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# ITALY 2022

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## A Lay Day

We had a lay day yesterday. It is just so hot that it becomes debilitating. Heather has had a headache for 3 days. It has gone on so long that she tested herself for COVID this morning — negative — thank heavens. After lazing around most of the day doing simple chores, writing and catching up on family matters, plus food shopping and watching a couple of Netflix movies we decided to give the day some highlight by trying to find a first very nice, Italian meal. With so many restaurants located within a stone's throw of our apartment it was an easy matter to check their menus and select one. Two beautiful pasta dishes were eaten with relish. We should eat out more.

**Its better to have stories to tell than to have things to show.**

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Prior to heading back to the cool of our apartment we walked the short distance to get some more food supplies and came across an American lady. She approached Heather and asked if we spoke English and whether we could help her. She was very distraught. To cut a long story short, she had left her hotel to get some exercise and to find a takeaway for the family. And nightmares upon nightmares she got thoroughly lost. She did not take her phone with her and wasn't sure of the hotel's name or the street in which it was located. Poor thing. She really was quite distressed and started to cry. We tried to call her husband, but with our international roaming off, our phone didn't work. We finally retired to the cool of our apartment, gave her a drink and then used Google Maps to search for her hotel. We did find it eventually and then walked with her to her door - only a couple of blocks away. Good deed for the day. Our one concern for Kerry was that she now had cold pasta to present to the family!

## Lucca

Lucca means light in Italian. Its greatest claim to fame is that the town is encircled by a wall 5kms long. The city was originally founded by the Etruscans in 180BC and continued as a Roman colony and meeting place for Julius Caesar. In reality Lucca's "wall" was added to three times over the centuries. The walls today are very thick - wide enough for a wide paved "road" which is heavily used by strolling pedestrians, runners, bikers and the occasional police car.

We made the one hour drive along the freeway and arrived in Lucca at around 9am. The traffic within the town was light. We made a bee-line to where we expected a public parking area. It was not forthcoming. Following the GPS we weaved our way around narrow lanes and one way streets not really being able to enjoy the experience for "fear" of being stuck there forever. We stopped in a square to gain our bearings and were told not to park there as we would be towed away. On we drove into the maze and eventually found metered park just inside the walls on the same side we had entered. After finding our safe harbour, we hired bikes and duly did what most tourists do in Lucca - we rode right around the city on the wall. At one point we rode down a ramp into the town to explore one of the 20+ churches found within - the Lucca Cathedral. Its rather dilapidated back exterior was a stark contrast to the white front facade - ornate carvings and opulent figures. The views from the wall are to an old world with terracotta buildings jumbled one against the other. We stopped for refreshment at a lovely shady spot and were served our ice creams on plates and a big glass of ice with our Sprite. We paid for that privilege of course. After our bike ride we spent time walking and admiring shop fronts until the heat started to get to us again. Home for respite and cool packs.

*Travel is my therapy!!*



Travel has one important attribute - it makes you realise how small a space in time you occupy.

In my case I know that in twenty years time I might be disappointed by the things I didn't do than the ones I did.

I have seen more than I remember and remember more than I have seen.



## Our World Cup

The occasion warranted interest  
The location sounded fine  
Florence in the hot summer?  
What could be more sublime?

We all put up our hands to play  
An experience for us all  
Each one as keen as mustard  
To kick that World Cup ball

The preparation was far too quick  
We needed to get appraised  
But we winged in from every corner of the globe  
Wide eyed, half fit and quite amazed

The hotel was a unmitigated disaster  
Its facilities a complete dive  
Literally everyone showed annoyance  
But none the less we survived

Our initial practice was very intense  
We had not played together  
Players practising at playing tourists  
Despite the extreme hot weather

The games started, the stage was set  
Our competition particularly stiff  
The English, Italians and the French we played  
But we didn't quite get a sniff.

As the tournament progressed  
And frustrations grew  
We played at our best  
But the goals were few

Despite both teams missing out in the end  
At least we sang our song  
The football itself was only silver standard  
But we kinda knew that all along

Despite the issues faced that week  
Despite lots of disappointments  
We will never experience this again  
Heat, fatigue, sweat, and the ointments

We've now moved on to relaxing things  
Enjoyment of the trip  
The sitting down with friends we made  
The beer and wine to sip

Memories remain like insects in amber  
Experiences we've had quite a few  
We can now roll them out whenever we want  
And keep on kicking that bloody ball too!







