



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

### Basic Observations

Why is it that people pay good money to buy stupid T shirts that advertise a brand? Makes no sense to me.

What it is with coffee drinkers? The cost of a cup per day made by an overpriced barista surely does not warrant the exorbitant expense? Seeing so many people sitting around in coffee shops - in every country we visit. Have you ever tasted coffee? Disgusting stuff!

How come some people stare intently over the horizon or put their phone to their ear when you approach them politely to ask for help. Then there are those who are prepared to go well beyond what is expected.

What is it with some lazy bastards. As soon as they buy something they rip off the wrapping and throw it out on the street expecting someone else to pick it up. I sometimes wonder what their own house looks like inside. Do they live in squalor or are their rooms spick and span?



### A Burning Day

Now if you are a Harry Potter fan you will know what this means. But just in case - it means "a new beginning". After a lazy day cleaning and packing yesterday, today we had one of our change-over days, going from Barcelona to Frankfurt (it was supposed to be Würzburg - some 1.5 hours from here). I'll get to that soon enough.

The day got off to an early start (4am) and it went fairly smoothly. We walked to the station - took two trains and one shuttle bus and hey presto, we are at the airport early (lucky we realised at the last minute we needed to take the shuttle bus to Terminal 1). Lufthansa was excellent in terms of: embarkation processes, a smooth landing and general customer service. However, once we arrived in Frankfurt the fun began.

Firstly, no-one came out with the stairs to allow us to alight the plane. The pilot keep on making fun out of the situation and some half hour later we were finally in the terminal. Then we got notified that our bags would be delayed. It took us an hour to get our baggage and then only after everyone else had theirs and we, very perplexed, went looking for the oversized baggage section. There they were sitting all by their lonesome in a dark corner of the airport. No one told us. No problems you say. However we were now more than 1.5 hours behind time to pick up our hire car. In our wisdom we had decided to pick the car up at the central train station in Frankfurt because when we leave from here in ten days time - taking a train from that same station. Yes, logical you say. But!!

Getting to the central railway station should have been a 12 minute journey, but the regular train did not even turn turn up for 20 minutes. They are supposed to be much more regular than this. Because the train was delayed, the passenger lines swelled considerably and we were literally packed like sardines in a tin once everyone jumped aboard.

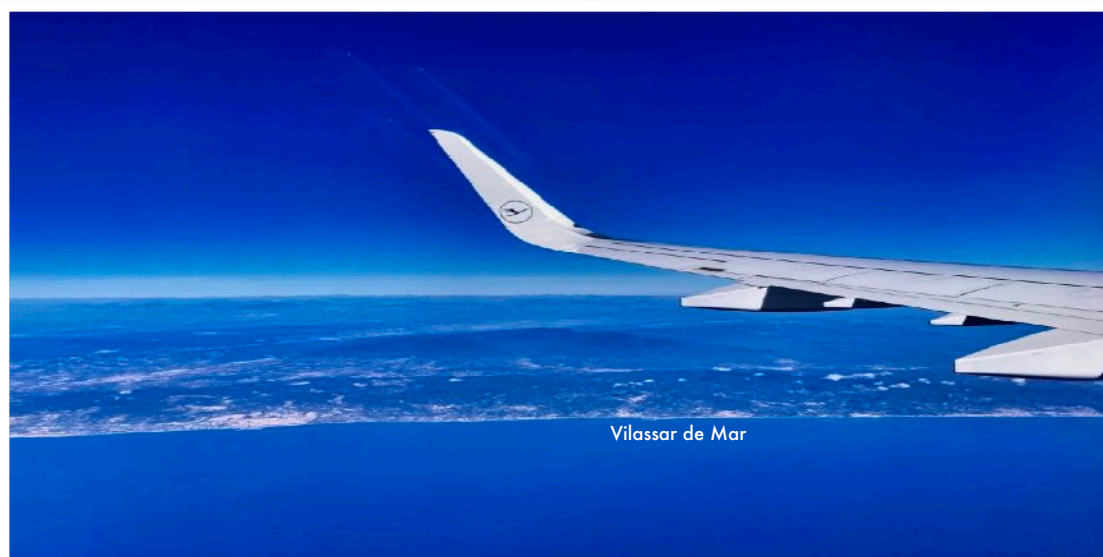
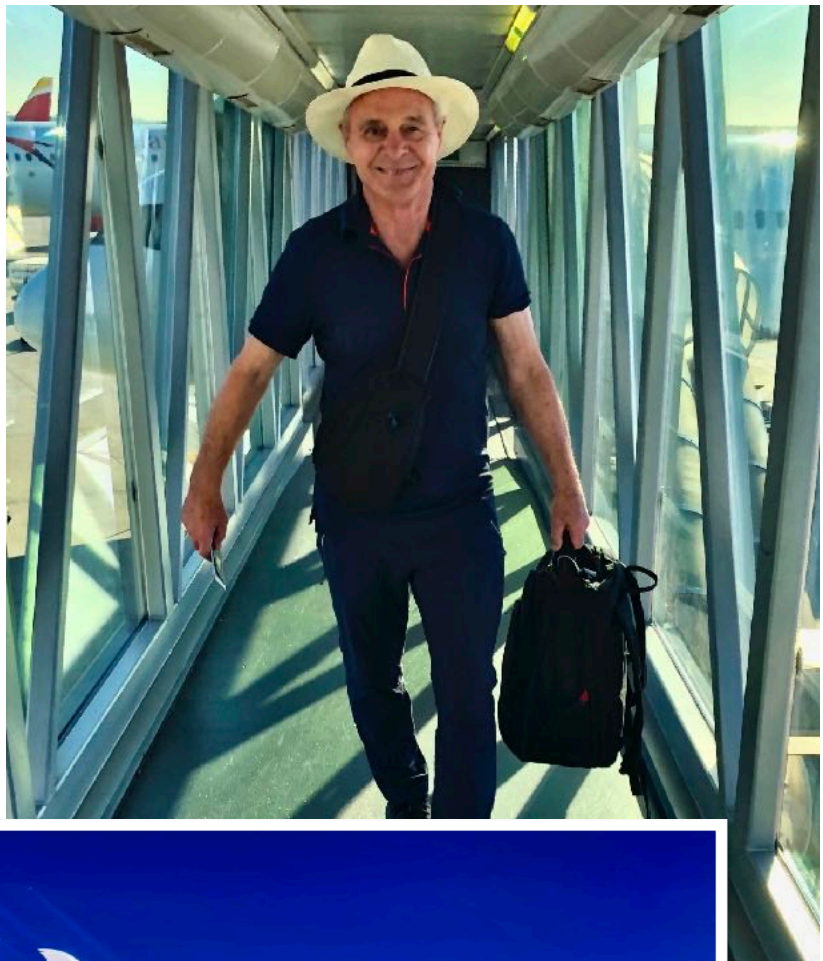




Our hotel for the night

The one redeeming feature was that we struck up a conversation with a lovely local guy who even helped us find our way to the Hertz reception desk area upon arrival at the station. That's where more fun began.

The place was closed!! It was 2.45pm by that time and it had closed at 2pm!!! Yes, we were late. Our booking was for 1pm, but what car company, at a busy location closes at 2pm? There was no usable contact number and the Avis guy sitting next door told us to go back to the airport or try there or hire one of his cars. Grumpy bugger! I was amazed that Heather was so polite given that we had already had the payment for the Hertz car deducted from our credit card and we both were a little peeved. We found it impossible to get any contact with Hertz so we moved on and somehow stumbled upon the Tourist Information Office. The receptionist kindly found a nearby hotel for us and we will attempt to pick up our car tomorrow - early!! Lets see how that goes! Our overnigher is once again a cheap alternative. Heather is particularly grumpy that it does not provide tea facilities!! The shower is hot though. What more do you want?



Vilassar de Mar