

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | THURSDAY, 25 APRIL 2013

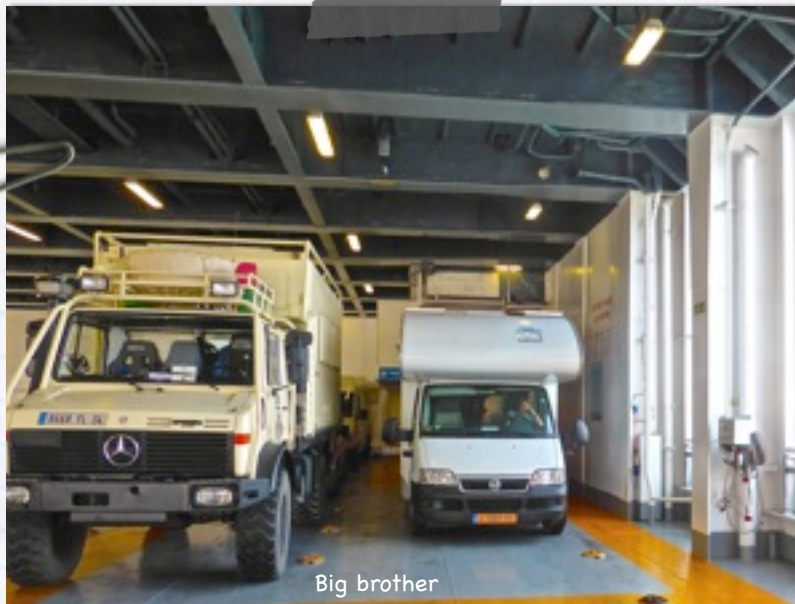
Pizza Land

After spending the night crossing from Croatia to Bari, Italy we spent the day on the docks waiting for our ferry to Greece. Unlike at Dubrovnik, we found a free parking place. Heather went out to get the tickets which we had booked online and I jumped on my bike to pick up a parcel that Droam had sent to the Sheraton Hotel some 4kms away. We both returned successfully and spent the rest of our time chilling out and planning our Greek itinerary.

At the end of the day we decided to check out the local area. We rode our bikes around and came across the old town. It gave us a new perception of Bari. There were many people drinking and eating outside under the umbrellas. Heather selected what she thought was a pizza place and we asked for the menu. We couldn't understand what was written so the waiter came out and explained it to us in Italian. Totally confused we gave up and with gestures, asked him to choose for us. We had to wait to see what type of meal we had actually ordered. What was served up was really delicious. We chatted with a young couple sitting next to us and I had to show a couple of very inquisitive guys how our bikes folded up. It was soon time to board the ferry. The overnight trip to Greece was very smooth - no sea sickness pills required.



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Big brother

Camping On Board

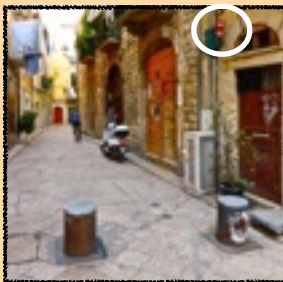
Greece has over 2000 islands - Croatia has even more. No wonder ferries are a fact of life. We now realise how extensive the ferry system is around this part of the world.

On our leg from Dubrovnik to Bari we had a cabin for the night but from Bari to Igoumenitsa we were able to "camp on board". We could use the ship dining and toilet facilities but sleep in our motorhome.

The view from our van window was great - the glistening water raced by.

We even had mains power hookup (but were not allowed to use gas in the van).

When Heather paid for the "camping on board" tickets she was given tickets with the wrong destination. We spend quite some time remonstrating with the ferry vehicle co-ordinator that we did not want to go on to Patras. In exasperation he kept pointing to our tickets. When the ferry stopped at Igoumenitsa we cut through the line of traffic and high tailed it off of the ship quick smart.



TRAFFIC LIGHTS? To stop unwanted traffic some of the side streets have electronic pop up bollards. Residents have a special card that senses when they drive near and the bollard drops down and lets them through.



RING THE BELL Noticed a string running around this truck over the back doors. If someone tries to open them the string is tightened and a bell warns the driver.



WARNING SIGNS Not sure what this sign means but were a little worried about this neighbourhood. No one else seemed to be perturbed. Maybe we need to watch our valuables. Hang on to me Heather!!

Bari



Of all the places one may get stuck
Bari's a bad choice when you're out of luck
A bland ferry town is all that it looks
Doesn't rate a mention in any Lonely Planet books

But we are here for a day so we must make the most
Particularly since we have a package pick-up via post
4 kilometers inland is where I am told to go
Parcel to pickup, Sheraton Hotel, passport must show

Biking in Bari is a most scary thing
Rushing traffic, car honking and heaps of din
One way streets with a railway divide
I rode straight but was caught on the wrong side

More of a marathon peddling on wheels
Luckily I was not forced to go by heels
Finally there it was, a tunnel under the ground
A way through to the other side I finally found

Parcel provided when passport was shown
But no GPS guidance to take me back home
Bari is confusing, in fact Bari's a mess
Was I capable of overcoming this horrible stress?

The backstreets were seedy, battered and tough
No stopping to ask directions, it just looked too rough
But eventually the coastline came right into view
With crowded fish market and many locals too

I followed the shore and finally came to the ferry
Once in the van I said "Heather, that was quite hairy"
"I never doubted that you'd make it back home
Now maybe I can check out Bari all on my own"

So Heather went out for a leisurely stroll
She soon realised Bari was reasonable and not just a hole
After crossing the outer facade that looks quite sad
She ended up in the old town and it wasn't too bad

So together we ventured out again for some eats
So many restaurants to choose from, so many seats
Pointing and gesturing at a menu so strange
We had a divine meal all within our budget range

Brochures can be helpful but not always so
We can now say its worthwhile to give Bari a go
Bari the wonderful or Bari the plain
The locals love this place whatever its name.

