



The do everything vacation Blog:

Trip of a lifetime

I was told once that a trip was a chance of a lifetime. I rolled my eyes because there are always second chances. Then my family got hit with cancer. After that came Covid. To top that off I know a young boy who is dying of cancer. Where is his trip of a lifetime? His lifetime is ending. So, maybe the trip we just took to Europe was indeed a trip of a lifetime.

I work out on a treadmill with IFit. It's been awesome! One of the trainers said it's a privilege to run. Some people don't have that luxury to walk and run. It's true. I wanted this trip to reflect the privilege to travel and run. So, I ran 10 runs. Three in Athens, 3 on our cruise ship, 1 in Kotor Montenegro, 1 in Paris, and two in London. They were all amazing! The Athens ones were crazy. I'd swear it was uphill both ways. Plus, I ran around the Olympic stadium. It was epic! The Kotor one included a hike up 1350 stairs to some ruins. I got lost in Paris. The two in London went around Buckingham palace and through two iconic parks.

The trip itself was a juggernaut. Coming into Athens was a grueling experience. We were up for probably 36 hours. It was 22 hours of travel. The 8-hour layover in Paris saved us 400 each but I

bet it took a chunk of my life. Athens was special. The food was great. The ruins were even better. The weather was perfect and the people and prices pretty good. I thought the museums and setup was not bad at all. Now the port in Athens is way bigger than you think. The train will take you there but the port is not close. Cabs are a good plan.

The cruise was good. Princess treated us royally. It's hard to rate the ship because I think they were still hurting (entertainment wise) from Covid. The food was good and the special dining was off the charts. Can't say enough good things about the service and cleanliness of the ship.

Santorini was a zoo but it was a cool place to visit. Oddly enough the iconic blue roof thing is not that prevalent in that place. There are only a few of them. Yet, it was an interesting setup. There is an issue with getting up and down the mountain to the ship. It's not easy. Then we went to Kotor Montenegro and it was fun but it's a place for historical travelers. You will not be entertained there. Yet, it was a place I would have loved more time to explore.

Naples's port and downtown is a crazy place. Getting to Pompeii is not easy. Cabs are a great plan. I am glad we went there but there was not enough time to appreciate either place. Pompeii is a day or two visit. I suspect Naples is the same way too. The same could be said of Sicily. It looked like a very interesting island. Yet, we had so little time to really see it. Somehow, I felt a little less welcome in Italy than other locations. I wonder if they had tourist fatigue? Barcelona seems like a cool place to explore. Yet, again on this cruise we only received a few hours. The basilica was outstanding. I would go back there with more time.

Paris is a place than needs time. I am betting we would need a week to just live there. See Paris as it is. Each road has something to see. The food is everywhere. I was saying that in Canada we have cannabis and alcohol stores on every corner. In Paris are food and sights to see on every

corner. It was like a massive party in Paris. People were everywhere. The same can be said for London. People all over the place. Yet the sights are at every turn. I suppose our trip was a little too much. How many different sights can you see before you get brain overload. Yet, each place was special. I loved adding the running. We are thinking of Kauai next September for ten days. I will run a half marathon. I learned so much from this recent trip. There is a ton to unpack about traveling from port to port. Country to country. We experienced 5 countries in 15 days. Over the next few months, I will talk about what I have learned.