched the NY skyline appear in the black night sky. With a brandy toast to help shake the chill of that 10° night, we watched N.Y. disappear as we roared into the sky. It was a beautiful flight (even after that upsetting talk about terrorism at the customs gate). We are holding our breath like 2 kids turning the corner from home - just dying to do it, but still hoping to be able to see the porch light. We left an hour late, but still made it over Lyon by 8:00 AM. And then we hit a snag - fog. 2 hours circling; over to Geneva to refuel; 2 hours on the runways; 2 hours circling again; a return to Geneva where we were piled into a bus and driven through the most beautiful mountains we had ever seen - one town more perfect than the last. It was so placid a vista that it actually swept away the frustration of that endless confinement. We arrived at Lyon airport only to get lost, but eventually we surfaced and found the airline rep. who put us in a cab to the train station. We got there with about 15 min. to buy new reservations (because we had missed our noon train) for the last TGV - 9:00 PM - for Paris. We knew it would be a shock to just enter a foreign country without speaking the language, but being in that station and watching the clock racing scared the hell out of us both. We were tired, hungry, and slowly beginning to comprehend the situation: we're on our own. It (Station Perrache) was a huge Grand Central type of place open to the outside tracks with a huge + ornate glass + steel overhang - full of people rushing to begin a holiday weekend. Russ succeeded in changing our tickets + we dashed onto a train + prayed it was the right one.



We sat in the wrong seats and settled in with food we bought in the bar car (totally missing the fact that we could have ordered a full meal and had it served). The family whose seats we took insisted we stay put - and we just felt woefully inadequate - mumbling "merci". We sped through the blackness and arrived about 3 hrs. later - As we spilled out into the Gare de Lyon with the whole crowd, we definitely lost that "cosmopolitan traveler" feeling we started with (that was way back when we felt that wearing money belts to guard our funds + passports was going to be the most serious problem we'd face). We kept smiling so bravely at each other - and meanwhile, we found the subway map and joined the masses heading underground. We emerged at St. Charles de Gaulle - Etoile - and as we rode the escalator up to street level, there was the Arc de Triomphe <sup>blazing</sup> with light. I think <sup>it</sup> was the only thing that allowed us to believe we were really here.

In a quick dream sequence, we found our hôtel (Elysée Foch on the Rue Lauristan) only a few blocks away. A sweet, tiny, narrow, tall, Parisian residential-type place.

Full of love and relief - we slept.



The Arc de Triomphe against a midnight navy Parisian sky.

TGV - Regist.	240 F
TGV - food	20
metro	10
wine, snack	79
(63)	<hr/> 349 F

12/30/89 Sat.

We both woke - like out of a dream - at 1:00 in the afternoon. Jet lag gone with one good sleep.

Still not believing - not at all - where we were, we took the metro to the Eiffel Tower. Cold, foggy, very gray + beautiful - it just sits there. We rode up to the highest level and took in this beautiful city - even in fog - it's magic.

We shopped along the Champs Elysées and wandered the streets around it. Bought some perfume and soap at Guerlain and some chestnuts from a street vendor. We're happy and free - lots of laughing. We brought dinner in from the Vietnamese Traiteur Dang across the street and went out to a late showing of "Dangerous Liaisons" - expecting to see a french movie - but it was just the English version with French subtitles. Later, we had café at the Rue de Boitevie.

I can't think of home - it's too far away - but I love it here - it's exciting, crowded, busy, pretty.

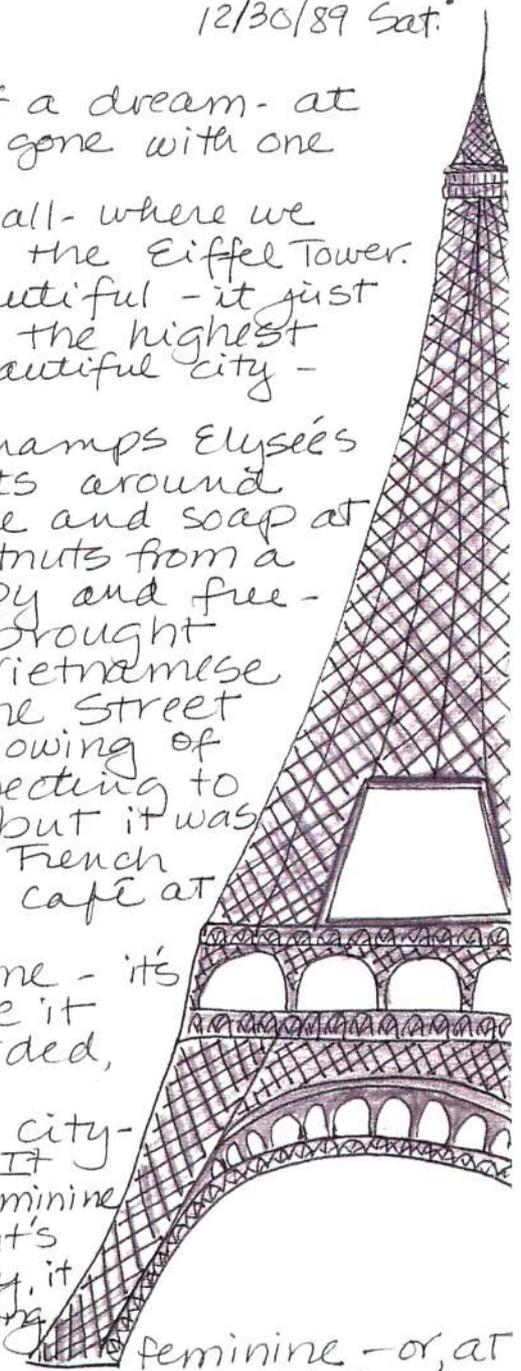
This is a woman's city - it brings out femininity. It feels like it's easy to be feminine here.... Somehow, back home it's sometimes work! Anyway, it

seems that women are strong but still manage to be feminine - or, at least the opposite of masculine, and it seems to be more related to attitude than clothing.

Metro - 10 F  
Prisonic (food) 120 F  
Guerlain - 300  
Street Vendor - 20

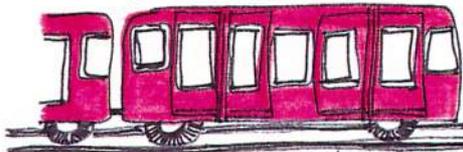
Dang Traiteur - 50  
movies - 72  
Cafe R. Boitevie - 20  
592 F.

(107)



Sun. 12/31/89 New Year's Eve

Really cold - almost wet air. We took



the metro to the Latin Quarter. What a strange experience - quiet subways! All the cars have rubber tires so there's none of that fingernail-on-blackboard screeching that's just part of the ride in NY. It's also surprising to suddenly be at ground level on one turn; on an elevated bridge at another; and then back underground again.

We wandered through the Latin Quarter - stopping for food along the way - excellent food everywhere.



This is a different city than the one we sleep in up on Rue Lauriston..... It seems as if life is lived on the street down here - everything is out in the open. I love it - Russ, too.



We also saw a Mass being said at Notre Dame - a very touching and spiritual experience of one's smallness in the giant scheme of things. This cavernous cathedral was jammed with people - standing room only right out to the front doors.

We then concentrated on the fact that today is New Year's Eve - and after heading back uptown, we began to look for a place to go tonight. We found a beautiful sort of "40's Paris" kind of place - dark, lots of wood, with the most wonderful tiny table lamps

the place" we thought. "No room" (with attitude). By now, it was to get dark, and since we had dress clothes with us just for we were beginning to despair.



As we sullenly headed back to our hotel, Russ decided to inquire into a place that had caught his eye this

"just he said beginning carried tonight,

morning as we started out.... And that's how we wound up spending New Year's Eve at the Raphael Hotel! After signing on, we went back to our room and sipped champagne as we ceremoniously dressed and prepared to celebrate. We were the first ones to arrive - it was a period room & beautifully done - Louis XV<sup>th</sup>. The room faced Ave. Kléber - less than a block from the Champs Elysée. The entire tuxedoed staff ushered us to our table in the center of the room which was lit by many, many candles. There was an enormous crystal chandelier that sparkled with reflected light and all the waiters were very attentive young Frenchmen who did not speak much English.

It was wonderful to watch this fantasy materialize! Russ was so handsome in his tux - we've been so busy finding our way in this country that I'm afraid we haven't looked at each other very much so far - but tonight we've changed our focus. We are beautiful.

The dinner was exquisite: formal service, delicious food, fine wine. At midnight, the city went wild - people marching past our windows (arms linked) chanting "Bonne Année" - horns, sirens, fireworks - and the magnificent Arc just being itself.

We hugged each other & walked through the crowds. It was cold. All our senses were involved and engaged - we have spent many New Year's Eves together (30+) - This one wins!



Adieu 1989-  
Bonne Année  
à tout.

Metro - 20 F  
Cards - 5  
Tea - 20  
Charcuterie - 28  
Pâtisserie - 28  
Raphael - 1105  
(Bonne Année) 1206 F

Monday 1/1/90

Good morning Paris - I love you! I want to carry this feeling with me always - it's wonderful.

First stop - Eiffel Tower. Cold, foggy, romantic as the world can get. What a beautiful way - an expansive way - to start a New Year. Our eyes just can't open wide enough to take it all in.

We walk and walk and walk and walk - the Seine just keeps going - like this dream we are living. The streets are so compelling - each unique and proud of it - like the French personality, I guess. After wandering through a very elegant neighborhood (bordered on one side by Rue des Etats Unis) we headed home for a wonderful nap.

We were out and walking again all evening. Tried to call kids, parents, friends back home + missed them all. Our feelings are very intense - missing home + loving it here.

We wound up sitting at the Gare de Lyon - a wonderful place for tea and people-watching. Everyone in Paris has a dog, I think - and they go everywhere with their masters - especially on holiday! It felt so good to stay in one place and watch people come + go - "we're really here" is how we're feeling.

Eiffel -	60 F
Lunch -	60 -
groceries -	8
Metro	31
Tea at Gare -	21
	<hr/>
	180 F.

(32)



Tuesday 11/2/90

I love waking up in this hotel. It's such a Parisian place - so narrow. It's always dark when we get up. We're on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor and our windows open out to the street and face an office building. When I open the drapes, even though it's dark, there's already people at work with all the lights on. I love to watch them - both the men and women are beautifully dressed and they seem to interact in a much more playful way than we do in our workplaces. I love having the coffee



brought up, but I also love going down to the little lounge that faces the inner courtyard - the colors are so different there.

There's a group of Italians staying here - they're leaving today. I'm so fascinated by them. There's four couples - each in a separate room, but all on the same floor.

Yesterday, 2 of them had an argument that lasted for hours - you could hear them two floors away. I tried so hard to understand what they were saying, but they were just too fast. What were they arguing about that was ok for their friends (and anyone else in earshot) to hear? Attitude? Clothes? Kids? Money? Sex? Or is it that it doesn't matter who hears? Anyway - it ended in tears (hers) and then they all went out. Today, everyone is friendly.

Today we shopped + walked! First to Galleries Lafayette - the largest of department stores (and of course, we were much too new to traveling to know



that today is the Parisian "Sale Day"). These crowds give new meaning to the word "pushy" ..... I read somewhere that Sartre had just been shopping at galleries Lafayette when he wrote "Hell is other people". At Prisunic - the wonderful "five + dime" store of France we bought hairdrier; Bourjois makeup; and some striped towels we hope to use for picnics. We walked the Rue Faubourg St. Honoré - each shop window is a work of art - it's just like a huge outdoor museum to me. We had lunch in the area around all the embassies - a quaint bistro that served up some very good roasted chicken and a perfect salad.

We took the metro to The Latin Quarter and amused ourselves all afternoon + evening just watching Paris go on with its business. Dinner upstairs in an "artsy" place - crowded, noisy, smoky + lots of fun. (Not so great, though, when I was sick throughout the night - the food, I think.

Vignette of the day: The metro - early evening. An elderly, frail, well-dressed lady takes a seat. She is dressed completely in gray. Her petite little dog - brown and gray - sits at her feet. She holds in her hand an exquisite bouquet of violets surrounded by a lace collar and tied with Blue Ribbon.



Lunch -	135 F
Scarf -	75
Maps -	40
Prisunic -	230
Dinner -	136
	<hr/>
	616 F

Wednesday 1/3/90 Paris

I'm not too well today. I was sick most of the night and today I still feel shaky and achy - but this is our chance to go to the Louvre, so out we go. First stop - perhaps the most serious of all French institutions - The POST OFFICE. We must mail our dress clothes home - it's going to cost a fortune and the box the clerk assures me is the size normale seems too small to me - I'm worried that this package will never make it home. After a brief inspection by a team of officials of the Bureau de Poste, however, I am assured that this package is as secure as a child in it's father's arms. Clinging to that image, I surrendered my belongings to the French Postal System and off we marched.



sky light



On our way to the Louvre, we stopped on a street corner and, by necessity, tried out one of those weird Parisian street restrooms! Insert the francs, the door slides open - in you go - the door closes and you're on your own. Push the button and the door opens and sets you free. After which it closes up and releases water + steam jets to clean the entire room for the next person in need.

It feels awkward to use one - even a little moreso to stand outside one waiting for someone to emerge. We laughed a lot.....

The line outside the Louvre was most discouraging. It wound around the whole courtyard in two or 3 circles - just luck, I guess, but we found a side door thanks to Russ' curiosity, and we were inside in minutes.

What a shock to just see one treasure after another - just lined

up. It's all lofty here - the museum itself is art - the ceilings, floors, marble, all of it - just there for the looking. The lighting is soft - it's the art the star here - and they all straight back at you - Canaletti's, Rembrandts - it's the best museum.

At least I made it through this part of the day - because I really began to feel ill and had to go back to our hotel.

I just wanted to climb into bed and sleep. Russ went out to see the Rodin Musée, the Rue Rivoli markets and the giant hardware store.

I'm still mad at my body - is this anyway to spend your last night in Paris? Boo.



Postage (clothes home)	- 180 F
tapelstring	- 15
Bus	- 20
Vitamin C	- 35
"Chat gentil plaque"	- 35
Dinner in	- 27
Umbrella	- 25
(61)	<u>337 F</u>

Paris Thursday 1/4/90

Woke up feeling okay. Whatever it was is gone. Today we leave Paris - and we're sad. We have an intense packing session, take a cab across town and pick up our new Renault - ours for the next four months. Within a half hour, we're spit out into the streets of Paris - what a freak-out. Major traffic - road



signs in French (what did I think they were going to say?). As if by magic, we found ourselves on the "peripherique" and we headed for Versailles. The skies are true blue - 1st time since we've been away we've seen the sun. Russ is a very brave driver and I'm far more trusting a passenger than I would have thought possible. It's not a very long trip - the signs for Versailles appear and it's not even noon. What an odd experience to just drive upon these



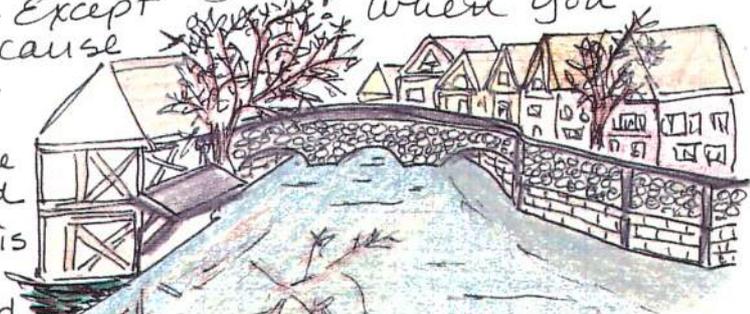
ancient cobblestones that make up the giant courtyard and then to park and walk in. The sheer size is a real shocker. I want to read everything I can about this place - I'm struck by the thought of what it must have felt like to arrive here as a member of court - to live in majesty. We follow a lady tour guide with a beautiful voice and an obvious love of history. Her words - even though they're spoken in English - are lost on us - we can only look! She smells so good, but even though I consider it, I'm just too embarrassed to ask the name of her perfume!

Louis XIV - lit

The private apartments are so dark and then suddenly we turn a few

corners and find ourselves in the Hall of Mirrors. It's late afternoon and the sun is beginning to set. The whole room - long room - sparkles like a crystal and somehow, it all belongs together: the clicking of heels on the parquet floor, the mirrors, the gilt, the crystal chandeliers... As we watch the sun go down, we realize we have nowhere to stay tonight - so, we hold hands and walk away (looking back lots of times).

We drive through flat and very green countryside and just at dusk, we spot the spires of the cathedral at Chartres. We follow the view and find ourselves there. The streets are a tiny, clean, organized maze - once you're in, you just keep going - except when you have to stop because the bridge you're crossing is so amazing - water like glass + banks reflected on both sides. This is a "perfect" European town: well-maintained but very old buildings - flower boxes, beautiful shutters - lace curtains.



We stay right in the center of town at the Hôtel de la Poste. We eat in the hotel restaurant and it's very good - Pot au feu; creme brulee; wine is La Renjardiere. It's wonderful to just walk upstairs afterwards and study maps for tomorrow's ride.

Jay -	80	F
gas -	150	
Versailles -	53	
Hôtel -	240	
Parking -	29	
Dinner -	210	
	<hr/>	
	762	F

138

° Mt. St. Michel Friday 1/5/90

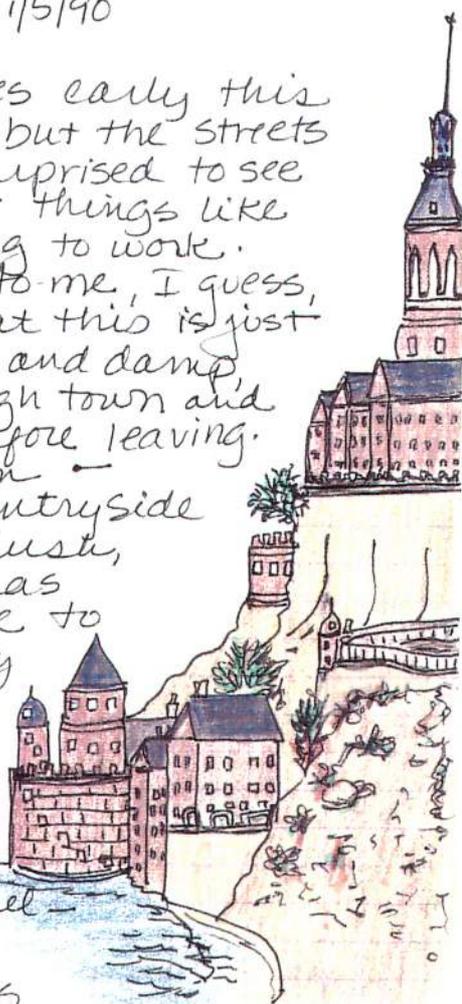
We walked through Chartres early this morning. It was still dark, but the streets were bustling. I'm always surprised to see regular people doing regular things like shopping, pushing strollers, going to work. All of Europe is a museum to me, I guess, and it's hard to take in that this is just home to some. It was foggy and damp, but we still wandered through town and the magnificent cathedral before leaving.

We took the N12 to Alençon - a beautiful ride. The countryside seems untouched - very lush, green and every house has flowers. (It was a surprise to hear "Ribbon in the Sky" by Stevie Wonder on the car radio as we were driving this afternoon).

By 4:00 - after many miles of very flat land - we arrived at Mt. St. Michel. We climbed those stairs - more than just a little spooky I thought, but Russ loves it and we're going to stay here tonight. Our room is great - tucked up in the eaves, it opens onto rooftops.

It's a little bare, but comfy and warm. We have an early dinner and set out to explore. It's almost deserted now - we can hear the echos of our footsteps - and as it gets dark, we can look up and see the abbey all lit up. The high tide which renders this place an island, won't be here for another week, but sitting up near the top, we can imagine that feeling of isolation.

On our way back to our room, we watched two men moving furniture -



through 2<sup>nd</sup> floor windows down to the street - again, amazement at the fact that some people live here!

I settled in - feeling so cozy + happy to be in out of the cold, fog + mist, but Reiss hadn't had enough - he went out for another long walk.....

This must be the most wonderful naturally air-conditioned place in the summer.

Bkfst.	-	27
lunch	-	21
Tea	-	31
La Vieille Auberge	-	140
Dinner	-	170
		<hr/>
(70)		389 F

• Sainte Sat. 1/6/90

We left LeMont early - hoping for blue skies - but only gray. We drove a short hop into Pontoron for morning Cafe - a beautifully well-kept town - not flashy - but a neighborhood kind of place. We had a walk around and then some strong café and croissant and then on the road again. Stopped in Rennes - a pretty and tiny city to do laundry. Quelle probleme! First - it cost a lot. Second - it took forever. We don't think too much about home - we don't talk too much about the future. We're realizing just how long this trip is really going to be and we're each nursing our feelings, I think. Really - the force that drives us on is the curiosity - the desire to see what we'll see.

Again on the road and a late lunch while driving toward Nantes - Cousteron Cheese (Loire) - French bread - Clementines. Music was beautiful on the radio - classical - and the countryside so lush and green I just wanted to cry.

To be free like this -  
to see this beauty -  
to be in love - it's heaven.

Long haul into La Rochelle and Boo-hiss. Probably a great summer place, but gray and deserted now. We both feel threatened - we go into a hotel (with all our bags) and then decide ..... no way! Glass doors to back courtyard - just not right. We lugged everything back out - tried to be courteous - and just left - - in the dark.

We drove on - feeling so vulnerable -



Quimper motifs  
appear here -

and by luck drove into Sainte. Russ tried his luck and voila - we got a room at Hôtel des Messageries. Family run - quaint - clean - quiet. We were elated to unload the car and dive into that room. Showers were great (odd bathroom with a 3/4 high tile wall separating shower from the rest of the room + also having the shower area be one step up + slanted so that water drained off). We had an incredible meal at La Sicilia - a very unlikely spot for a trendy pizza place, but there it was. Delicious pizza with all kinds of veggies - even had a banana split for dessert.

This is a real charmer of a town and we covered it all after dinner. There's a lot of energy here.

We laughed a lot - shrugged off the stresses of the day - and had a great time.

Bkfst.	20 F
Lunch	67
Laundry	80
Dinner	150
Room + Bkfst	248
	<hr/>
	565 F

(102)



• Biarritz

Sunday, 1-7-90

This was a hard place to leave, but we are spurred on by curiosity.

The autoroute here is very beautiful - sort of like the Merritt Parkway back in Connecticut.

Grapevines for miles - Bordeaux.

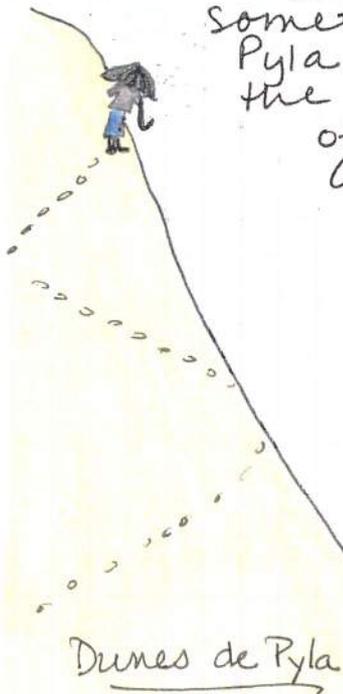
We had to investigate something called the Dunes de Pyla - and it was well worth the long detour. A mountain of sand in Arachon on the Atlantic ocean - just southwest of Bordeaux. We had to climb it - even in the rain. We just carried umbrellas (actually - we had to share - only one with us - so we took turns).

It's hard to acknowledge this as real - it's just so unexpected - and arrogant as it sounds, neither one of us has ever heard of it before!

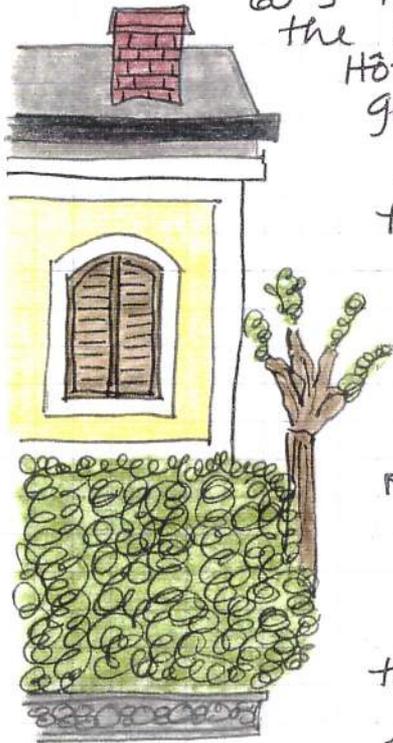
The area all around here is très chic.

Stucco - Spanish-style homes - very grand - with unbelievable views and magic gardens.

After a few hours of just walking all over this mountain, we were off again.



we arrived in Biarritz just before dusk. The ocean here is amazing - huge - serious - vast. The town is Fairy Tale French - right out of 60's textbooks. Beautiful colors in the sunset and we found Hôtel Loris - an aging little gem. Sweet and neat.



Dinner in a wonderful Thai restaurant around the corner (Brochettes - grilles - Tursan wine).

Fun.

Stately houses here - beautiful. Great colors. The hedges are tall and everywhere. Those funny trees line every street.

We walked lots tonight. It's a beautiful town. Stopped in at a stationers and bought this pad (my original diary is falling apart). Heard yelling in the middle of the night. ??

Gas	160	F
Lunch	15	
Dinner	130	
Hôtel (4 Bkfst. + calls to Spain)	268	
Stationers	38	
	<hr/>	
	611	F

(111)

Santander, Spain

Monday 1/8/90

We're in a hurry to leave. The weather is threatening - On the other hand, it would be heaven to wait for summer right here. Onto the autoroute and a short ride to the border - but not so short. Customs problem with trucks has caused a major back-up for miles. We drove the wrong way on a major 4-lane road just to find an exit ramp (and we started a trend, too, as others followed). Russ actually tried to disassemble a roadblock on the exit and by the looks of the road police who showed up just as he gave up and got back in the car, his timing was perfect.

So - we headed to the backroads and the border crossing at Hendaye into San Sebastian. This was a very freaky border - masses of traffic - and first these French guards in impeccably pressed blue uniforms checking passports and saying goodbye ... a few seconds later, we stop in



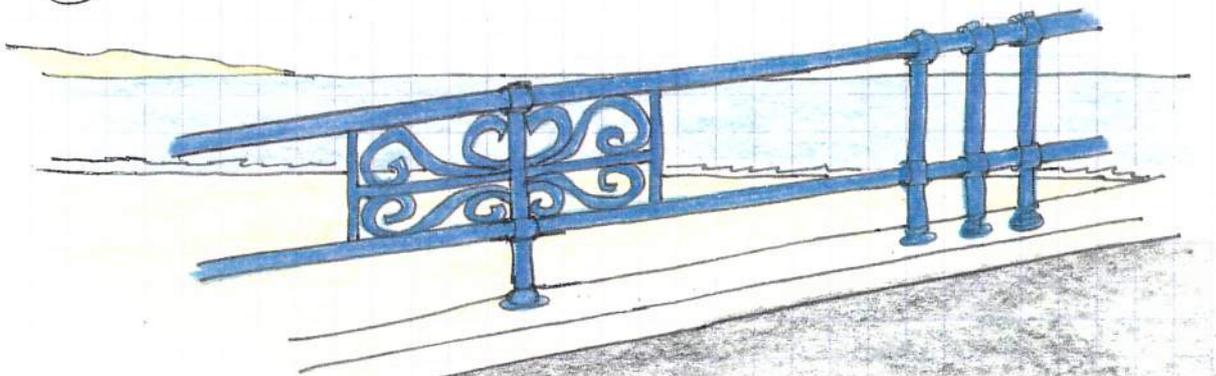
front of the Spanish guardhouse - rumpled brown khaki uniforms, stubbly beard, cigar hanging out of his mouth spilling ashes - vive la difference !!

The border itself is huge here - full of trucks. We drove on - feeling a little off after all that French civility. By the time we were entering Basque Country and seeing all the nationalism-type graffiti, we were feeling uncomfortable. Of course, it then began to rain and get chilly. We left the main

road and shot ourselves into noon traffic in San Sebastian. A real zoo. The city is old with some very beautiful statuary + great buildings - but overcrowded and very disorganized. We found a banco + Russ circled while I went in for \$ - and right back on the road again. Stopped at a service area on the road and we both sunk a little lower as we eyed the building (dingy) the food (unappealing) and the people (cold). Maybe we're just too close to Basque country. We tried Betsy again + finally discovered we're dialing wrong - too many numbers - but no answer anyway. Drove the northern coast between San Sebastian and Santander - a European Big Sur - only longer and higher. Really beautiful. We found a turismo office in Santander and headed for the Playa.

Took a room in Hotel Rhin - right across from the beach. Modern hotel - beautiful room - funny smells. We walked + walked after a dinner in the main square (rice - fish - sweet wine). There are paved boardwalks all along the shore - with lights and gardens. It's wonderful to hear the ocean - we sleep well. But - we miss France.

Hotel Rhin	7356 P
Dinner - Casino	1600
Gas	1300
Tolls/Snacks	1660
(108)	11,916 P



Madrid

Tuesday 1/9/90

Finally got Betsy this morning! We left Santander at noon and headed for Madrid. We can't believe the landscapes here - the coast is so rugged and wild - almost uninhabited. The shore is gorgeous - but then a few miles later, we're encased in fog so thick we can't see anything but the hood of the car. For miles and miles it goes

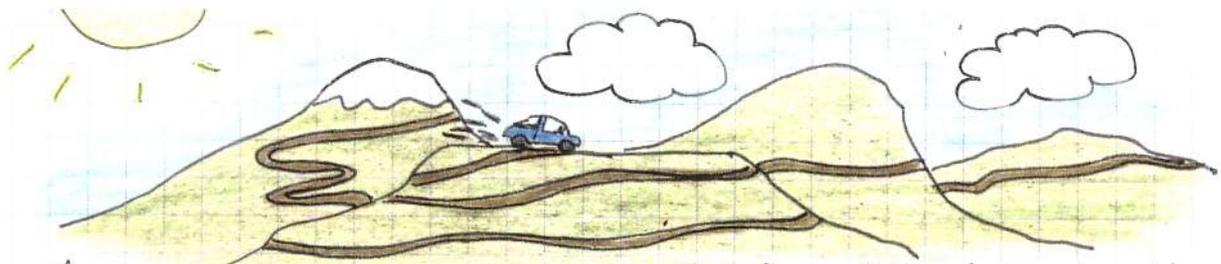


on like this - fog at the tops of mountains and then clear as we descend. We pass villages that we're sure are deserted and then we see signs of life - a schoolbus with a few children; an old man leading a donkey and cart. The music on the radio is strictly Spanish - folk or flamenco, but not a lot of American tunes mixed in like we found in France.

We stop in Burgos - a rather orderly and very populated small city in the middle of nowhere - I mean, it just appeared! I wonder if the "wild west" was like this as Americans moved on - miles and miles of plains + mountains and then suddenly a settlement and then just as suddenly wild land again. Burgos was a surprise because we saw so many kids. School had just let out and the streets were full. We had lunch at a tapas bar - it was interesting and tasty and we felt good to be on our way to Madrid.

We left refreshed and ready to face the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of this long drive.

We drove through plains that were so vast we felt like ants - and



down on top of mountains. We drove all day - and just before dusk we came to Segovia. It's ancient - and it also has major traffic - how incongruous. A spidery, tall, thin, very old aqueduct dominates the skyline. We want to stop + explore, but Betsy's waiting at a stop for us + we will be an hour late as it is. We miss a major road outside Segovia and find ourselves on backroads - it's getting dark and we are lost (it seems) in the mountains - one after another after another. We are both steamed at lack of directions or signs of any kind. Suddenly - we go round a bend + see the lights of Madrid in the distance! Yeah! We find El Escorial - a magnificent monastery - with no trouble and there's Betsy at the station. What a reunion! After a drink, we head off to the maze of Madrid - huge - traffic jams - but we have our own guide. Heaven. We park (a miracle) just down the street from her 5<sup>th</sup> floor walkup in Old Madrid. Charming as can be, but not a place for tourists. We chat for a while + then Betsy goes off to a friend's house + we turn in - exhausted. It's cold as hell, windy in the apartment + we're not feeling too secure on the top floor of this ancient wooden building with hall lights that only stay on for a few seconds. We sleep (with hats on) but fitfully. I miss Paris. Russ has a sore throat.

Burgos-lunch	375 P
Gas	1800
	2175 P

(20)

Madrid

Wednesday 1/10/90

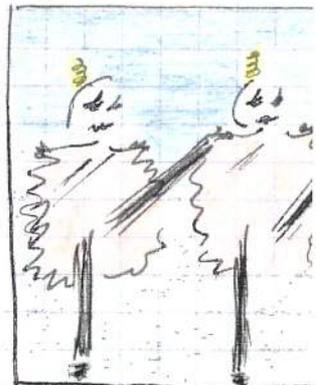
Spent the day with Betsy. We walked everywhere with her. got a mattress for her sofa bed and helped carry it through the streets and set it up in the apartment (Five flights up + we giggled most of the way).

We walked through most of Old Madrid - amazing for its ancient wooden structures to the Post office - to the travel agency to see about going to Portugal - a long (3 hour) lunch at La Barraca - an elegant city restaurant. Real paella - and it was delicious (and expensive). How odd, we thought, that things are so hidden here -- we had to go through three doors to get into the restaurant.



Russ' sore throat is really bothering him and so we find a pharmacy - buy some Vitamin C - and he stays home and goes to bed.

Betsy and I go off to the studio space where she paints. I write home to Kim and Wendy while she works on a painting - it's quite good - Bold and colorful. I also watch a woman come in and start working on a wonderful painting of dancers in a kind of abstract-y fashion. Within an hour it was a mess - ruined. I wonder where I heard that the only thing that marks you as an artist is the talent for knowing when



to stop.

We go to the Lladro showroom and I send home a few pieces - my mom loves them and my friend Cathy has asked for one, too. She'll love the one I send - it looks like her child, Alaina.



We eat a great veggie meal at home with Betsy and talk and talk and talk (family gossip + catch-up) and go to sleep early.

We've decided to leave for Portugal tomorrow. Betsy's holiday is over - and - we have to get warm.

Lunch-La Barraca	10,000 P
for Betsy	5,000
Post office	300
Subway tickets	<u>200</u>
	15,500 P

(140)

Almeida, Portugal

Thursday 1-11-90

The drive was easy and beautiful today. Wonderful blue sky - Betsy rode with us to the edge of the city and then hopped out at a bus stop - we were on our way again.

Flat land - no mountains - and we had to stop in Avila just to marvel at that ancient walled city - still standing as it was.

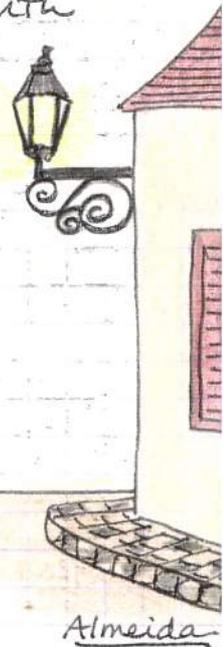
We're happy to be heading this way - we can feel the warmth coming.

The border is very eerie here - kind of a desperado feeling - lots of indigent people just milling around - not many vehicles at all. We are just waved on - looks like no one is ever going to look at these passports it took so long to get.

We cross the border at Vilar Formoso and everything changes again. The land is much less scruffy, rocky, craggy - it's all just green and green and green! We both feel better right away.....

We find that there's a Pousada very closeby - Russ called from the border - and we pull in just before evening.

Almeida is gorgeous - a real oasis. There's beautiful wood everywhere - lots of windows, lots of stone, lots of tile. The lobby is huge with a giant fireplace blazing away. We are very happy to be here. Our room is



large, airy, serene - a real harbor.  
 The fabrics are all woven here -  
 heavy cotton robes and towels -  
 softest wool throws and blankets.  
 We want to experience it all -  
 sit in the soft leather chair with  
 a lamp and a wool throw over  
 your legs and read; take a long,  
 hot, shower and dry off with  
 those super towels; walk downstairs  
 to a wonderful dining room with  
 smiling + helpful staff and eat  
 well (all locally grown/produced)  
 chicken, fish, veggies, great bread,  
 wine; sit by the fire with wine  
 and just be quiet; snuggle up in  
 a big, soft, comfy, warm bed!  
 We did each one and then we  
 slept peacefully - deeply.

In the morning, we see people  
 walking with cows; wagons drawn  
 by donkeys; a surreal foggy mist  
 mingling with all the green.

We set off once again - but  
 not before one of the staff can get  
 out to our car and wash it down  
 with warm water (to clean it off +  
 get rid of some ice that has formed  
 on the windows)

A one-of-a-kind send off .....



Almeida		
Pousada	7,000	ES.
meal	5,340	
Gas	2,000	
	<hr/>	
	14,340	

(104)

Estoril, Portugal

Friday, 1/12/90

We drove all day - mostly along the coast. Portugal is a blue sky, green land, white house, red roof kind of country. The countryside is beautiful. We first freaked out and then laughed like hell at these weird road offshoots for vehicles with faulty brakes - basically, a "Y" off to the side into an upwardly piled hill of gravel. I know Russ was dying to try one - I think it would have just gobbled our little Renault right up.

We drove through Lisbon - an enormous city and very crowded, hot, noisy - and immediately out again and into Estoril. We are in awe at the beauty of the ocean side here - miles and miles



- Estoril -

of walks along the water with beautiful old white buildings looking out over all. We are screwed once again by American Express lists of approved places to cash checks. No way to get cash and it's Friday night. Of course, then we fight over money and it's late with no place to stay.

Russ goes to the turismo office and comes out with at least a recommendation - Hotel Lido. It's fine. An aging Euro kind of place - it'sy lift - lots of wood built-ins - overlooks its own

pool. I'm comfy - he's not too thrilled.

Dinner at Pereira's - a local place from "Let's go". great Suito misto, Baked Chicken, sweet wine.

Russ gets to choose the fish he wants to eat — lots of locals to watch as we eat.....

Small problem driving later on. We got lost and found ourselves going the wrong way on a one-way street - right past the police station. We finally came to a stop in a pedestrian square.

The cop just shook his head.....

Gao	3,201	Es.
Snacks	300	
Hotel Lido	4,200	
Pereira Rest.	1,700	
	<u>9,401</u>	

(68)

• Sintra, Portugal

Sat. 1/13/90

After driving up to see the castles in the sky, we decide to stay here tonight.

We check in at the Residencial Raposa in town - no driving today. We're tired and wounded from yesterday's battles over room and money.

We sit in the front courtyard in the sun - spend the afternoon on the beach. Crashing Atlantic waves at Cabo da Roca. Lunch is fresh bread, oranges and Vinho Verde. We finally relax.

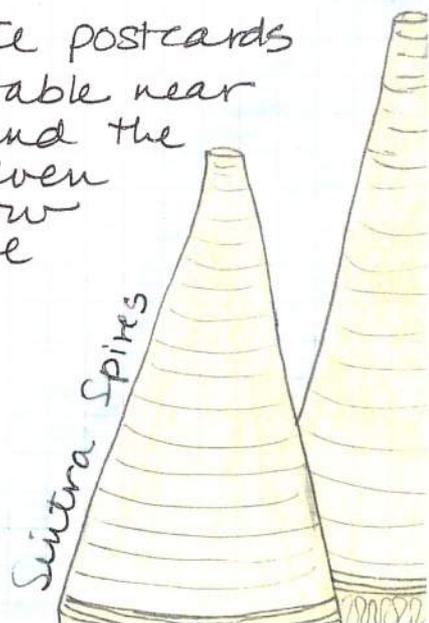
Sea back at our inn, which is also a Salon de Thé and then dinner later at another very local place - Alcobaca Restaurant.

This room had the best wine colored chenille bedspread - Russ loved it so (I wonder if he would have taken it if we had room?)

We read and write postcards by candlelight on the table near the window. No locks and the warped wood didn't even allow for the window to close completely. We still felt safe - and close again.....

cards	150 Es.
Gas	2000
Snack	775
Lunch	1100
Dinner	1500
Room	5000
	<hr/>
	10,525

(76)



Albufeira, Portugal Sun/Mon 1/14 and 1/15/90

Drove straight down the coast - to Albufeira. Did a crazy run-around looking for where to stay - spent 1/2 day, at least. Finally ended up right back where we started - Hotel Sol e Mar.

It's too much money, but we do it - we need to sleep and lay in the sun. This is a 60's-style large hotel - front steps go out to the main square - in the back, only ocean.

The Gulf of Cadiz meets the Atlantic here. The place really reminded us of the Deauville (Miami) in 1964! We ate Cataplana for two at O'Tunnel - a restaurant on the steps to the square and good Branco wine. We watched all the tour groups at the enormous bar in our lobby and then went up to bed.

In the middle of the night - on the balcony wrapped in blankets - we could see all the ships passing on the horizon on their way to the Atlantic's sea lanes. Silent disbelief at the spectacle.....

We awoke early to a brilliant blue sky - brought clothes

to the laundry and got groceries and then just sat on our balcony

for lunch. We walked all afternoon and then sat in a cove on the beach until the sun went down. When it sets here, it's almost sad.



This place was meant to be in sunlight.

Huge English retirement population here - odd to see signs for pubs and tea rooms.

Nice dinner in a very out of the way place - a Travessa - Russ really has a nose for these places.

Sagres Cerveza wine - fish grilled on skewers for Russ and swordfish for me.

Happy day.

Funny post office. Upstairs in a house-type building. All foreign outgoing mail gets tossed in a ragged cardboard box on the floor.

Wonder where that will all end up?

1/14 Tolls	230 Es.
Gas	2500
Snack	150
Dinner	2360
Room	7500
	<hr/>
	12,740

(92)

1/15 Laundry	1800 Es
groceries	1900
Post Office	700
Cards	250
gifts	450
Dinner	1800
Room	7500
	<hr/>
	14,400

(104)

1/16/90 Tuesday / 1/17 Wednesday

Baïlen, Spain - Benicarlo

Left Albufeira early - 8 AM. Sad to go because it was such a beautiful day. Drove right to the border of Portugal + Spain + screeched to a stop. The border is a river + no bridge. Have to ferry across. Now this border stop was real Sneeze - no one could look you in the eye. We zipped across on the ferry studying the maps of Spain. Noticed a couple who were back packing - they were older (like us) + we both decided we were happy to be doing the trip by car. We still have about 2 bags too much - should have heeded the old advice - "bring 1/2 your luggage + twice as much money."

We drove to Sevilla + got off the highway there for ufo + cambio. We lost an hour - got no help at all. Got lost in the streets. This was a really crowded city - zillions of cars. I saw some gorgeous old buildings - Russ had all he could do to keep from being hit by one of the maniacs zooming around. Someone did warn us at a light to remove stuff from the top of the back seat - apparently they loot the cars as they stop for lights. Great -

Back on the highway, we raced to Cordoba + got off seeking ufo. Got more help from a gas station man than anyone else. Called ahead + made reservations at a parador in Baïlen. What a trip. Giant foyer - long, narrow corridors leading to standard kind of rooms. Strange place. We're hungry - the rest. in this place is too expensive - but we brave it at the bar + ask for a sandwich - it works - at least we eat something before turning in.

We are up + on the road early - 8:00. Just coffee + a bolla. Russ jokes about a chain of Dunkin' Bollas - it would probably work. We drive 600 Km today - Russ has unbelievable endurance (+ is incredibly motivated to get to France) We go through a number of towns - they just suddenly appear. Ubeda, [lunch in town bar - fritatas + bread - only men - drinking] Bought bread from a vendor's car.

Alicante, Albacete - finally Valencia. All this while - no highways. Just regular roads. Almost all the towns look deserted - all Spanish life takes place behind the front doors or in an inner courtyard. Spooky.

We got a tour of Valencia trying to find the highway - unbelievably congested city - makes NY look positively clean. Tons of really poor people everywhere + suddenly we turn a corner + there are about a dozen equestrians - gorgeous horses - all formally dressed - starched shirts, black velvet jackets - I could even see the jeweled tie pins + red nails. You just had to stare at the incongruity parading in front of your eyes. After that, an easy drive to Benicarlo where we stopped for the night. A nice parador - right on the mediterranean. Felt good to check in + walk to the waters. We went to the piers + watched the fishing boats come in + saw the most amazing fish auction. Flat after flat of the most perfectly arranged fish auctioned off - we were mesmerized + stood there for a long time. I loved standing there with Russ' arms around me - I'm glad we'll be in France tomorrow. Back at the hotel - a convention of Iberian pharmacists - all in white sweatsuits + black socks smoking up a storm. By the time we went out for dinner, they were filing solemnly into a bus. We wandered the streets - saw a weird parade with horses - stopped in a tapas bar for dinner. Beers and a few anonymous tidbits.

1/16	Gas	2500 Es	1/17	Snack	550 Ps
	Ferry	540 Es		Parador-Benicarlo	7420 Ps
	Cordoba-snacks	450 Ps		Dinner	600
	Parador-Bailen	7000 Ps		tolls	1240
		7450 Ps			9810 Ps
		3040 Es			

(67) (22)

(89)

(Lost tons of money in the phone trying to call my mom. Swore like a trooper at the operator who couldn't understand a word I said).

1/18/90 Thursday  
1/19/90 Friday

Collioure, France

:

Left Spain with difficulty - couldn't find any places to change currency - finally just drove + hoped they'd take the combination of Pesos + Francs which was all the cash we had. At the border we paid the toll in francs + they had a cambio office there anyway.

How happy we were to be in France again - amazing how the country changes so drastically. We suddenly found ourselves on one of those roads that looks like a country lane bordered on both sides with tall trees - and then we turned into Collioure - a "painters" village on the sea. We could hardly contain ourselves - actually, we couldn't. We got out + immediately sat in an outdoor café overlooking the harbor + water. We had some café - I shopped + got some undies + then we checked into Hôtel Triton. A little pink charmer. What a beauty - our room had outlandish flowered paper, a bed that kind of collapsed in the middle, a sink + shower but no toilet (that was down the hall), the thinnest walls I ever heard (we heard sneezes, sighs, everything) and doors that opened onto a tiny balcony that looked right over the harbor and lower village. We were in heaven. We knew we'd stay here for 2 days. We walked to dinner in a totally hidden place on some sidestreet - the only people in a charming little place sweetly cared for by one man. Presentation was special - food was so good - happy day.

Wine of this region is Côte de Roussillon. It's good.

This bed just made us giggle - it was as bowed as an ancient hammock and squeaked loudly if you took a deep breath... even so - we couldn't resist.

We watched the "check outs" the next AM - the fancy couple in the big BMW - he carried out everything



and at the last moment she appeared - with furs, high heels, etc. We had such fun spying. Also watched the old, old man with the 40-ish woman - we both agreed she was faking.

Settled down out on the harbor walk all day - it was like summer. We ate lunch (wine, bread, fruit) and walked all the way out on the sea wall. The colors in the sky, the earth, the water - it really is compelling to paint - we both, though, just drink in the beauty - we are exhausted after that drive through Spain and this is the most wonderful recharge we could have imagined.

We watch the old fisherman feeding all those black + white cats that live under the rowboats right outside our windows -

We'll remember when we read this those 2 elderly couples sitting on the seawall together having lunch - their animated conversations, their easy laughter - how sensual and male/female their energy was - and how natural.

We are happy here -

	1/18	Spain to France		1/19	
		Bkfst. on autopista	350 Ps.	Bkfst.	50 FR.
		gas	1600 Ps.	Chambre	190
(43) Sp.		tolls	2855 Ps.	groceries	47
			<u>4805 Ps.</u>		<u>287</u>
		Hôtel Triton	190 FR.		
		Dinner	150		
		lingerie	240		
		Café	44		
		gas	75		
(27) Fr.			<u>699 FR</u>		
(52) Fr.					

Saturday

~~Sunday~~ 1/21/90

Aix-en-Provence

We left Collioure early - the autoroute is beautiful in the South. So green with beautiful views of the water in some places. We get off the road in Ailles - there is a market going on that covers the whole town. Unable to find a place to

park, we just drive and watch until we find ourselves in an old part of town — there's a Roman amphitheater smack in the middle of town — on its highest point — that's still used for shows + concerts! This is a beautiful small city — but we want to find Aix, so we go on.

We find Aix — we park easily — we struggle with finding a room. The first one is too much — we argue, because I have to be the one to draw the line — but we recover and down the street we find the Residence Rotunde Hôtel — it's fine. We shower + rest before hitting the streets — this room has the most unusual

storage arrangement we've ever seen  
 But it's very comfy.  
 Aix is gorgeous — it's only after you walk a block or two behind its



enormous promenade that you really see the city — a maze of the most wonderful streets, shops, squares, courtyards — a trillion bookshops. This is a college town — oh, how Kim would love this little city. We wander + walk til dark + then we walk some more just to be able to look into windows that are lit. Finally — we can't walk any more — we bring white pain de pays, hard goat's cheese, bread, jambon, tarte au citron + heart cookies (+ a bunch of violets) back to our room for a late and very happy dinner.

1/21. gas	120	FR
tolls	27	FR
groceries	64	(inc. violets)
Café	7	
Hôtel	236	
	<u>434</u>	

Sunday 1/21 Aix-en-Provence - Antibes

We left Aix early - a gorgeous day. Very blue sky and everything so green. It just doesn't seem like January.

We got off the highway quickly (near le Luc) and drove country roads through vineyards, tiny villages, mountain towns, toward St. Tropez. One place, between la garde-Freinet and Grimaud was a tiny travel-book paradise. Old houses, well-cared for, flowers, beautiful fences, old dogs, good smells - sort of nestled into the hills high above St. Tropez. This was one of Russ' favorite places. It was fun driving here - no one on the roads - no time restrictions - and the most beautiful coast in the world popping into view around every curve.

Stopped in St. Tropez for cafe and croissant: we had to watch the locals to learn that you sit outside and get coffee or drinks at the cafe and buy something to eat at the bakery that is inevitably next door - bring it back to your table - unwrap the goodie - and enjoy it as you drink the hot cafe and face the sun. It's such a ritual - all chairs are turned to the sun - all faces look up - Sant. is so quaint - tiny - but all roads leading in are very built-up. This place must be unbelievably crowded in season. lots of condos, huge hotels - we're kind of grateful it's so empty now.

We just hugged the coast from here on - from one little town to another. Some with all its houses white and shining under a very bright sun - others with dreamy tree-lined squares facing the sea. Then the hills got to be more like small mountains + the dirt became very red and the water just got more turquoise until we knew we were getting close to a city. The buildings suddenly got tall - eventually they became

high rises - zillions of them - and that was Cannes. Now that was a town chock full of luxury cars. We buzzed through in our toy Renault and screeched to a halt in <sup>3</sup> Juan les Pins - it was lunch time and the assortment of outdoor cafés facing the sea was just too much to pass up. We chose the Brasserie le Neptunia and had omelettes + wine on linen covered tables outside. We tuned out the bored and arrogant vibes from the waiter and focused on the people - and the buildings and the water. In no time we were off driving through Cap d'Antibes + hoping for a place to stay. No luck there, but as we spun out into Antibes, we spotted l'hôtel Royal and after the usual negotiations, Russ got us a dream room. Double windows facing the mediterranean on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. We were directly across the street from a public beach (tiny) + promenade. The room was wonderful - private bath (such luxury) - pale pink, white furniture, and all the bedcovers were done in a sweet tiny pink, blue and yellow print. A really inviting place, we ensconced ourselves so quickly -



and went off to wander through Antibes. I went to Picasso's atelier - like a shrine, it was. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor windows have shutters like frames, so the view of the sea below looks like paintings.

It's a great museum - old pale wooden floors, lots of windows - wonderful works everywhere (even the garden) and whole rooms of photos of Picasso at all stages of his life. I went alone because we couldn't afford two tickets. This is one of my favorites - of his. It's a giant print! After walking the rest of the day, we went back + changed for dinner + walked through the Vieille Ville. Ate at a wonderful, peachy colored old place with the smartest deco wall sconces + old, old neon lights at the bar. The harbor was brimming over with sailboats and we watched planes landing in Nice just about every 5 min.

Gas - 120 FR; tolls - 40; lunch - 58;  
Room - 200; Dinner - 130; museum - 30. 578 FR or (105).

Monday, 1/22/90 Antibes

It was wonderful to wake up here. So sunny so quiet. We walked into town looking for breakfast - really hungry. Could only find places that just served café - finally a patisserie - SO fancy - with incredible sweets - + tiny tables in the rear. We could have eaten a lot more than the allocated 1 roll each.

Watched a little old lady feeding her tiny poodle sugar cubes - the dog danced around in circles to her delight and that of the proprietor.

We sat on a bench by the water for lunch (bread, wine, <sup>hard</sup>cheese) and got so cozy + warm.

Drove through Antibes (amazing traffic for such a small place - mostly 1-way streets) to Mougins, a beautiful walled city on the top of a big hill overlooking the whole valley.

Visited Fragonard perfumerie - a disappointment really - just too touristy. We are spoiled by the beauty of the land and its incredible peacefulness. It's a shock to go through Grasse and see such a high concentration of people, cars, stores, roads - we've been hugging the coast until now and have not seen this kind of middle class neighborhood since we left Chartres a long time ago.

We got dressed + had drinks at our hotel + then dinner around the corner at Le Relais Monceau - a tiny local place, Provence tables + cloths - good chicken (pot au feu) + good local wine.

Hôtel Royale	200 FF
Café - pain +	36
lunch	
Drinks - hôtel	40
Dinner	130
	<hr/>
	406 FF



(74)

Tuesday 1/23/90 Antibes to Cap Ferrat

Of course, on the day we leave we find the best, the sunniest, place for breakfast - full of locals on the way to work - coffee is steaming + a whole tiny basket of rolls for 30 FR.! We have fun speaking with a woman at the Amex bank - she shows us photos of her baby - we show her K+W photos..... We know we want to stay in this part of France, but where? We drive through Nice - it's gorgeous. It's huge, with lots of trees, old, old buildings, great squares every few blocks - very compelling - the traffic is wild - just have to go with the tide. We spin out of the city + find ourselves on a harbor road - through Villefranche-sur-mer. An almost unreal + out-of-time harbor nestled in a cove around the corner from Nice - everything is purple, pink, yellow, blue - + all faded from the sun. As we drive on, the road goes up the side of a mountain - the sea just sits there below - it's Beaulieu-sur-mer. A genteel old place, lots of old people. We try the tourist office - not helpful - wind up with bread + oranges + wine on a bench in the lovely park in the center of town. We want to stay here, but can't find a place. We drive to St. Jean cap Ferrat + back, about 4 times. We're tired of traveling - we want to stop. We brave it finally. Just pick up the phone + dial one of the numbers on the tourist rental sheet + we get Mme. Meozzi - we agree to meet at her place - a one-bedroom aptmt. - not the top floor as advertised, but the bottom flat. We negotiate as best we can with the 2 sisters-in-law + finally take the place for a week. We have been on the road for a month + we have to stop. They live upstairs - the place is quiet - clean - safe. I'm singing as I unpack... we'll be able to cook again + just stay in one place for a while. We go down to the harbor to the laundromat - buy some groceries. and finally go "home". We sleep like

babies - happy.

apmt (30 Rue Denis Séméria - 93.76.09.71) or 93.42.76.17

groceries

Bkfst (Antibes)

lunch (Beaulieu)

laundromat

1300 FR

100

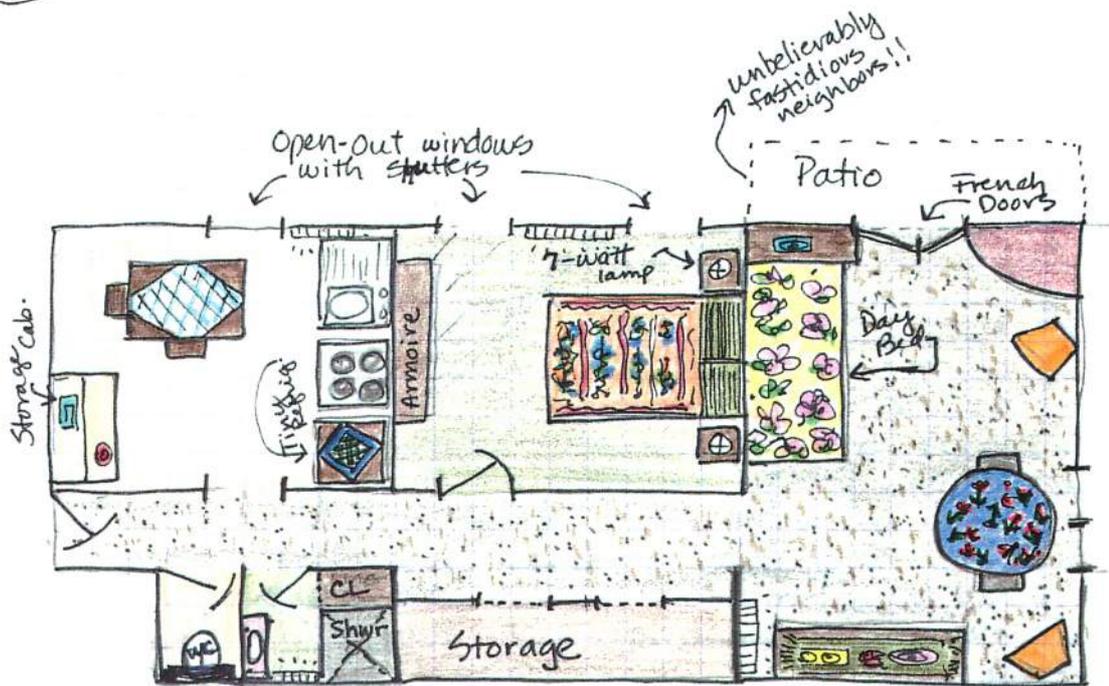
30

24

69

1523 FR

(277)



Wed. 1/24 Cap Ferrat •

We wake up questioning this move. Did we pay too much? Do we want to stay here for a whole week? Is there a paradise right around the next bend that we haven't seen yet? Anyway... we both want to be outside.

To the beach in the cove on the way out to Beaulieu - absolutely breathtaking. You can look across to Nice. We hardly speak - it's sunny, warm, cozy - and we can see that in the summer there's a concession + chair rental place here.

We get the car washed(!) at a speedy drive through on the way to Beaulieu for groceries and then drive the cap circuit - the estates are pure fantasy - the quiet is everywhere - everything is slow here.

We go out to the end of the Cap and stumble upon the most moving war memorial - a chapel sitting at the peak of the cap - its windows look out on blue forever - the cemetery is in the courtyard - and this enormous madonna + child - a metal sculpture pivoted together in pieces overlooks the whole cap - on our way back down the road, we pass a very old woman going up - her arms full of flowers - her eyes full of tears - we are deeply moved. We sit in a sunny cove for an hour and congratulate ourselves on being here.

We play in the kitchen - veal; artichokes become a wonderful dinner - later I write letters + Russ reads.

Patisserie	14
Groceries	200
Market/flowers	60
Car wash/gas	145
	<hr/>
	419 F

(76)



Thursday 1/25 Cap Ferrat

Today we are up early - we take the car to the Renault dealer in Beaulieu-sur-Mer for its oil change and check-up (it is very overdue and the proprietor is shocked that we are so careless about maintenance). We hop the train to Nice - a beautiful city. We walk-walk-walk. Visit the Russian cathedral (so weird in this setting to see "onion domes") - walk through the "Old City" - (very busy street life) and stop for a "real" lunch, ie, full course meal at Divia (from Let's go!) We search book stores for Michelin guides (for France + Italy) but no luck - and we can't afford them anyway. We are fascinated by the book stores and by the stationary stores - in France both are special ..... orderly, bright, full of new things, spotlessly clean, staffed with people who love to help.

We stop at Fnac - a large department store & find an English version of the Italian Michelin paperbound & we bite the bullet & buy it (an astounding 41 F - about \$8.00)

We sip drinks at an outdoor café near the station - I try Pernod - really different.

Back to Beaulieu to pick up the car - we can't believe how much we have to pay to get it back - 250 F. We go home feeling poor, but happy. We eat the sandwiches we bought for a snack as our supper and we read maps, guidebooks, & all our notes about Italy. We'll be in a new country in less than a week.

We hit a snag before this day ends, though. As I continue to get more excited about the days & adventure to follow, Russ begins to retreat it seems & finally just cuts off altogether. Boo.

Train - 20 F; lunch - 115; snacks - 32; drinks - 22; museum - 20; car repairs - 249; Michelin guide - 41. 499 F

(91)



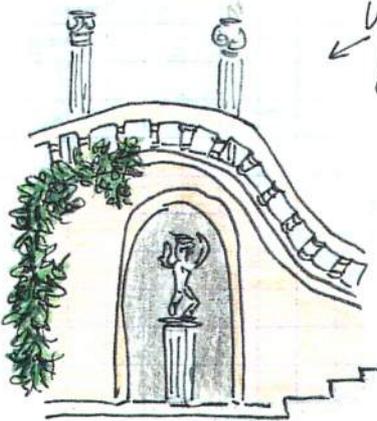
Friday 1/26 Cap Ferrat

Today we have a major relationship argument: he/she; closed/open; silent/verbal. For most of the day. Lots of feelings - lots of tears. Lots of pain. By mid afternoon we're emotionally drained and we decide to go to the Rothschild Musée right around the corner from our apartment.

We lose ourselves in its splendor. We have a young woman guide who only speaks French - the dozen or so people all speak French, too. We don't care. It's like lovely background music as we meander through room after room of quiet opulence. Rooms full of Sevres porcelain (even made into potty chairs for the kids!!) Savonnerie carpets! And two Renoirs and a Monet (though not a very good one) just sitting there in his dressing room. We both notice as we go along a young couple - he speaks French to the guide + then turns to his girlfriend and translates on the spot into English for her. Russ envies him - I'm just sad. We wander through the gardens - little gems of vignettes all at every turn. This palace is like a little crown on the top of Cap Ferrat - we feel like we're sitting on top of the world - is that how the Rothschilds feel? You bet!

We are free to roam at our leisure - and so we do. We are both wounded and wandering around all this beauty is very soothing.

We find this little footbridge which  
← looks out over the sea + all of the Cap - straight across to Nice. The Sun sets here and we hold hands even though we've resolved nothing. It seems like the issues are unresolvable anyway.....



(9) Museum Ave - 50F

Saturday 1/27 Cap Ferrat

Our week is flying away here. We decide to take the train to Monaco today - a 10 min. beautiful ride. The trains are wonderful - clean + on time. The schedules are posted outside on the tracks and are little works of logical art.

Monaco is a fairy tale. We walk up the enormous hill to the old town and the palace and we see the changing of the guard - a very impressive show. Absolute precision. Just as that show ends, we hear music and follow our ears in time to see a parade - religious - with great pomp - in honor of St. Devoté, the patron saint. When it's over, we disperse with the crowd and find ourselves in a



small traiteur (Aux Deux Moines) - we have lunch amid lots of larger family parties - this is apparently a holiday here. We wander the streets for a while - the private residences are magnificent - walled in, with the most incredible attention paid to details like "the perfect door knob" - sparkling brass, etc.

Later, we leave the heights of the palace + old city, + wander down to the waters level + the casinos. We wander through the casino - largely inaccessible to us - we have no money - + we settle for sitting near a huge window in the foyer + watching the activities at the Grand Hotel across the street. What goes on!

Jaguars, Rolls, amazing fancy sports cars I don't even know the names of - furs + hats + jewels. Russ is fascinated by a really eccentric old guy who is dressed in old baggy clothes + yet seems to command the instant attention of everyone when he steps out of his chauffeured auto. Wonder who he is?

We train back before dark - it's starting to rain hard anyway - and go back home for

dinner, after which we have a battle over (what else) money because we discover that our budget will not allow 2 movie tickets tonight.

We've been fighting for .3 days now - ouch! I think I want: heat, light, new clothes and a huge dinner in an elegant restaurant. I think Russ just wants me to be quiet + leave him alone.

groceries	167 F
train fare	20
lunch-Monaco	133
	<u>320 F</u>

(58)

Sunday 4/28/90 C. Ferrat

A beautiful day today - blue skies - puffy clouds. Walked down to the corner + called my mom - found out my Dad had a stroke last wed. - a minor one, she says, but he's still in the hospital. God - I feel so far away. I talk to Bev, too, who says the same thing - not too bad - he'll be okay; but I feel uneasy because I'm so far away. What would I do if he died? I'd have to get home right away - I guess I could just go to Nice + fly from there. But then, I think, why would I go home? I would miss seeing him again, anyway. It's hard to think clearly. I really thought that they'd fly over next month and meet us in Italy so we could go to Pesaro together - they must be so discouraged. I tried to call Sue but she wasn't home - spoke to Red briefly.

Felt kind of numb for most of the day. I'm upset and worried about my Dad. We walked through town - along the harbor - had a ride around the Cap - we're feeling much closer - we've had a lot of time to talk.

At night we walk along the harbor's promenade to Beaulieu - in the dark. It's breathtaking.

This was our favorite → house - it's back to the promenade - it's front to the sea below. It looked so warm inside - so safe + secure. Such beautiful drapes + real lamps and a wonderful glow that filled us with "house yearnings".



Means "Little cliff"

We walked home through the town so silent that occasionally we could hear people laughing + talking in their houses.

(14) Bread, croissants 75F

Monday 1/29/90 Cap Ferrat

I'm up early today. The only way I can do this (leave here) is to just get up + get packed. I want to go to Italy, but I want to stay here forever.

Like a demon possessed, I storm through the closets + pack everything in sight. We go down to the harbor laundromat to do laundry and I goof - by the time it's over, all our underwear is blue and Russ' best yellow shirt has turned a greeny-mustard color. It's very discouraging because there's no time to bleach anything out + for sure no money to buy anything new.

We just have to laugh, though - for all the ups and downs, worries about home, etc., we are having an extraordinary time for ourselves.

The beauty, particularly here in the south of France, has completely captivated us. We were not prepared to fall in love with this place.... but we did. I'm sure we'll be back.

And now I know why I always liked David Niven so much - he was smart enough to live here.

We take a long walk all around the Phare on the promenade - the most beautiful walk we've had so far. We stop at the patisserie + treat ourselves to café and a tarte - then home for our dinner - veal, carrots, bread, wine -



Monaco - just around the bend!

au  
resoir  
Cap Ferrat.....

(19)

laundromat	46 F
snack	23
wine	15
Italian map	22
	<hr/>
	106 F

End of Part 1  
The Importance of Running Away Every Now and Then

We crossed the border into Italy with very mixed emotions. Italy was, after all, the main focus of this adventure since our intention was to find and reunite with my father's family in Le Marche, on the Adriatic Sea. We never intended to become so enamoured with France, but we did. It seems that wherever we found ourselves....city, country, shore, inland village....we were happy to be there. It was a big surprise.

Another surprise was to discover just how happy and well-suited we seemed to be as travelers. By now, we had been on the road for more than a month and aside from the occasional melt down (usually caused by a budget crisis) we were getting along very well and enjoying the adventure and welcoming the next new experience.

We began to be homesick less and curious about the next vista more. And that fundamental emotional shift would play a very important role in the decisions we were about to make regarding our future.

Italy, here we come.....