

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | FRIDAY, 17 MAY 2013

The Mani

We got a very late start today after being delayed trying to book a ferry to Italy. No need to say any more only that in the end we gave up and just sent an email requesting a berth on Sunday. Hopefully it will get through. We will just have to go in much earlier and hope to be able to pick up tickets. Not being high season we may just be OK.

The plan today was to drive across this peninsula we have been staying on for two nights to go to the more rugged and "supposedly" more interesting side. The journey was very enjoyable despite the overcast sky. Even the little bit of drizzle did not dampen our spirits.

The main road used the valley through very steep sided mountains. Once on the western coast we started to see very interesting architecture in the little villages along the way. There were obviously many new buildings. The majority were all in this one style - squarish in design (no eaves) and made of stone - either grey or a sandy colour. The roofs were terracotta and most windows had shutters. They looked fantastic, especially when the shutters were painted a contrasting bright colour - Heather particularly liked the dark blue. It looked like a lot of well healed people must be living here.



continued on next page



Supermarket Shopping

Going food shopping in a foreign country is a real experience, especially if there is no-one around that speaks English to help you. Peering long and hard at strange labels does not necessarily help you work out what the hell is in the can or the packet. Instinct and images are not enough either.

Finding balsamic vinegar in the soft drink section or peanut butter in with the bottles of sauerkraut was weird to say the least.

Steak anyone? Gain the attention of the meat section attendant, point to a slab of beef behind the counter, make cutting gestures and put up 2 fingers for 2 steaks. He cuts off two thin bits and then suddenly gives them an absolute pounding with his mallet so loudly that everyone in the shop can hear.

Result is steak so thin it could blow away in the wind. Tasted fine when cooked with balsamic vinegar and peanut butter!!



GREEK YOGURT There is a real market opportunity for someone to sell sweet fruit yogurt in Greek supermarkets. Natural yukky Greek yogurt everywhere but no **BLOODY SWEET FRUIT YOGURT!!** Or frigten cordial!!

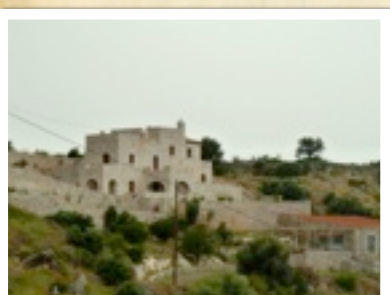
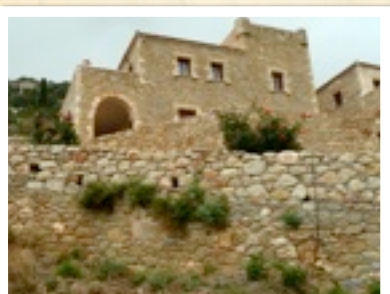


RESTAURANTS EVERYWHERE It must be a national past time to cook and feed the traveling masses or is it simply that tourists have money and they love to eat Greek food? Every vantage point has at least one table and chair with napkins on the ready and a smiling waiter ready to serve you. Souvlaki anyone?



GRILL We might call it a BBQ in Australia but in Greece it is called the Grill. What's the difference? The Greeks always cook their meat on a rotisserie not a hot plate.

SNAPS



We almost feel at home with the Bouganvillias and Eucalyptus trees

We stopped outside the first little village we could get down to. Heather walked down the steep slope to the waterside village to check out whether or not it was suitable for the van. It was so we drove down, parked and enjoyed a slow walk around this enchanting location. The wind was quite strong so the seas were pounding the rocks. We stayed for lunch and enjoyed the view over the village across to the distant mountains. All was well in our world for those moments in time.

WILD AND REMOTE MANI WILL NOT REMAIN LIKE THAT FOR TOO MUCH LONGER

We moved on around the coast and saw village after village with this interesting architectural style. The locations they were in were quite spectacular, being often very steep and right on the waters edge. The country is extremely rocky and barren. None the less, olive trees still seem to thrive here. The only occasional big trees we saw were eucalyptus, many with white trunks. So strange to see them here.

We stopped at another village and wandered around again. The weather warmed up but the seas were still large with the waves crashing on the rocks. Marvelous.

We finally realized that we had to get a move on in order to get to within striking distance of our last Greek location - Olympia. Even though we have seen a lot of piles of stone, we have been told many times that we can't give Olympia a miss. After Olympia we will drive to just outside Patra - our point of departure for Italy.

Our stop for tonight is another surprise packet courtesy of Patricia. The co-ordinates have taken us to a beach location in Elia on the west coast of the Pelopennese. Two other motorhomes are beside us. The beach area is totally open and some of the locals have come over to walk on and gaze at the sea shore. Again there is a water tap (with shower to wash off salt water after a swim) plus a large rubbish bin.

It seems like you can camp anywhere in Greece - the country puts out the welcome mat to visitors.





PHOTOS

