

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | SATURDAY, 20 APRIL 2013

Rock Country

We wanted to get from Plitvice Lakes to somewhere near Split by the end of the day. Heather, our senior navigator and guide, put her suggested route into the GPS and Emily, our GPS voice, gave us a running commentary of turn points and route names. The trouble was that Emily kept wanting to go the fastest route and Heather wanted to go the scenic route. In the end Heather won this battle.

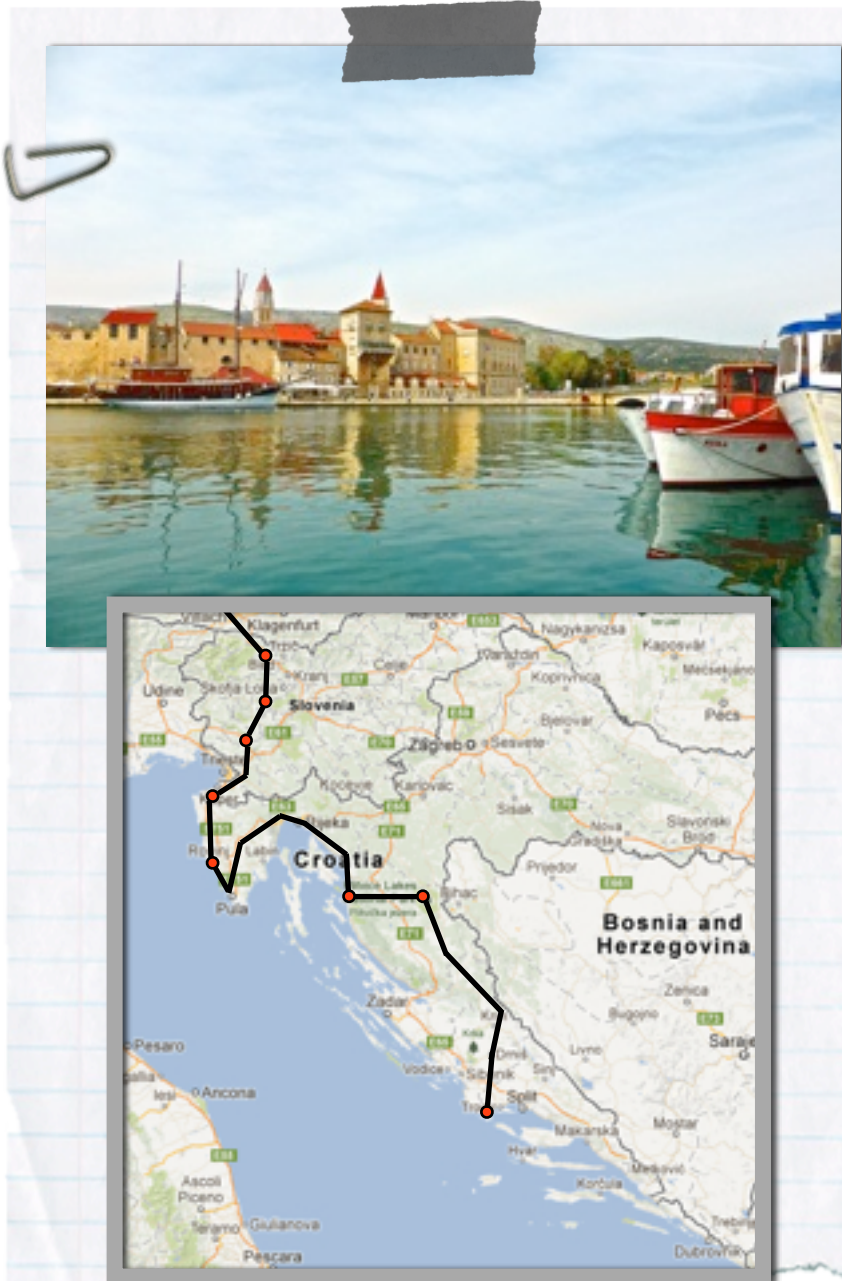
The inland route via the B roads ended up taking 1 hour longer. This would have been fine if the scenery was interesting but shortly into the trip we were looking at very poor agricultural country covered from one end to the other with small boulders. We saw no cattle, sheep or goats. We saw very little in the way of crops. For almost 3 hours of our 4 hours, apart from climbing and descending a number of mountain ranges, we saw fields of rock. Heather conceded that this was not her finest hour. I would have agreed with her but our journey was punctuated by a series of interesting things.

Around the middle part of our trip we started to pass a large number of derelict buildings - farm houses, village houses and barns. Very strange - it got us thinking.

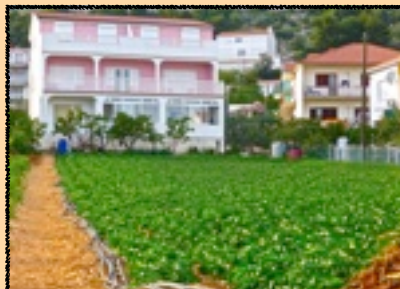
The landscape was pretty barren and we theorized that the country was too poor to sustain a farm or a community.



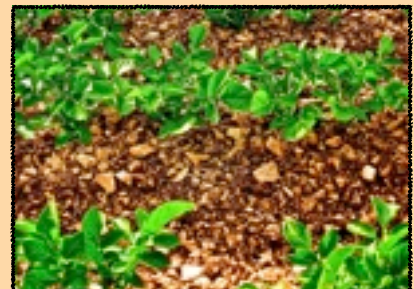
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ANKLE BITER This little fella will have to dramatically improve his parking skills if he wants to play with the big boys.



CITY HARVEST Potatoes, onions, peas, grapes, olives or whatever. We found many front gardens right on the water front but none of them grew lawns or flowers.



RICH SOIL? We can't believe that anything actually grows in the soil here in Croatia. You could see more rocks than soil yet the plants seem to thrive in it. Grapes in particular.

EMILY GPS

Emily is with us everywhere we go. Her dulcet voice reminds Heather of the news reader on SBS but I think Emily sounds a little more refined. At times, when things are getting truly serious in the cabin, she comes out with something that really brightens up our trip.

The salesman who sold us Emily warned us that she is not very good with foreign street names. Well we can tell you she was not great in the Netherlands but she is totally off the mark in Croatia. But then we too are totally off the mark when we have to pronounce these street name.

Emily is our own in-house comedian. She warns us well in advance but once she announces the street or road name she has us in stitches. Heavens knows what she will be like in Greece and Turkey. Go Emily go.

What do you do when you have rocks to spare? Build rock fences.

We also presumed that some of the newly built highways would have also killed off much of the small business in this area. But then we looked more carefully.

Many of the houses had been burned out and their roofs had caved in. Much of their outer cement rendering was missing and the stone of the walls was showing. These buildings were derelict for a good reason.

Looking closely we could see holes and large gouges. What made us sit up and take notice was when we passed through a town aptly named Kosovo.

CIVIL WAR AND ETHNIC CLEANSING IS VERY FOREIGN TO US

When we finally settled in to camp for the night we read more about the terrible recent civil war in this area. It actually started at the lakes that we have just left. It made us reflect on how good we have it and how bad it must have been here less than 20 years ago.

We arrived at Trogir, near Split, at about 4 pm. We found a parking spot only two kms from the centre of town and rode

our bikes in to catch a quick glimpse of this roman settlement. According to the guide books Trogir boasts interesting architecture, a castle, two very old cathedrals and very narrow streets. All this on a beautiful river and with a backdrop of the lovely blue waters of the Adriatic Sea.

We rode around and enjoyed what we saw, especially the very narrow streets with cafe's, restaurants and speciality shops. What interested me was that most major buildings were adorned with a Croatian flag and sometimes more than one. Heather was most peeved that there was a guard demanding a fee to enter the cathedral. Needless to say we did not go in.

On the way to our camp site we passed a cavalcade of about 20 cars. A man was hanging out the window of the lead car waving a Croatian flag. All the cars were sounding their horns loudly. We could only surmise that maybe Croatia had won their leg of the World Cup.

And so we watch the sun set on the Adriatic again. Heather is trying to work out if she purchased bleach or toilet cleaner. She wanted disinfectant. It smells awful. Google Translate is little help! Her guess is as good as mine. It turned out to be medicinal alcohol.....





PHOTOS

