

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | TUESDAY, 4 JUNE 2013

Porto to Calvi

We got away early, looking forward to traveling the 100 kms to Calvi. Calvi is on the northern coast of Corsica and is as far north as we intended to go on this island.

The day started much better. The sun was shining through and the cloud base was higher than yesterday. Consequently we had a much better view of the surrounding countryside. We immediately saw the benefits by being able to view Porto from our elevated position.

We realised that there was another part of the Porto beach that we had not seen yesterday. The southern area of the town had an expansive white sandy beach hidden on the other side by the promontory. This beach had an entrance further up the road - the one that we did not go up. Too late but never mind.

The colours of the rock, the vegetation and the water were glorious. The road curved its way up and up. Because the road hugged the coast, we got superb views of the water below and the mountains that drop sharply to it. The roads, although narrow, were two lanes and very carefully maintained. The edges were lined with very low rock walls and occasional small parking areas were available for anyone to "duck" in.



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Imagine meeting this coming the other way. Notice there is another bus in front of this one.

Mediterranean Sea

I (Heather) have particularly enjoyed the colours of the various seas that are collectively known as "the Mediterranean". I say colours, because it is not just a homogeneous blue. Sometimes it is aqua, other times cobalt blue and on other occasions it has been described appropriately by Sig as being like mercury. Very strange but very beautiful.

I decided to ask the internet why this is so. I thought you might like to share in the answer.

The Mediterranean (which is really a combination of many smaller seas) has very few nutrients - or at least not as many as other seas. This means that not as much algae and other material is produced in the water. The water therefore stays much clearer and "bluer."

Tomorrow, I intend to just stare at this water. We don't leave till 9 at night and I want to get my fill of it. Once we get to mainland France, we will not see much of it again.



EDUCATING A NYMPHETTE Harry Potter, French for Dummies, How to Cook Corsican Sausages? Whatever the book it certainly had this lass hooked. Cool bum.



LYCRA SET Young or old, fit or fat, gents or ladies - bike tours are the "in thing" in Corsica. They take up one lane on the highway and, along with the bikies, fill most of the seats in the highland village cafes and restaurants.



BLOOMING BEAUTIFUL? Heather keeps waxing lyrical about the lovely coloured blooms she sees growing on the sides of the road, in paddocks and even on hillsides. Trouble is methinks they are noxious weeds.

SNAPS



The highest mountains in Corsica have snow on them till late July.

There was nowhere as much traffic as yesterday, but for one stretch we “slip-streamed” behind two buses. I figured that they could bully through and we could just follow on. It really was a superb drive - one that we won't forget in a hurry.

The second part of the drive took us inland. We chose not to take its coastal cousin. That apparently is one step too far for a vehicle our size. The views on this leg were also special. Because the road was “tamer” we could stop and enjoy the scenery. We did this at one particular spot where the clouds looked fabulous as they started to descend over the lower slopes. Many flowers dotted the landscape. We don't know if they were native or if they were weeds. But they added to the ambience.

We arrived in Calvi and drove straight to our caravan park. We then headed out on our bikes to find the ferry terminal to hopefully book our passage to mainland France for tomorrow night.

ITS HARD TO LOOK AT THE VIEW AND KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE ROAD AHEAD. ONE MISCALCULATION AND

As soon as we mounted the beach walkway, we stopped in excitement as the Citadel of Calvi and its old town came into view. A large ferry happened to be coming into port at the same time. The combination of the citadel high on a promontory, the fabulous blue sea, the long stretch of sand, the small boats in the harbour and the sunshine, left us exclaiming “Wow, wow!” It really was a picture.

We cycled into the town, past many, many other tourists enjoying the marina. The ferry office was closed so we took ourselves up the many stairs and steep paths to the citadel above. It was a little disappointing as we were not able to get around much of it. It appears to be mainly private dwellings - it's best aspect is from afar.

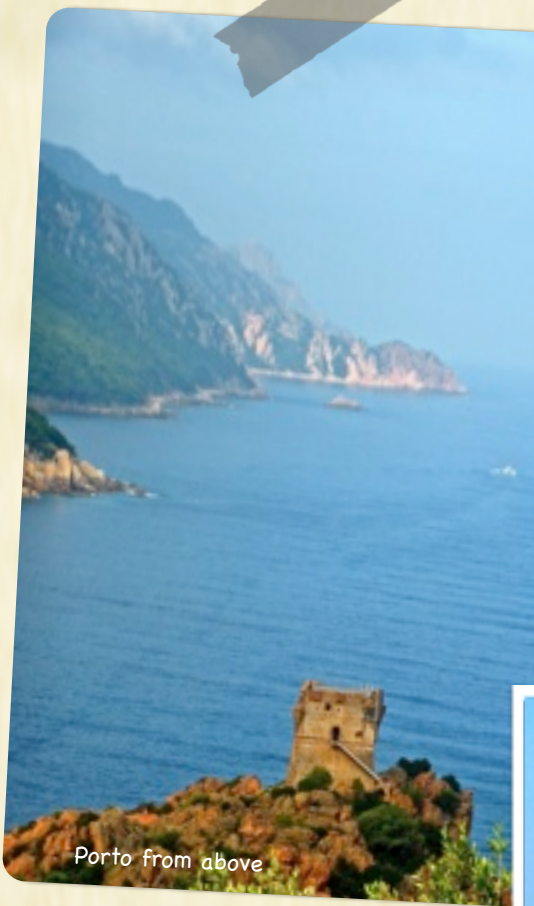
We then went down to the town below and were, once again, disappointed. It was pretty, but nothing special. We did however, enjoy a very nice ice-cream. Then back to the van where we managed to book the ferry on-line plus have a stroll along the beach. We leave for Nice at 9 o'clock tomorrow night. About 3 weeks remain of our time in the van. Time to plan our trip around mainland France and Belgium.



North of Porto on the road to Calvi



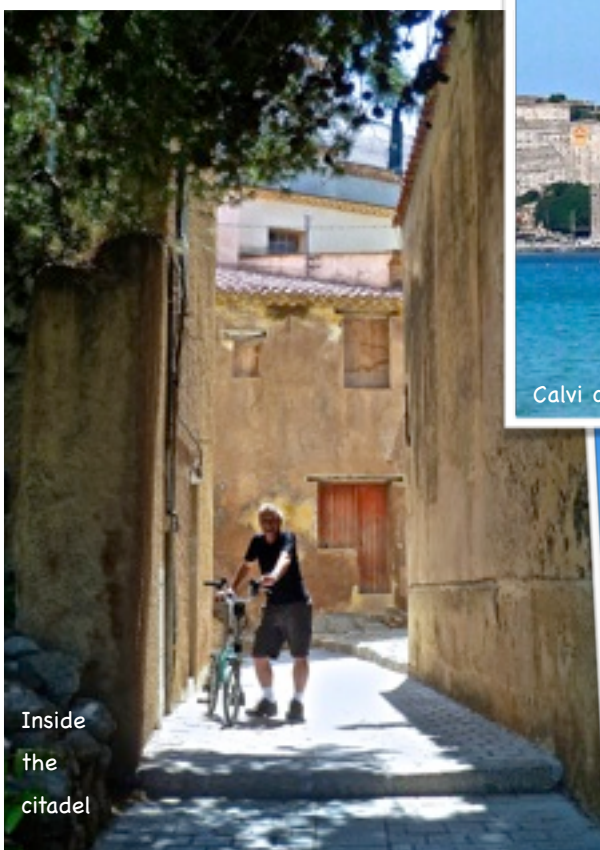
PHOTOS



Porto from above



Porto from above with red rock peninsular dividing the town into two parts



Inside the citadel



Calvi citadel

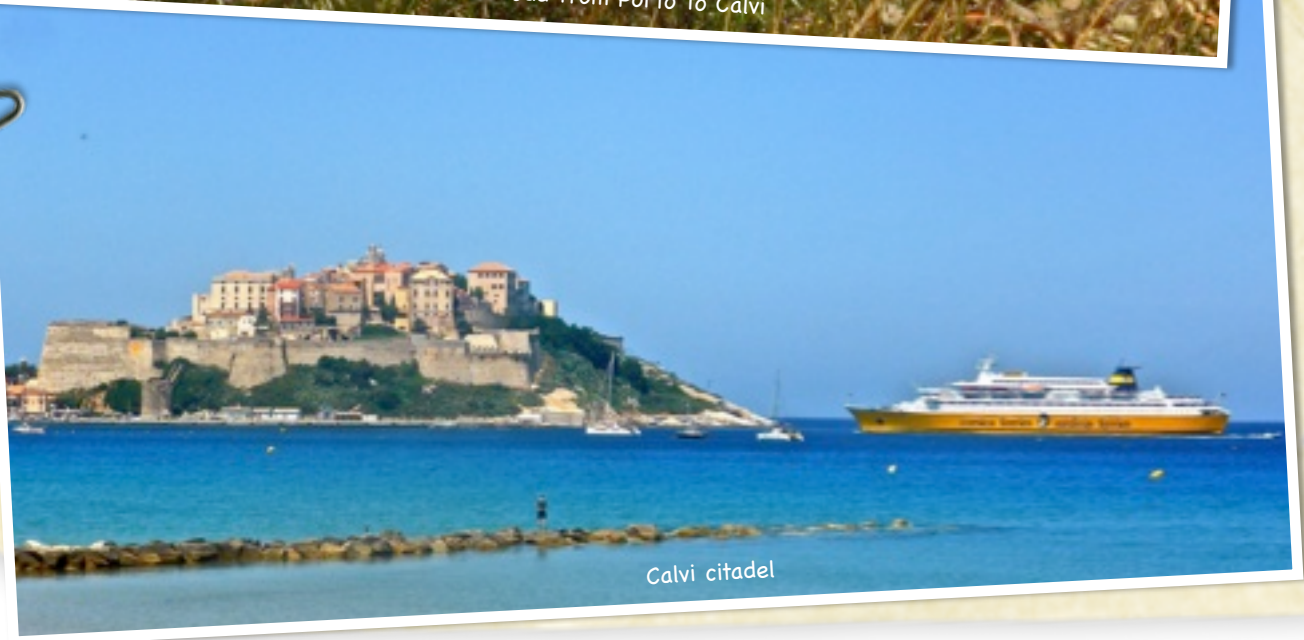


View from the walls of the citadel

Porto to Calvi's precarious coastal road



On the road from Porto to Calvi



Calvi citadel