

Paris

July 15-25, 2015

Wednesday, July 15-Thursday, July 16 - Several events delayed our flight from Portland. First, storms delayed the plane at its origin. When it finally arrived, there were four disabled passengers that required assistance boarding, which caused a further delay. Then, as we were waiting to take off, we had to wait for three other planes to land (an unusual occurrence in Portland). Amazingly, we ended up being only about ten minutes late arriving in Newark. We actually had time for a drink in the United club. However, the waiting wasn't over yet. Our plane was number twelve in line for takeoff. After a very pleasant flight, we arrived in Paris on time. After a long wait for Passport Control, we were able to contact our driver from Blacklane



limousines and he took us through the heavy Paris traffic to our apartment. We met Isabelle, the manager, and she showed us around the apartment and gave us the keys. It was really hot so the first thing we did was turn on the air conditioner. After we got settled in a bit, we walked to the local

Monoprix supermarket to stock up on supplies we'd need for our visit. Our trip to the store required us to climb what I began referring to as "The Stairs from Hell". They are a steep series of ninety-six steps going up a hill from our street to the one leading to the store. By the time we returned, we were exhausted and sweating. Cindy was so tired that she wasn't sure she could tolerate our dinner plans with Tom, Genevieve, and Olivia. However, after a short nap and a shower, we decided to take a taxi to Tom's apartment. We were glad we did because we had a fabulous meal at Les Tablettes (now [nomicos](#)) starting with marinated sea bream in a vanilla, lime, and passion fruit sauce, then a low temperature egg with potato emulsion, saffron, and parmesan. Entrees consisted of cod served two ways: brandade and steamed in a fennel/verbena sauce and chicken with chanterelle

mushrooms, peas, and mustard seed. The cheese course was goat cheese with soft pepper, marjoram and olive oil followed by desserts of Rhum baba and Gariguette strawberries, basil, and creamy yoghurt ice cream. Afterward, we found a taxi and went home for a much needed sleep.

Friday, July 17 - Even though I had a case of jet lag, I woke up early and decided to go for a walk while it was still relatively cool. I walked to Avenue President Kennedy, then the [Pont de Bir-Hakeim](#). I turned around and walked along the [Seine](#) to the Radio France building, which is at the other end of [L'Allée des Cygnes](#). By this time it was starting to warm up so I walked back to the apartment and had breakfast. We prepared for our lunch with Tom and the girls, walked to the Pont de Bir-Hakeim and crossed to the other side of the Seine, then to the



[Restaurant de la Tour](#). We had a lovely lunch. As an example, I started with a country ham terrine, duck foie gras, and salad followed by a pasta dish with Morel mushrooms in a truffle infused brandy sauce. Tom wanted to take the girls into the [Tour Eiffel](#) so we walked there to be

greeted by a long line waiting to enter. Cindy and I decided just to chill in the shade of the park while Tom, Genevieve, and Olivia waited to get tickets. After about three hours, they returned with tales of going to level two and deciding to take the elevator to the top. Meanwhile, Cindy and I had enjoyed watching the people, particularly the street vendors who were trying to sell Eiffel Tower replicas and selfie sticks.



We walked back to the apartment and had some drinks. Then Tom and I walked to Monoprix to get something for dinner. They were preparing to close by the time we got there but we were able to get some sushi, seafood salad, chicken paté, tabouli salad, and rosé wine which made a tolerable dinner.

Saturday, July 18 - Cindy and I decided to explore the neighborhood. We walked to Rue de Passy and proceeded down the hill where we found the ATM at BNP

PariBAS, which was recommended by Bank of America. We got some cash and continued walking to find a place for lunch. We were hoping to find a café with air conditioning. I thought I found one on the Place de Costa Rica but it turned out to be a restaurant that was unsuitable for a simple lunch. Then we walked across to a little pizza restaurant called [Marcello](#). We sat outside at a shady table and started with drinks. Cindy had a kir and I had a Ricard, which is very refreshing on a hot day. We ordered a salad with arugula, dried tomatoes, and Parmesan cheese and a pizza with country ham, mushrooms, and cheese. The perfect lunch. Afterwards, we walked down the hill on Rue de l'Alboni to the top of the stairs leading down to the Passy metro station, then proceeded down the next set of stairs to Square Alboni and Rue des Eaux and on to the apartment. We had discovered an alternative to "The Stairs from Hell".

Fortunately, we were able to make a reservation at [La Petite Tour](#) for dinner. We met Tom and the girls there and had a nice dinner featuring my first escargots in Paris. They were delicious.

Sunday, July 19 - We planned to meet Tom at [Auberge Nicolas Flamel](#) so we had to take the Metro from Passy to Charles DeGaulle Étoile, then transfer to the RER A to get to [Les Halles](#). Everything went fine until we got to Les Halles and discovered that the exit we needed to take was closed. So we found another way out and eventually arrived at the restaurant. It is in a charming old Paris house seen in this picture. The plaque reads:

Maison de Nicolas Flamel et de Perenelle sa femme

Pour conserver le souvenir
de leur foundation charitable
La ville de Paris a restauré en 1900
L'inscription primitive
Datée de 1407

So that should explain the history of the building.



Anyway, we had a very elegant lunch, although Olivia wasn't able to find anything satisfactory (besides dessert) so she left a bit hungry. We walked down to [Notre Dame](#) and then on to [Île Saint-Louis](#), where we were able to satisfy Olivia's hunger with a Nutella crepe. We walked to the end of Île Saint-Louis where there is a little park (one of my favorite spots in Paris). After a little rest, we started walking along the Seine toward the Pont Bir-Hakeim when we encountered a little café on the river where people were swing dancing. So we stopped, ordered some drinks, and watched the



people dance. However, Genevieve and Olivia were not too interested, especially since there was no WiFi. It took a while to get our check but



we finally managed it and proceeded to walk back to Pont Bir-Hakeim. We crossed over to the 16th where Cindy and I parted with Tom and the girls and walked back to our apartment. We had a drink then finished off the leftovers from Friday's dinner and went to bed.

Monday, July 20 - I finished my book (Carl Hiaasen's "Bad Monkey") and wanted to get another. So Cindy and I decided to take the Metro to Concord, have lunch, and go to [W. H. Smith](#) to get some books. Fortunately, the Metro C line goes directly from Passy to Concord so we walked over to the station and had a direct run with no transfers. We passed a nice café called Sanséveria (now closed) on Rue de Rivoli so we stopped for lunch. Afterwards, we walked to W. H. Smith, which was only a couple of doors down. We love the W. H. Smith book store. It's got all these little niches with all kinds of books. Cindy found a paperback version of "All the Light We Cannot See" by Anthony Doerr which is only available in hard cover in the U. S. I found a copy of Mark Twain's "Innocents Abroad" which I've been wanting to read for a long time. We took our prizes and went back to the Metro for our trip home. When we arrived at Passy, we made another discovery that will help us avoid "The Stairs from Hell". First, an explanation of the location of the Passy Metro station. It is basically the beginning of a tunnel that goes north from there. There is a set

of steps on the west side of the station, which was the only side we had seen so far. However, since we were traveling in the opposite direction at this time, we left the station on the eastern side and found that, not only was there another set of steps, but also an escalator going up the hill. So when we went to Chez Géraud (which is now [La Causerie](#)) for dinner, we avoided "The Stairs from Hell" by taking the escalator up the hill.

Tuesday, July 21 - This was "The Day from Hell". We had planned to go to [Versailles](#). The train that goes there is the RER C line. There is an RER C station near our apartment but it, along with all the other RER C stations except Javel, which is the one where the train leaves for Versailles, was closed for repairs. I had done some research yesterday by walking down Avenue President Kennedy to the location of our RER C station. There was woman there who told me that there was a free bus that stopped at all the closed RER C stations and took passengers to Javel. So we had all discussed this last night at dinner and agreed to meet at our apartment at 10:00 and walk to the RER station to catch the bus. Tom had not arrived by 10:30 so Cindy and I walked on to the station where we called Tom. He had totally forgotten our plans and had begun walking to the RER C station at Pont de l'Alma, which was quite far from where we were, and was also closed anyway. So by the time they walked to our location, it was after 11:00. The woman at the station bus stop told us that the next bus should be there in about thirty minutes. Fortunately, it showed up about five minutes later. But it was so packed that we couldn't even board it. So the woman suggested that we walk to Javel because it wasn't too far. Of course, that was easy for her to say because it was quite a long walk, in the sun, with no shade. By the time we arrived, the station was packed with people trying to buy tickets. After a while, the RER staff just started letting people board the train without tickets so we got on the train and left for Versailles. When we got there after 12:30, we walked to the restaurant, [Le Sept](#), where Tom had made reservation for lunch. It was a long walk and we got there shortly after 13:00. The restaurant closed at 14:00 but we were able to order lunch and finished just after they closed. This was the only high point of the day. Also, Cindy and I were able to get a ride back to the chateau with a friend of the family that owned the restaurant who happened to be going that way. We waited for Tom and the girls (they had to walk) and



headed to the ticket office. The waiting line for tickets must have been at least five hundred people, in the sun, in several lines that snaked around for blocks. Tom and I stood in line for a while but decided to blow it off. So we walked back to the train station and got another free ride back to Javel. Cindy and I took the Metro back to our apartment where we met Tom and the girls, had some drinks, and made plans for [Musée d'Orsay](#) tomorrow.

Wednesday, July 22 - The plan was for Tom to get to the Musée d'Orsay early and Cindy and I would meet them there later. However, we were running late so Tom got in before we arrived. We had to stand in line for about fifteen minutes and when we got in, started looking for Tom. We finally found them and walked through the museum for a while.

These are three of my favorite statues there. After stopping at the gift shop for Genevieve



and Olivia to buy some souvenirs from the museum, we left and walked down to the Seine. We were planning to go back to the Restaurant de la Tour for lunch since we had such an

enjoyable meal there last Friday. It was a pleasant walk and we saw some interesting sights like a



whale made from wood scraps and the painted path along the river.

After lunch, we walked back across the Pont Bir-Hakeim where we left Tom and the girls to walk back to their apartment (we tipped them off about the escalators going up the hill past Passy) and walked back to our apartment. Cindy and I decided to walk to Marcello for dinner where we shared some calamari and another pizza.

Thursday, July 23 - Tom took Genevieve and Olivia shopping so Cindy and I took advantage of the cool morning and went for a stroll on the Allée des Cygnes. We



started at the entrance in the middle of the Pont de Bir-Hakeim and leisurely strolled to the other end where there is a miniature of the [Statue of Liberty](#).



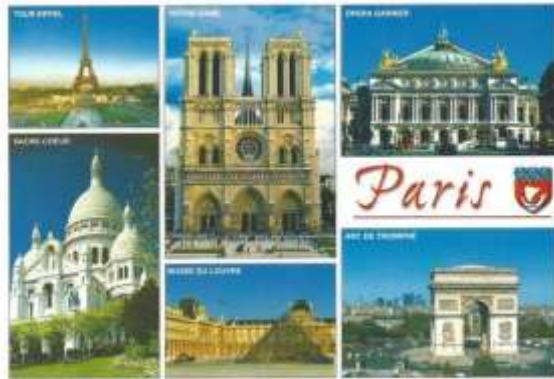
Afterwards, we went back to the apartment and took a nap since neither of us was feeling well. We woke up, had leftovers from Marcello and Restaurant de la Tour for lunch and took a shower, which made us feel better. Later, Tom, Genevieve, and Olivia came by the apartment and we walked to [Bistrot des Vignes](#) for dinner.

Friday, July 24 - Je suis un flâneur! I got up early and walked to the Place de Puerto Rico and [Café le Passy](#) for a pain au chocolat and cappuccino. From there I walked up Rue Vineuse to the Rue Benjamin Franklin and the [Square de Yorktown](#) overlooking the [Trocadero](#). I lingered there for a while then began walking back down the hill. I was also waiting for the pharmacy on Rue de l'Alboni to open so I could buy some cough syrup (I had developed a terrible cough). I also stopped into a patisserie to buy another pain au chocolat to take back to the apartment.

Cindy and I walked back to the Place de Puerto Rico to have lunch at a creperie called [Framboise](#) (which is next door to Marcello). We each had a crepe and they were delicious. Later, we took a taxi to Tom's apartment to have a last visit with them before we leave tomorrow. We had some drinks then walked to [Paul Chéne](#), where we had a disappointing dinner. We said our goodbyes and walked to the Trocadero Metro station where we caught the train back to Passy and home.



Saturday, July 25 - Our car from Blacklane drove us to CDG. We checked in for our flight home, went to the Star Alliance club, and waited for the flight. Au revoir, Paris! When we arrived at EWR we had a long layover (almost five hours).



We went to the United club but discovered that it wasn't as good as the one in the International terminal, so we went there to wait. It was a good choice but we were glad to finally get on our flight to PWM. It was about midnight when we finally arrived home in Brunswick, about a twenty-three hour day.