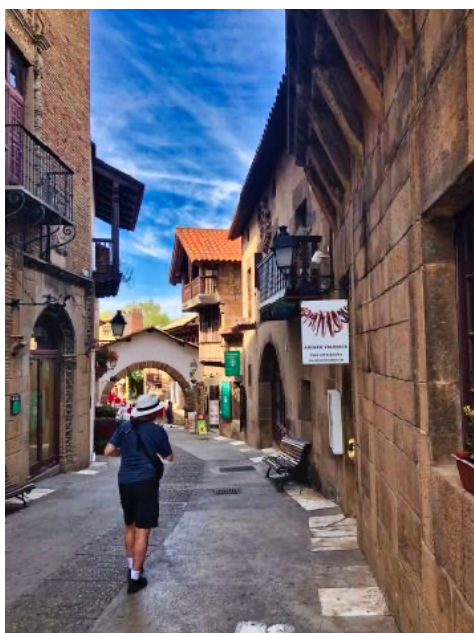


EUROPE 2023



4 months | 6 countries | 8 house swaps | 10 journey legs | 2 grand-boys + 1



Barcelona

We decided to tackle Barcelona head on today and go see some attractions. Unfortunately, Gaudi's famous Sagrada Familia cathedral was fully booked, so we opted for an alternative plan: touring the city by taking a ride on the hop-on hop-off tourist red bus, which covered the southern parts of the city. There was also a blue bus available for the northern attractions, We will take that tomorrow.

Our first destination was Poble Espanyol, an open-air museum constructed in 1929, featuring 117 buildings representing Spain's diverse regional architecture. It was a remarkable recreation of various aspects of villages and towns across Spain. The place exuded beauty with its intricate facades, charming alleyways, and numerous restaurants around every corner. From a high vantage point, we enjoyed a panoramic view of Barcelona. We strolled leisurely through the labyrinthine streets, with Heather indulging in the many specialty gift shops. Each building had a unique theme, making the entire experience feel like a journey back in time. It was definitely worth exploring. Heather was particularly drawn to a particular apparel shop and left with a vibrantly coloured Picaso-themed woven poncho. When Heather craves colour, who am I to object?

At one point, we were ushered into a theatre where we watched a video showcasing some of the quirkiest festivals celebrated in various regions of Spain. The examples included a massive tomato-throwing event where people were drenched in tomato mush; fearless men being chased and occasionally injured by large bulls running through narrow streets; 10,000 drums beating creating a deafening symphony of noise; a large crowd constructing very high human pyramids; and finally, a number of robust horses rearing up and engulfing the surrounding crowd. The Spanish truly know how to celebrate in style! I think they might be a little loco!



Sagrada Familia lost in suburban sprawl





During our visit, a group of Polish ladies was taking selfies, and Sig, revealing his Polish heritage, offered to take group photos. He became an instant hit.

Next on our agenda was Heather's eagerly anticipated attraction: the cable car ride up Montjuic (Hill of the Jews). The castle perched atop Montjuic offered breathtaking panoramic views of Barcelona, including the bustling port area. It was an excellent vantage point to grasp the vastness of this sprawling city. In the midst of it all, we could easily spot the iconic Sagrada Familia.

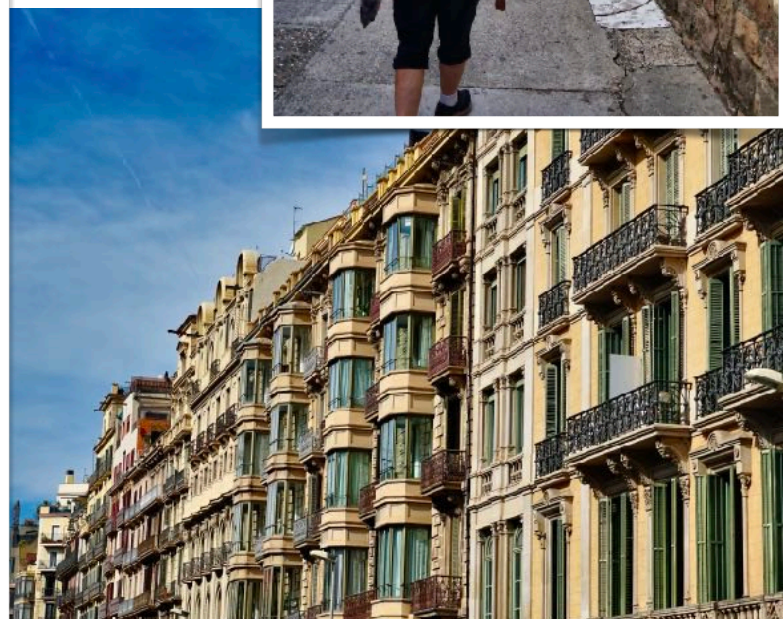
After exploring the castle's barracks and savouring the sweeping views, we decided it was time to retreat. The day was becoming increasingly hot, and our energy was waning. We boarded the bus once again and spent the next hour taking in Barcelona from the top deck—an excellent way to get our bearings. We also now feel more confident about which railway line to take when we catch the train to and from Vilassar de Mar.

Tomorrow, we plan to repeat the adventure, this time with a visit to Gaudi's garden on our itinerary. We'll also decide on any additional stops along the blue bus route based on our mood and interests at the time.



The once famous bullring is today a modern shopping centre





The locals call this Gaudi apartment block - The Rock Quarry

