

Paris, Lyon, and Venice

March 26-April 16, 2022

Vacation to Exile

In June 2021, Sue and I decided that a trip to Paris in 2022 would be ideal. By that time the coronavirus seemed to be coming to an end since vaccines were now available and we had been vaccinated earlier in the year. Plans for our Paris trip expanded to include Lyon, Italy (to visit friends near Bologna) and ending in Venice, since I had never been there. So, we booked our flight with United and began planning the details for the trip.

By March 2022, when our flight to Paris was intended to depart, the dreaded coronavirus was yet to be eliminated and was more insidious since variants were appearing around the world. Nevertheless, we had vaccination boosters in November and our enthusiasm for the trip outweighed the potential for any problems that might occur.

On the 26th of March we departed from Portland for the anticipated European trip and arrived in Paris on the 27th. After arriving at our apartment on Rue des Écoles, we made plans to spend the rest of the day exploring our new environs and avoid the temptation to nap. We walked to [Île Saint-Louis](#) where we had lunch at [Les Fou de l'île](#). Afterwards, we walked back to the apartment, stopping to take pictures of Notre Dame from the [Pont de l'Archevêché](#) and watching the skaters. Later that evening we ate at



[Brasserie le Balzar](#), where they offered escargot Bourguignon. Then we retreated to our apartment, where we were able to view the twinkling lights of the Tour Eiffel, since it was visible

from there, making this a spectacular ending to a long day. We thought how lucky we were to be in Paris together, if only we had known what the future would bring.



Monday, March 28 – After our first breakfast in Paris (coffee and croissants) we walked to the [Panthéon](#). Originally the Church of Saint-Genève, it was transformed into a mausoleum where the crypts of such luminaries as Voltaire, Rousseau and Josephine Baker reside. It also houses Foucault's pendulum, which proves the rotation of the earth. We were gripped by the latest art installation by Anselm Kiefer that commemorates the French writer and First World War soldier Maurice Genevoix.



After lunch, we walked to the Jardin du Luxembourg to walk around the gardens then we took the Metro to [Tour Montparnasse](#). We bought tickets to the observation deck at the top which offers an amazing 360° view of



Paris. It was a fun way to see the city and we were glad to have made the trip. We took the Metro to Odéon and walked the rest of the way to our apartment. We were tired from our excursion and still feeling the effects of “jet lag” so we rested for the remainder of the afternoon.

Tuesday, March 29 – Our plan was to visit [Musée d'Orsay](#) including lunch at the restaurant there. We dodged the rain and took the Metro to the nearby station. We had a very enjoyable visit, although I had developed a nasty head cold.

Wednesday, March 30 – Sue suggested that we have hot chocolate from her favorite place in Paris called [Angelina](#) on Rue de Rivoli and it really was



worth traveling for. After hot chocolate and brunch, we walked to [Place de la Concorde](#) to see the Egyptian obelisk (which was covered in scaffolding) and the Fountain of Rivers.



Then we walked to the [Palais Garnier](#) to see the opera house with the chandelier (made famous by the Phantom of the Opera) and the ceiling that was painted by Marc Chagall. On the way back to the apartment, we passed La Samaritaine department store where we stopped for a drink. We walked along the Seine, crossed the [Pont au Change](#) to Île de la Cité, continued on across the [Pont Saint-Michel](#), then back to the apartment.

Thursday, March 31 – Since I was not feeling well due to my cold, we decided to conduct a



Covid test before going to dinner at [Sola](#). I tested negative but Sue tested positive so we cancelled our dinner reservation and began isolation for the next four days. We were very disappointed. I was in charge of getting meals so that Sue could rest in bed. I also decided to sleep on the tiny Naugahyde sofa rather than in bed with Sue. It was an uncomfortable way to sleep but we wanted to isolate as much as possible. We had planned to go to Bologna but we decided to spend more days in Lyon, since we will have been isolated in Paris for so long, and were able to reserve the apartment in Lyon for four extra days.

Friday, April 1 to Saturday, April 2 – We isolated ourselves, reading and resting.

Sunday, April 3 - After a couple of days, we tested again and Sue still tested positive. But the weather was nice so we found where we could sit outside and have brunch. Afterwards, we walked to Notre Dame to check out the [construction](#) being done then back to the apartment to continue isolation.

Monday, April 4 – We found a pharmacy nearby and for Sue to get an authorized Covid test and she still tested positive. We walked to Île Saint-Louis to find a place to have lunch outside but could not find anything we liked. We walked back to Notre Dame and found a place to have lunch. We hurried to [Vedettes du Pont Neuf](#) for a cruise on the Seine before leaving

Paris. After the cruise and a short visit to the [Square du Vert Galant](#) we started walking back to the apartment. On the way, we tried to go to [Sainte-Chapelle](#) but it was blocked by the police, due to security concerns, so we continued on to the apartment to prepare for the trip to Lyon.

Tuesday, April 5 – We boarded the train to Lyon at around 13:00 and enjoyed a pleasant trip through the French countryside. When we arrived at 4 Rue des Augustins we were met by the owner's mother. Although we arrived at the time that we had texted her, she brusquely greeted us and gave us a hurried orientation of the apartment during which she informed us that the previous guest had broken the coffee maker and it had not been replaced. She offered her regrets but none to replace it. Then she gave us paperwork to sign and left. All-in-all a very unpleasant beginning to our week in Lyon. Nevertheless, we began settling into the apartment and decided to go find a replacement for the coffee maker as well as supplies for our stay. We found a kitchenware store that had a small French press, which we bought and eventually brought back home. At least we could enjoy breakfast in the morning without having to go out.

Wednesday, April 6 – We wanted to buy a weekly transit pass so we began walking to [Place Bellecour](#) where the Lyon tourist information office is located. After lunch we proceeded to the tourist office, bought the transit pass and casually walked back to the apartment.

Thursday, April 7 – This is the day we planned to go to [Halles de Lyon-Paul Bocuse](#) and we used our transit pass to take a bus there. It was an incredible place for foodies with several restaurants offering all sorts of gourmet items. After walking around trying to find the right place for lunch, we settled in at [Chez Les Gones](#). Sue had a fabulous Salad Lyonnaise and I had their Brandade, which was the special of the day. After lunch we bought some tapenade, Époisses cheese, foie gras terrine, and saucisson then walked in the light rain to Galeries Lafayette to find a sweater for Sue since it had been cold and she was tired of wearing the same clothes. She found a really nice one. We left and took the bus back to the apartment. We had a wonderful dinner with the food we bought at Halles de Lyon.

Friday, April 8 – In anticipation of our lunch at the Michelin-starred [L'Atelier des Augustins](#), we walked to the nearby [Place des Terreaux](#) on the way to the Rhône side of Lyon. Our apartment was in the part of Lyon between the Saône and Rhône rivers and this was the first time we had

ventured toward the Rhône which is near the Hôtel de Ville Lyon and the Opéra National de Lyon.

Finally, our 13:15 reservation for lunch arrived and we happily made our way there. This was our chance for an extraordinary meal in France and we were not disappointed. The chef provided a delicious surprise menu.



Unfortunately, we did not take notes regarding the contents of our meal but we had fabulous service from sommelier Sophia, who gave us great advice about the wine selection, and chef Nicolas Guilloton, who came to our table after our meal to explain each dish and talk about his experience as a chef.

The picture at left features amuse-bouche, appetizer, entrées, dessert and mignardises.

Saturday, April 9 – We walked down the Quai des Célestins past the morning market site to the dock on the Saône where we boarded the [Bateaux Lyonnaise](#). It would take us to the [Musée des Confluences](#). The museum is a modern architectural wonder at the confluence of the Saône and Rhône rivers. On the river we saw the [Orange Cube](#) and Green Cube and other interesting architecture. The first temporary exhibit we visited at the museum featured an enthralling look at nearly 240 specimens of rare birds. The next was about the interaction between Europeans and native Americans during American colonization. Afterwards, we were ready to have lunch at the rooftop café, with its 180° view of the city. We finished our tour of the museum with the permanent exhibitions.



Sunday, April 10 – We decided to walk to the Vieux Lyon (old town) across the river. Although it was Palm Sunday, there were many places to see,

including the [Musée des Arts de la Marionnette](#) (puppet museum) and [Le Petit Musée de Guignol](#) (Lyon history museum). Afterwards, we had lunch at [Le Laurencin](#) then walked to the fourteenth century [Cathédrale Saint-Jean-Baptiste](#). After a short visit we searched for [La Longue Traboule](#), a secret covered passageway, and walked through toward the [Funiculaire de Lyon](#). It took us to [Théâtre Gallo Romain de Lyon](#), the remains of a large Roman amphitheater on the hill of Fourvière, where we were treated to a view of the distant mountains. We returned via the funicular and walked back across the river to our apartment. Since it was Sunday, there were not many restaurants open so we revisited Le Grand Liban because it was close by and it was open.



Monday, April 11 – For our last day in Lyon, we went by Metro to the [Parc de la Tête d'Or](#) where we planned to visit the zoo there. However, we got lost while looking for a place to have lunch because most of them were closed. We did see a small part of the zoo and found Buvettes des Cygnes, which was open for lunch and located on the lake. We had walked a lot and were very tired so we took the Metro back to the stop near the Hôtel de Ville and walked back to the apartment.

Tuesday, April 12 – We left early to for [LYS](#) to take our flight to Bologna on Air France. We had to fly there because we already had reservations but, after arriving in Bologna, we went to the railway station to take the train to Venice. When we arrived in Venice, we walked with our luggage to Nati's house, our apartment for the next few days. It was a nice one bedroom first-floor walk-up but no coffee maker. Fortunately, we brought the French press that we bought in Lyon. Nati's house is on a canal in the [Cannaregio](#) district of Venice which has many canals and bridges over canals. Walking around is an adventure in itself.

Wednesday, April 13 – Because Sue's friends Rosa and Lorenzo were to arrive on the train this morning, we tested for Covid and I tested positive. We decided to go and meet Rosa and Lorenzo at the train station but then



find a pharmacy that could give a more authoritative test. After testing again, it showed that I was, in fact, negative. So, we all celebrated with hugs and left to go to their hotel. After they checked into their room and dropped-off their luggage we walked toward San

Marco, stopping for lunch along the way. When we finally arrived at [Piazza San Marco](#), it was packed with tourists and there were long lines waiting for the Basilica tour and campanile. We decided to take a vaporetto back to our stop near the [Ponte delle Guglie](#), which is near their hotel and our apartment. We decided to meet later at Trattoria Pontini for dinner outside near the canal. After a great dinner, we walked to show the location of our apartment to Rosa and Lorenzo.



Thursday, April 14 – We met again at the Guglie vaporetto stop and boarded the boat to [Murano](#). Shortly after we arrived, we found a glass factory that was performing a glass-blowing demonstration. Later we discovered that there were many factories around the island but none were giving demonstrations. Rosa and Lorenzo were going back to Venice to take a train home but Sue and I were planning to continue to Burano. So, we said goodbye to Rosa and Lorenzo and went to wait in line for the vaporetto. It was a long line and was hardly moving so Sue went ahead and learned that, because there were few vaporetti to Burano, our wait might be a couple of hours. We abandoned our plans and walked back toward the canal. While walking along the Fondamenta Manin we reconnected with Rosa and Lorenzo and were able to get directions to a stop where we could get a vaporetto back to Guglie. When we arrived, we once again said goodbye to Rosa and Lorenzo and they left to catch their train.

Friday, April 15 – The day we get tested in preparation for our trip home tomorrow. We planned to take a vaporetto to San Marco and walk to the pharmacy where our tests were to be taken. So, we walked the Ferrovia stop where we could get the correct vaporetto. When we arrived, there was a long line of people waiting for the San Marco vaporetto but we discovered that we could take the vaporetto that was going in the other direction but would still take us to San Marco, only a longer ride. We opted for the longer ride rather than waiting for perhaps an hour or more to take the more direct route. The decision was a good one because we had a leisurely cruise around Venice and were still able to arrive in plenty of time to get to our testing appointment. After arriving at San Marco, we began walking to the pharmacy where we waited for our scheduled appointment, had our tests and waited nervously for another half-hour for the results. Sue's result was negative but mine was positive, meaning we would have to wait ten days to

return to the United States as required by a CDC directive. We went back to the apartment and immediately called United to determine how to change our flight reservations since we would not be able to leave as planned. Fortunately, we were able to book flights ten days later but we had to pay a considerable amount due to fare changes since we originally booked our flight. Anyway, we continued as planned to take the [Alilaguna](#) transport to [VCE](#) and go to the [Parkhotel Annia](#) to spend the night. When we arrived at the hotel, we discovered that we could not stay there for the next ten days because they were booked for the Easter week. We were able to find a hotel in nearby Mestre that would accommodate us.

Saturday, April 16 – So much for the good night's sleep. I woke up at about 02:00 remembering that we had left our car parked at the Hilton Garden Inn and that they were expecting us to move it today, which was the original plan. Since it was still April 15 there, I decided to call them and tell them that we could not move the car and make arrangements to leave it there for another ten days. Now, back to sleep. We got up to have breakfast at the hotel then had the clerk call for a cab to take us to [Voco](#), also known as “the Quid”, the hotel in Mestre where we would stay in exile for nine days. We planned to return to the Parkhotel Annia in ten days so that we could take their shuttle to the airport when we, hopefully, will fly home on April 26. Anyway, we checked into Voco and immediately began scouting for places to shop and eat while we stayed in Mestre. The hotel does include breakfast during our stay and also has lunch service on weekdays and dinner every night except Sunday so we should be able to survive. However, we also found a shopping mall and several restaurants nearby, assuring us that we would not be confined to the hotel. So, we walked to the mall to find a grocery store in case we would need to find food that we could store in the room in case we weren't able to find a meal. Instead, we discovered several places where we could get takeout in an emergency. We also found several sushi restaurants, including Sushi Wok 008, where we had lunch. After lunch, we walked back to the mall and bought sandwiches to take back to the hotel room for dinner.

Sunday, April 17 to Sunday, April-24 – We had our first breakfast at Voco today. It was satisfactory so we will be able to have at least one good meal for the day. However, we realized that most of our clothes would need washing. The hotel did offer laundry service but it would be expensive the things we needed to wash. I tried washing a couple of shirts in the shower but that would not be a solution to the problem over the next few days. We made plans to buy tickets for the bus, which we could get from the hotel

clerk, and go into Mestre to a laundromat where we could do laundry. This would also give us an opportunity to have lunch at [Hostaria Vite Rossa](#) in Mestre, where we had an excellent meal. A welcome change from [Sushi Wok 008](#) and [Rossopomodoro](#), the Italian pizza place near the mall, where we had most of the lunches and dinners during our exile. We did order room service one night for dinner and even ate dinner in the hotel restaurant a couple of nights. We mostly read, watched movies (the hotel offered an app that allowed us to stream Netflix) or news (CNN in English) on TV and played backgammon on Sue's iPad. We also walked a lot but there wasn't much to see around the area. One of the interesting things we discovered were two car brands (Kitty and Yoyo as seen in the pictures) that were at a nearby car dealership. They are both small electric models that we'll probably never see in the United States.



We were also intrigued by the tour group that stayed at the hotel for two nights. The tour was called “Latter Day Tours”, apparently mostly Mormons, and the hotel was pretty much filled with them it seems. They took most of the restaurant for dinner and were even offered an early breakfast on the day they left. Sue was fixed by the women and was wondering if they were wearing Mormon undergarments, something she had never heard of.

Saturday, April 25 – Finally the last day of exile at Voco is at an end. After breakfast we checked out and took a taxi to VCE where we took our obligatory Covid test and we both tested negative. What a relief! Now we were set to go home tomorrow. We called Parkhotel Annia and had them send their shuttle to pick us up at the airport. Once again, we walked to Al Quadrante for lunch, although in a much happier state.

Sunday, April 26 – We took an early shuttle from the hotel to the airport, checked in for our flight to Frankfurt, and went to the Business Class lounge to have breakfast. We were finally going home and, after a hectic boarding experience at VCE and trying check in process in [FRA](#), we made it back to Portland where we picked up the Volvo and drove home at last.