

Day 1, Monday, September 16, 2024

I woke up at 1:00 AM (10:00 AM CET) to start adjusting to the Italy's time zone (Central Europe time = CET) and managed to stay awake until my flight left Portland. A friend picked me up at 10:30 AM, and I gave her an Excel tool I'd created to help her analyze the costs of getting a new car versus keeping her current car, which has a persistent check engine light and high oil consumption. She drove me to the airport, where I treated her to lunch. She watched over my house while I was away.

My first flight was an overnight trip to Reykjavík. I had chosen an aisle seat for easy restroom access, but the people near the window needed to get past me a few times during the flight, which interrupted my sleep. The window seat would have been better for sleeping. Even with the interruptions, I was so exhausted that I managed to sleep through most of the seven-hour flight.

(Daily bike miles 0 miles; Total trip bike miles 0 miles)

Day 2, Tuesday, September 17, 2024

I arrived in Reykjavík, Iceland around 6:00 AM. My next flight was to Milan, Italy. I had another aisle seat and it was the right seat for this flight. I wanted to stay awake to help sync with CET, but I struggled to keep my eyes open due to fatigue.

Upon arriving in Milan, I discovered that my bike wasn't coming through baggage claim. Thankfully, I had attached a Galaxy SmartTag to my bike and the device detected that my bike was at the Milan airport. Some other travelers on my flight were waiting on their golf clubs that also did not come out at the baggage claim. We all headed to the lost and found. I informed the lost and found staff about my SmartTag detecting my bike, and after they made some calls, they located my bike (and the other travelers' golf clubs, which had ended up with my bike). The SmartTag truly saved me from what could've been a rough start to the trip.

I easily caught the train to Milan's central station but had trouble finding my hotel, the Hotel Galla. Once I found it, I met up with Jay, and we took a walk, enjoyed a beer and snack, and then had pizza for dinner. I went to sleep around midnight, feeling fully adjusted to the CET time zone and sleeping soundly.

(Daily bike miles 3.82 miles; Total trip bike miles 3.82 miles)

Day 3, Wednesday, September 18, 2024

We woke up around 7:00 AM, had coffee and a croissant, then packed up and left the hotel by 9:30 AM. We cycled from Milan, Italy to Bergamo, Italy. Navigating out of Milan was a bit tricky, and I think my GPS was giving odd results since I'd set it to lead us to the start of the ride. The GPS provided at least one wrong turn, but I was able to use my etrex 22x GPS to confirm the route. Jay seemed a bit frustrated with my navigation, though I felt we were managing just fine. Milan's large population made it a challenge, but we eventually made it out of Milan.

Along the way, my suitcase fell off my bike, and one of its roller wheels broke off, leaving me with only three suitcase roller wheels for the rest of the trip, which made it harder to pull when not attached to the bike. Then, a short distance later, my rear tire locked up because a bungee cord from the bike rack got tangled around the rear wheel sprocket—probably loosened when the suitcase fell off. I managed to untangle it and continue riding.

Once we cleared Milan, the ride picked up, and we mostly traveled on low-traffic streets. We reached Bergamo around 4:00 PM, where we had dinner at La Taqueria, a Mexican restaurant, but ordered

Indian-style mango chicken and rice. The meal was excellent. Afterward, we walked up the hill to Bergamo's historic area, which was lively with shops and pedestrians strolling along traffic-free streets. We then walked back to the hotel.

(Daily bike miles 32.7 miles; Total trip bike miles 36.52 miles – GPS track on 840 in 2 pieces – had to fix data)

Day 4, Thursday, September 19, 2024

I had a restless night and couldn't pinpoint why. I was just dozing off when my phone unexpectedly rang, even though it was in airplane mode with Wi-Fi calling enabled. I hadn't realized it could still ring like that, and after the interruption, I couldn't settle into deep sleep again. I eventually got up around 7:00 AM to work on some things, and Jay woke up at around 8:00 AM. Then we went to breakfast at the hotel. By 9:00 AM, we had packed up and started biking from Bergamo, Italy to Brescia, Italy.

It was a scenic ride, with stretches along gravel trails and moderate-traffic roads that often had cycle able sidewalks or bike paths. We enjoyed a beautiful section by Lake Iseo and cycled through the town of Iseo. Navigating out of town got confusing with my GPS, due to getting off course to see town and when we returned, we seemed to be backtracking. Jay seemed a bit uneasy about my frequent stops to confirm directions. So, we tried using Jay's Google Maps to continue our travels. His route was uphill and led us onto a main highway, which didn't feel safe, so we backtracked to continue on the original route. For me, these navigation quirks add to the adventure! We arrived in Brescia by 4 PM, checked into the hotel, and explored the town on foot.

(Daily bike miles 41.89 miles; Total trip bike miles 78.41 miles)

Day 5, Friday, September 20, 2024

Another rough night's sleep, finally falling asleep around 3 AM and woke up around 9 AM. After our hotel breakfast, we started cycling from Brescia, Italy to Verona, Italy. I took a few loops around our hotel to get the GPS figured out, but once I was on track, the navigation went smoothly. Along the way, we detoured to the fortified town of Peschiera del Garda, to enter the town we crossed a bridge that seemed like a moat around the town's walls. We stopped for coffee, then followed a scenic path along the Mincio River, only to find the route across the dam closed for construction.

We continued to the town of Monzambano to cross the river, doubling back to the dam and rejoining the river's cycling path, which was lovely. We reached Verona around 5 PM. It took a while to locate our hotel, we asked at another hotel and they told us to go to a nearby door and ring the bell to get into our hotel. Once settled, we strolled around town, saw the Colosseum, and enjoyed the lively atmosphere. I went to bed around midnight.

(Daily bike miles 52.04 miles; Total trip bike miles 130.45 miles)

Day 6, Saturday, September 21, 2024

I woke up at 7:00 AM, while Jay slept in a bit. We started riding around 9:00 AM, heading from Verona, Italy to Vicenza, Italy. It was a pleasant start out of Verona, following my GPS route. However, we soon ran into a point where my GPS route tried to take us through private property. A woman from a nearby house told us we couldn't go that way, so we switched to Google Maps on Jay's phone. For the rest of the day, I was not tracking the ride. We rode through a mix of busy roads and quiet countryside lanes. Some of the roads were barely wide enough for a single car, but had traffic going in both directions. Since the car traffic was very low, I never saw what happens if cars met up going in different directions,

there was not many placed to pull over. My guess is one of the cars would need to back up for a distance while waiting for the other car to continue.

We passed vineyards, farms, a wedding in Caldiero and biked through the picturesque town of Soave, with its impressive castle. We arrived in Vicenza by 4:00 PM, checked into our hotel, and explored the town, which had a vibrant wine-tasting festival in the main square. We had dinner at a restaurant on the square.

(Daily bike miles 43.41 miles; Total trip bike miles 173.86 miles)

Day 7, Sunday, September 22, 2024

I woke up around 7:00 AM and did some work before we headed to breakfast at 8:30 AM. A friendly British guy joined us and mentioned he was in town to watch a soccer match. We set off from Vicenza around 9:30 AM, starting with a loop around town. The British guy from breakfast took a photo of us as we cycled past him on our final loop around Vicenza; I think he found the suitcase on my bike amusing.

Leaving town went smoothly, and most of our ride to Padova followed scenic trails along canals. We reached our hotel around 3:00 PM. The hotel Wi-Fi did not work from our hotel room, so I worked on my journal in the hotel lobby. After a rest, we walked around Padova, taking in the sights. Once back at the hotel I went to the lobby and worked on my journal for a while.

(Daily bike miles 28.04 miles; Total trip bike miles 201.9 miles)

Day 8, Monday, September 23, 2024

We woke up at 6:30 AM and enjoyed a quick breakfast before heading out at 7:45 AM. On this day, we biked from Padova, Italy to Venice, Italy. Navigation was a bit challenging at first, but once we were out of town, the ride was flat and scenic, mostly following canals on trails or low-traffic roads. We reached Venice around 1:00 PM and went to see about checking into our hotel room, but found we were too early to check-in to our room.

Since it was too early to check in, we stopped for coffee at a nearby café. Once settled into our room, we explored Venice on foot. Jay had to return his rental bike to the mainland, so we used WhatsApp to reconnect at the train station when he got back. We finished the day with dinner and more sightseeing around Venice. A minor mishap occurred when one of my gold crowns came loose, but otherwise, it was a fantastic day! Jay went to bed before 10 PM, and I followed around 11:00 PM.

(Daily bike miles 28.64 miles; Total trip bike miles 230.54 miles)

Day 9, Tuesday, September 24, 2024

We woke up around 7:00 AM and got ready to catch the train from Venice, Italy to Ljubljana, Slovenia. Despite arriving at the train station with time to spare, we were initially unsure about the check-in process. Our train tickets indicated that checking in for the train was mandatory. The train's announcement explained that starting on September 21st, trains began implementing automatic check-in at departure. You can change the reservation before departure, but not after your scheduled train departure.

The train to Trieste Centrale was fast and on schedule. However, the train from Trieste Centrale, Italy to Ljubljana, Slovenia was slow and ran a little late. We arrived in Ljubljana around 4 PM and found our hotel without issue.

Our attempt at finding the historic part of town was unsuccessful, but we eventually found a decent spot to have a beer and a bite to eat. After dinner, I walked around in search of temporary crown cement for my loose dental crown. The pharmacy directed me to a nearby dental clinic (They said it would be closed until the morning). I looked for the clinic, but did not exactly find it. I later found online the dental clinic claimed to be a 24-hour clinic and it was very close to our hotel. When I had walked around looking for the dental clinic, I was right in front of it but saw no signage. Also, the building was dark and closed. After a long day, I went to bed around 11:00 PM.

(Daily bike miles 0 miles; Total trip bike miles 230.54 miles)

Day 10, Wednesday, September 25, 2024

I slept decently but was preoccupied with my tooth. I could not sleep longer and woke up at 6:00 AM. After the hotel breakfast at 7:30 AM, we went to the pharmacy, and then I visited a nearby dental clinic to ask about my crown. Initially, the dentist said he couldn't help without prior authorization, but his nurse persuaded him to take a look. He re-cemented my crown in about half an hour, though he advised I follow up with my dentist back in the USA. He recemented tooth 7 and said that tooth 5 should be examined. I was very lucky he did the work and hope the tip helped in future decisions to help others. Since I was not pre-approved, they were not going to charge me. Grateful, I tipped the dentist 60 Euros. When I finished, Jay was waiting outside the dentist office, he was not sure where I had been for that half hour.

We returned to the hotel to pack up, left around 11:00 AM, and enjoyed coffee by the river and lunch at La Petit Café, where our rental bikes were delivered. Our self-guided bike tour began with a shuttle ride to Kobarid, Slovenia. After checking in to our hotel, we explored St. Anthony's Church on the hill before a nice dinner in town. Jay mentioned my snoring and told me he had 2 operating to stop his snoring. The funny thing is he still lightly snore, but doesn't know it. I can sleep through his lighter snoring, thanks to having a bad ear and sleeping on my good ear.

(Daily bike miles 0 miles; Total trip bike miles 230.54 miles)

Day 11, Thursday, September 26, 2024

We woke at 7:00 AM for the hotel breakfast and started biking around 8:30 AM in on-and-off rain. We rode from Kobarid, Slovenia to Šmartno, Slovenia, crossing the historic Napoleon's Bridge over the Soča River and cycling alongside its beautiful emerald waters. Most roads had light traffic and there were some great bike paths. I climbed the Gonjače lookout tower for a stunning view of Šmartno. We arrived around 5:00 PM, had dinner at 7:00 PM, and went to bed around 11:00 PM.

(Daily bike miles 42.05 miles; Total trip bike miles 272.59 miles)

Day 12, Friday, September 27, 2024

We woke at 7:00 AM, we had breakfast at 7:30 AM and began cycling by 8:30 AM from Šmartno, Slovenia to Slap, Slovenia. My GPS initially wasn't working, but Jay helped me fix it. The ride took us through light-traffic roads, though the terrain was varied. When we cycled through Gorizia, Slovenia we found an international food festival (Gusti di Frontiera 2024). Jay bought treats from one of the festivals stands and we had coffee at a local café.

We cycled on some rough trails, crossing small streams by coasting with our feet lifted to keep them dry. Upon arriving at our hotel at 2:30 PM and had to call the phone number at the door to get into our hotel, we were met with some quirks: the room lacked a bathroom door, just a curtain, and the shower design made it easy to flood the bathroom floor. However, the historical estate itself was fascinating,

dating back to the 1700s. In the early years of the estate, they had 3 additional building added when the main house felt too small. The estate hotel rooms were added by current owner of the estate and the rooms were build underground to keep the historic estate appearance and status. The owner showed us his impressive wine cellar. It was a unique stay, though the room layout wasn't ideal for two single people. If you want to stay at a historic estate with great wine tasting you could love this place. (Daily bike miles 35.2 miles; Total trip bike miles 307.79 miles) (GPS issues had to use a blend of Edge 840 and etrex 22x data)

Day 13, Saturday, September 28, 2024

We started our day with breakfast at 8:00 AM and set off biking at 9:00 AM from Slap, Slovenia to Štanjel, Slovenia. The day was sunny, and the initial five miles were easy, followed by a three-mile climb with a 1,500-foot gain. After a four-mile descent, we finished with a gradual ascent to Štanjel, Slovenia. Around noon, we stopped for coffee before checking into our hotel. When I was walking around before getting in our hotel a man let me visit his garden. He was a very nice man and helped us figure out how to get into our hotel room.

Once in the hotel we relaxed and I worked on my journal. Later, we walked around town, hiked along the fortified part of Štanjel, and saw a wedding near the Ferrari Garden (Ferrarijev Vrt). We explored fort ruins, then picked up groceries for dinner, which Jay cooked—a delicious veggie and pasta meal. Afterward, I revisited the Ferrari Garden and worked on some computer tasks before going to bed around 10:30 PM. I woke up at 1:30 AM with some bug bites but managed to get back to sleep after working on my computer. Ignoring the bug bites this hotel was the nicest so far, offering spacious rooms and a full kitchen in a historically rich area.

(Daily bike miles 17.5 miles; Total trip bike miles 325.29 miles) (GPS issues had to use a blend of Edge 840 and etrex 22x data)

Day 14, Sunday, September 29, 2024

We woke up around 7:00 AM we had a unique breakfast setup in our room, different from the usual hotel buffet. The hotel had stocked the fridge with meats and cheeses and left fruit, bread, and snacks on the counter. Today's route took us from Štanjel, Slovenia to Lipica, Slovenia. I took a wrong turn early on, and Jay quickly lost confidence in my navigation skills—a recurring theme! I realized my mistake within 1/10th of a mile and we cycled back up the hill to where I made the mistake. The mistake was we were supposed to take the trail that started out parallel to the road I took. Despite this, the ride went smoothly overall. Along the way, we encountered some whimsical trail features, including a bench with golf-ball drumsticks and a xylophone built in. Jay gave a quick "concert" before we continued. Shortly after that there was a troll made out of sticks and material on the side of the trail. My GPS quit tracking for a very short period one time, then I got it working again. Not sure why it stopped working.

For much of the ride, we followed quiet dirt trails and paved bike trails closer to Lipica, with more bike riders than previously. The trails here are well-marked with an extensive network of bike routes. Great ride through small towns and vineyards. We arrived at our very modern hotel by 1:30 PM, situated in a sparsely populated area next to a casino and a large stud farm. I could find no other stores or shops anywhere near the hotel. After checking in, we visited the casino, which required a lot of security measures, including passports, photos taken of us and signing a document. Inside the casino, only a small portion of the machines were utilized. Later, we had a glass of wine at the hotel restaurant. I ordered beef stew; it was a very small ball of noodles (about the size of a golf ball or maybe smaller) and then they poured hot water over the noodles. Not what I was expecting and not that tasty. I went for a

long walk around the stud farm, accidentally entering the grounds before quickly exiting. You needed ticket to get into the farm and I did not want to get charged. It was not that cool of a farm, but a nice long walk.

(Daily bike miles 25.62 miles; Total trip bike miles 350.91 miles)

Day 15, Monday, September 30, 2024

We were up at 7:00 AM for breakfast and on the road by 9:00 AM. This day's plan was to ride from Lipica, Slovenia to Divaca, Slovenia and then take a train to Ljubljana. Our ride to the Škocjan Caves was easy with some uphill, arriving just in time for the 10:00 AM tour. Our guide book said we should pre-pay to get ticket into the cave, when we got there, we found it was no problem getting tickets into the next tour of the cave. Reserving tickets for the cave is probably much more important during their high season. The cave tour was spectacular, with the addition of a river running through, creating a unique experience. I attempted to take a few photos inside the cave, but didn't get any good shots, as photography was not allowed. After exiting the main cave, we took the longest exit route (there was 3 different route to exit the caves). The long exit went through another cave and bridges. The cave was very cool with stalactites (hang down from the ceiling of a cave) and stalagmites (grow up from the cave floor). There are better stalactites and stalagmites at Carlsbad caverns in New Mexico. However, Škocjan cave had a large river running through the middle making the overall experience very unique. After our tour, we had coffee at the cave entrance, browsed the gift shop, checked out the little museum, left the caves area around noon and cycled to the train station in Divaca.

I got train tickets for us. We ended up on the wrong train to Ljubljana, which required a bus transfer in Postojna. We got off the train at Postojna where we waited for the correct train. During our wait, we chatted with a couple bike touring from Austria. After arriving in Ljubljana, we checked into the hotel and explored the area. We tried an Indian restaurant for dinner, but the food didn't seem particularly sanitary; both Jay and I started feeling unwell two days later.

(Daily bike miles 10.7 miles; Total trip bike miles 361.61 miles)

Day 16, Tuesday, October 1, 2024

We woke up around 7:00 AM and had breakfast at the hotel. We might have gotten food poisoning from that breakfast. However, the food seemed fresh and we later believed that the food poisoning may have come from the chicken we had the previous day at an Indian restaurant. We left Ljubljana at 8:30 AM, and I noticed one of my luggage tags was missing. The hotel put a luggage tag on my luggage, but not an official Visit Good-places tag.

We then cycled to the train station in Ljubljana, Slovenia and took the 9:30 AM train from Ljubljana, Slovenia to Zidani Most, Slovenia. After a lovely train ride to Zidani Most, we cycled toward Krško, Slovenia, through a scenic canyon with a mix of bike trails and paved roads. Great ride and mostly flat until the last 3 miles. Right before we reached our hotel, my stomach began to feel unsettled, and soon after checking in, I experienced a severe bout of food poisoning. The worst vomit episodes I ever recall, then I got the runs. Luckily the worst part was over that night. Jay started feeling the effects a few hours later. We believe it was the Indian food the previous day, we both had chicken there and it did not seem as sanitary as the Best Western Hotel. We both felt so terrible we canceled our dinner plans, spending a rough night in our hotel room.

The luggage tag the hotel put on my bag that morning did not stay on my luggage. So that evening, I put a card in my regular suitcase luggage tag where I wrote bag 1 of 3 and visit good-places (Like what it said on the original luggage tags). This worked without any questions for most of the remainder of our trip, on the last day they called Jay to confirm we had three bags. All three of our bags made it to every hotel on the trip. We both felt miserable all that night. The hotel had a great view and deck for a drink, I wish we could have enjoyed it. We went to sleep around 10 PM.

(Daily bike miles 26.15 miles; Total trip bike miles 387.76 miles)

Day 17, Wednesday, October 2, 2024

Despite still feeling ill, we got up for a light breakfast at 8:00 AM. We both still felt ill and had very light breakfast. We took a rest and then started cycling. Jay asked if I could manage the ride, and I assured him I could. We rode from Krško, Slovenia to Podčetrtek, Slovenia, enduring about 2,884 feet of elevation gain. I was still feeling a little ill, I had a mild headache all day, but was able to cycle all day. Jay was also not feeling great, but we did bike that day. Not much to see that day. We arrived at our hotel about 12:50 PM, took a nap, and fortunately avoided the rain that began soon after. That night, we enjoyed a delicious ravioli dinner at the hotel and went to sleep around 11:00 PM.

(Daily bike miles 27.23 miles; Total trip bike miles 414.99 miles)

Day 18, Thursday, October 3, 2024

We were still slightly feeling the effects of the food poisoning so we had a light breakfast at our hotel. They had a great breakfast buffet I wish I would have felt better. We left the hotel at 9:00 AM to start our daily ride. The rain accompanied us all day on our ride from Podčetrtek, Slovenia to Ptuj, Slovenia making for a wet day through the countryside. At a coffee stop, the shop owner seemed grumpy, perhaps because of our dripping wet state. She was friendly to the guys sitting out front that came into the coffee shop.

We arrived at our hotel by 2:30 PM, completely soaked. We got there before our luggage and I went for a walk. Still soaked I walked up to the castle and then down to the river. It was raining the entire time I was walking, consequently I was soaked. I went back to the hotel; the luggage was there. So, I changed into dry cloths. Then Jay and I went for a walk to check out the town. Later we had a glass of wine and decided to skip dinner. We went to bed around 10:00 PM. I woke up around 1:00 AM, I was worried about my October 7th Novara, Italy hotel wanting me to check in by 6:00 PM (They had sent me an email the previous day and I could not figure out how to contact them). My train was scheduled to arrive in Milan, Italy at 5:15 PM and I still did not know how to get from there to Novara. I did get back to sleep again about 4:00 AM and woke up about 7:00 AM. I felt rested, I think it was not sleeping because I had so much sleep when I was feeling ill.

(Daily bike miles 28.93 miles; Total trip bike miles 443.92 miles)

Day 19, Friday, October 4, 2024

We woke around 7:00 AM, had breakfast at 8:45 AM, and left the Ptuj, Slovenia hotel around 9:00 AM to start cycling to Maribor, Slovenia. After a night of rain, the rain diminished and stopped by noon. It had been raining for 1.5 days, so we expected puddles on the trails. We still opted for the challenging route with more unpaved paths, which led us to a 6-8-inch-deep stream crossing about 100 feet long. I crossed riding my bike first, I had to get my feet wet in the process. It required going around a corner in the water and I could not see if Jay was coming. I yelled for him, but he was too far away to understand his response. I waited a short time and then went cycled back through the water to where Jay was still

waiting. I then convincing Jay it was manageable. I crossed again while Jay took a video of me cycling through the water. Then he crossed while I took a video of him cycling through the water. Shortly after, we encountered an even deeper stream, so we backtracked, had to cycle through the first stream again and rejoined the main road to chart a new, paved path to the hotel. It turns out that we believe even the easy mostly paved route went through the big streams.

On the way, we stopped for coffee, where we met Giovanni, an outspoken Italian who quickly launched into a passionate monologue about his dislike for Trump and Russians. He went on talking about his hatred for Russians and Trump for about 45 minutes. He ended up paying for our drinks at the café. Very nice guy, but it was nice to get away from his justified complaints. Arriving at the hotel too early to check in, we stored our bikes and explored the town.

We checked into our room at about 2:00 PM. Then I spent some time on my journal before we went out for pizza, then we visited a modern shopping mall before heading back to our hotel for the night.
(Daily bike miles 19.96 miles; Total trip bike miles 463.88 miles)

Day 20, Saturday, October 5, 2024

I struggled with sleep, finally dozing off after midnight and waking at 7:00 AM. After breakfast, we set out on a loop ride from Maribor to the St. Urban viewpoint. At the start, we visited a local farmers market. I had the route loaded on my GPS as a clockwise route and it was easy for me to follow my GPS route. Jay loaded the same route and kept saying I was way off. When he showed me where it wanted him to go, all I could think is his phone wanted him to go counterclockwise. We ultimately followed my route and reached the St. Urban church overlooking Maribor. Later, we passed another similar-looking church, which Jay mistook for as a loop back to St. Urban. It just happened that the two churches looked similar from a distance.

In one small town, we searched for coffee, only to find a private event with no cafés around. So, we continued without getting coffee. Returning to Maribor, we stopped at a riverside bar for a beer before catching a 3:35 PM train to Ljubljana. Once back in Ljubljana we strolled around town and had dinner. We went back to the hotel and I contacted friends I was going to visit in France. Then I worked on my trip journal before sleeping around midnight.

(Daily bike miles: 23.53 miles; Total trip bike miles: 487.41 miles)

Day 21, Sunday, October 6, 2024

I had a restless night, waking often but managing to sleep in until 7:10 AM. After breakfast and a shower, we planned to bike the Trail of Remembrance (POT), the former WWII barbed-wire boundary encircling Ljubljana. We started around 9:00 AM, we had some GPS trouble due to the start and end points being close to our hotel. After some backtracking, I used my etrex 22x GPS (older device) and found roads to a point to reorient us. That got us on the loop, but headed in the wrong direction of our track. I accidentally left my etrex 22x cursor on the spot we used to get on course and that had us get off course again. At that point Jay totally lost confidence in my navigation and I can understand that. Then I pushed the back button on my GPS to move the cursor and we also used Jay's GPS to get back on course. Once back on course both of our main GPS's wanted us to travel counterclockwise and we had already started in the clockwise direction. We ended up using my etrex 22x GPS which shows the route without the turn-by-turn details and never recalculates based on getting off track. We followed that for the rest of the day and it worked fine. The screen on etrex 22x is hard to see, so I often had to pause and look at the device.

Once properly on the POT trail, the route was scenic, with frequent signs but complex enough that GPS was essential, lots of turns and road/ trail changes. Once back at the hotel, I hiked to a nearby castle. On the way, a dog lunged from under a restaurant table and bit my pant leg, though it didn't reach my skin. It was a nice hike up the hill to the castle. I ended up paying to go into the castle, it was the most boring castle I have ever visited. No kings throne or rooms. No rooms made to look livable. The art in the castle was mostly boring modern art. It did have a small area with historic stuff in glass cases. I went up the stairs of the crowded towers before leaving. Returning to the hotel, I journaled until the bike tour guide team came to collect our bikes and returned my folding bike. We then wandered the town, enjoyed dinner at a Chinese restaurant, watched a movie, and called it a night around midnight. (Daily bike miles 24.33 miles; Total trip bike miles 511.74 miles)

Day 22, Monday, October 7, 2024

I slept lightly, keeping an eye on the clock to make sure I woke up in time for my early train to Milan. Around 5:20 AM, I got up, gathered my things, and made my way to the train station with my bike. I was on my own for the rest of this trip. Jay was flying back to Portland the following day from Ljubljana, Slovenia. My first leg was a train to Villach, Austria, which arrived nine minutes late. It was an older train with compartment seating. Once on the train, I looked around for a space that could accommodate both me and my bike. I found a 6-seat compartment with only three people who kindly shifted around so I could place my bike in an extra seat. Shortly after leaving Ljubljana, the train halted unexpectedly; an accident was announced, and they initially suggested we'd need to switch to buses. Thankfully, the issue was resolved, and we continued to Villach without further disruptions. I was relieved not to have to board a bus with all my baggage. Despite the delay, the train arrived in Villach on time (even with the late departure and the stop).

Once there, I had some trouble finding my next train. I had pre-purchased tickets from home, and although it wasn't the ideal route, it may have been my best option. When looking at the tickets it appeared to be a bus from Venice to Milan (I did not know that until I departed on train to Venice.) To my surprise, my ticket from Venice Mestre to Milan Central actually included a train with an assigned seat, not a bus as I initially thought. This train, however, had limited luggage space and no bike accommodations. Fortunately, it wasn't crowded, so I was able to stow my bags, with my bike concealed, in the luggage area.

When I arrived in Milan, I rushed around trying to find a train to Novara. People kept telling me to go to different places for a ticket. It was tiring carrying my package bikes up and down stairs. After a confusing search, a lady at a newsstand finally sold me a ticket to Novara and told me where to ask about the train track. I went upstairs in the train station and asked a man at a premium ticket booth. He told me my train would be at track 3 and I went there and asked the train ticket checker for first class and she said it was the right train but I would need to go the second-class area. I got on the train and asked someone and they said it was the right train. When the train started moving, I asked another man and he said I was on the wrong train. Using my GPS, it appeared the train was going in the right direction. I used my GPS during the train ride to determine when to get off for the Novara train station. It was a good thing I had created a waypoint on my GPS for the Novara train station, there was no monitors on the train and I would not have known when to get off without the GPS. I guess somehow, I did get a train quickly to the right location. The first 2 trains that day my GPS worked on (could find satellites and track my route), the 3rd train it would not work in the train (double pain windows that my GPS could not detect the GPS

satellites through). Thankfully that last train the GPS worked and I needed it to figure out which stop was Novara.

I tried getting out of the train station on the wrong side, a man told me I would need to get out on the other side of the train station. Since I was almost out of the train station, I went up the stairs and could see he was correct the hotels were on the other side of the train station. I originally almost went that way, but noticed most people going in the other direction. Then I went back into the tunnel and went to the right side of the train station, by the time I found the hotel I was very tired of carrying my bike on my shoulder and running around. My back was also getting sore from carrying the bike. I checked into my hotel in Novara, it was a not very nice, 2-star hotel. It did work as a place to stay and I was able to fold my bike to bring it into my small room. After settling in, I walked around town a bit but couldn't find a suitable meal, so I settled for chips and soda. I went to sleep around midnight.
(Daily bike miles 0 miles; Total trip bike miles 511.74 miles)

Day 23, Tuesday, October 8, 2024

Waking up around 7:30 AM, I prepared for a wet day of cycling from Milan, Italy to Novara, Italy. I made my way to the train station in Novara (I was staying for 2 nights in Novara) and took the train to Milan. This was a connect the dots ride. I had cycled through Novara in 1989 and now that trip connects to this trip that started in Milan, Italy. The forecast called for continuous rain, which started as soon as I arrived in Milan. I was cycling by 9:30 AM through moderate to light rain, which persisted the entire day. This day was even rainier than the bad rain day in Slovenia. My route was an inverted route which put me on the wrong side of one-way roads if I used my Garmin Edge 840. Thus, navigating out of Milan was challenging on the one-way streets for the first 5 miles, and I mainly relied on my Garmin etrex 22x GPS to guide me out of Milan. After about six miles, the city traffic eased, and I was riding along canals for much of the day. When I got about 11 miles from Novara, my route veered onto muddy dirt roads with large puddles. It was a very rainy day, the puddles were big on the dirt road, but I was able to avoid the worst of them. No rivers running across the trail, the rivers all had bridges or coverts.

I arrived back in Novara around 2:30 PM. I cycled to the west and north town's outskirts to connect this trip to my 1989 route. By 4 PM, I was back at my hotel, drying off and taking a much-needed shower. I worked on my journal and then walked around town and bought groceries. I cleared up memory in my Garmin Edge 840 (I had gotten a memory out warning on my Garmin Edge GPS when I returned to Novara from Milan). I first tried removing all the unused waypoints and old track from the GPS, but that did not help with the low memory. I then removed the USA maps from my Garmin Edge GPS and that freed up a lot of memory. I ate in my hotel room and spent the evening on emails, social media, and Journaling. I went to sleep around midnight.

(Daily bike miles 46.39 miles; Total trip bike miles 558.13 miles)

Day 24, Wednesday, October 9, 2024

I woke up at 6:12 AM, created waypoints for all the locations left in my itinerary, and loaded them into my etrex 22x GPS (waypoints to train station in Novara, train station on Milan, Train station in Genoa, Train Station in Ventimiglia, train station in Nice, Hotel in Nice, Hotel in Antibes, hotel across from Chris/Jen in Antibes, Train station in Barcelona and my hotel Barcelona). I checked out of my hotel and I loaded my stuff on my bike before leaving the hotel (I did not want to carry the bike any more). Then I went to the Novara train station to take the train to Milan. I bought a ticket to Milan and I was about to board the wrong train. I asked one man and he said he did not know. I asked a second man if I was

getting on the right train and he told me I was to get on the train to Milano Porta Garibaldi and that I needed to take a different train if I wanted to go to Milan Central. Then he told me the Milan Central train left at 9:05 AM, that man got on the earlier train. I was lucky he helped me figure out which train to board. I waited for the 9:05 AM train and it took me where I needed to go. On the train to Milan, I sat next to my stuff in the train exit platform, so I could keep an eye on my stuff. Another man came out and also hung on the platform. He was coughing, I tried to keep my distance and did not look his way. I was afraid he might get me sick. I never did get sick. Once in Milan I noticed my ticket said check-in required. I asked a lady at the train assistance area and she said I should have already checked-in for the train. She said I would need to get on-line and press the link to check in from my email I received from the train company. I had trouble getting on-line with my PC using the train station WIFI. My phone was not working on-line either. Therefore, I could not get on the WIFI at all and the lady said I would need to get on the train and hope the conductor let me stay on the train. I finally got on-line and it indicated that the ticket would be automatically validated when I got on the train. I asked a different lady at the assistance window and she said I was fine.

On the train to Genoa, I encountered a woman in my seating area talked loudly to herself. I used the restroom on the train and there was pee all over the floor and seat. After me another lady on the train occupied the restroom for an unusually long time. People were getting mad at her; they wanted to use the restroom before the train trip ended. When I got off the train, the lady was still in the restroom (she was probably in the restroom for at least 30 minutes). I should have put my bike in the train car for bikes, I could have probably avoided all the ruckus in the train car I selected. I did not go to the bike train car because I thought they might charge me extra for my bike. In the future I will not worry about the charge, it is easier not to fold my bike.

Once at the Genoa train station I went to the assistance lady and they gave me a new ticket to Ventimiglia and told me it would validate when I was on the train. She was very helpful and also told me the train track for my train. She did have trouble understanding my ticket, but was able to find my reservation on her computer. What an improvement over the service I received in Milan. The train from Genoa to Ventimiglia was an old train and I started out on a small seat with no window. Then I moved with all my stuff to a nicer seat with a view of the Mediterranean Sea.

Once in Ventimiglia, I had a little trouble figuring out which train to get on for Nice. I went to the track with the correct departure time and found a time table that indicated a stop in Nice. It also showed a stop in Monte Carlo. I was thinking I should have just paid the extra money and spent one night in Monte Carlo. At that point I figured I would never go to Monte Carlo. I caught the last train of the day to Nice and found my hotel for the night. In the hotel I looked more into biking to Monte Carlo and I could not find a bike route. I figured I would not be going to Monaco, but maybe a round trip on the train. I did not get to sleep until about midnight. I woke in the middle of the night, I again web searched to see about cycling from Nice to Monte Carlo. There was no google bike route, but I did find a 10-mile one way route using RideWithGPS.com from my hotel to Monte Carlo.
(Daily bike miles 0.45 miles; Total trip bike miles 558.58 miles)

Day 25, Thursday, October 10, 2024

After a restless night, I woke around 7:00 AM, loaded my route to Monte Carlo into my GPS, checked-out of the hotel and had them hold my suitcase while I cycled to Monte Carlo, Monaco. This day I cycled from Nice, France to Monte Carlo, Monaco, then back to Nice, France and continued to Antibes, France.

Like normal I had a little trouble finding the start of my route with my GPS. I mostly used my 22x GPS to find the start of my route and then I was able to use the Garmin Edge 840 to get to Monte Carlo. On my way, I saw a cool statue of a Mermaid Mother with her Child in Beaulieu-sur-Mer. I arrived in Monte Carlo a little before 9:00 AM. Once in Monte Carlo I took several photos and cycled to all the edges of Monaco. At one point I saw a man driving a 3.5-million-dollar car, a Pagani Huayra Roadster in Monte Carlo. I attempted to take the train back to Nice, but due to a 2-hour delay in train service (technical trouble), I decided to cycle the 10 miles back instead.

Then I went to my hotel and picked up my stored luggage (Carry on suitcase and front bag). Once I had my luggage, I strapped the suitcase onto my bike and front bag to the bike in the hotel lobby. The lady at the hotel reception desk asked me about my trip. I told her what I could (she asked where I was headed), but I was not sure how to explain that I was heading to Antibes that day. I wish I would have thought to give her one of my gobikeride.com business cards. I checked out the historic waterfront in Nice. The ride out of Nice was flat, but I had to fight strong headwinds along the coast from Nice to Antibes. It was only a 15-mile ride mostly on a great ocean side bike trail. Once in Antibes I contacted Jen to see if she wanted to get together after I took a shower. Then I met up with my friends Chris and Jen, who gave me a tour of the historic town and pointed out Picasso's former home. We spent the evening enjoying wine and pizza before I returned to my hotel, tired but fulfilled.
(Daily bike miles 48.41 miles; Total trip bike miles 606.99 miles)

Day 26, Friday, October 11, 2024

I woke up around 7:00 AM and had breakfast at the hotel, thinking it was included in my stay. Later, I found out there was an extra charge for breakfast, which was only clarified during checkout. Jen arrived at my hotel around 9:00 AM, and I moved my belongings to Chris and Jen's place, where I'd be staying for the night. Together, Jen and I set off on a coastal hike along the Juan-les-Pins trail on Cap d'Antibes. The path was incredible, winding along the coast with stone stairways and trails cut from shoreline rocks.

After our hike, we walked back to Jen and Chris's place and met up with Chris. We grabbed lunch and enjoyed an Aperol Spritz at La Crique snack bar nearby. After a leisurely walk, we returned to their place, where Jen took a nap while I planned my final night in France. Chris helped me get the SNCF app set up for booking tickets and added my upcoming train ticket to my Google Wallet. I also booked a hotel room in Montpellier, though I still needed to arrange my train ticket from Montpellier to Barcelona.

Jen told me about a couple of movies that were set in their area. "The man with the iron mask" which was based on a prison on an island not far from Antibes, France. The other movie she recommended was "The Great Gatsby" which illustrates how jazz music originated in the French Riviera.

Later, Jen and I went grocery shopping for dinner supplies. In which Chris used to make us a delicious pasta dinner. I did some laundry and appreciated their incredible hospitality, which made my Riviera adventure unforgettable. They turned in around 10:00 PM, and I stayed up a bit longer to post on Facebook before going to bed around 11:00 PM.

(Daily bike miles 0 miles; Total trip bike miles 606.99 miles)

Day 27, Saturday, October 12, 2024

I woke up at 6:40 AM, got packed, and prepped for the journey from Antibes to Montpellier by train. Chris and Jen helped me bring my things to their garage, where I set up my bike. Chris even snapped a

photo before they both walked me to the train station. Then I easily got on my train from Antibes to Cannes.

Once in Cannes, it took me a few minutes to understand the platforms (A, 1, 2). My next train was from Cannes to Marseille and was running about 20 minutes late. I was able to get on the train and leave everything attached to my bike. I also had a comfortable seat next to my bike. A crazy guy was also sitting in the bike area. He was trying to talk to me and the lady next to me said he was talking nonsense and called him crazy. Two stops into the trip he got off the train and all the people in the bike area signed a relief when he was gone.

My next train was from Marseille to Montpellier and was loaded ready to go on time, but left 40 minutes late. The train just sat on the track for about 40 minutes. In Montpellier, my hotel check-in at the Best Western Plus turned into a two-hour ordeal due to an issue with my payment (they received my payment without a name and could not figure it out), which was frustrating and disrupted my cycling plans. Worst experience ever checking into a room. I did do some computer work for the 2 hours they were trying to check me into my room. After finally checking in, I cycled around in the rain but didn't manage the full 15-mile goal I had in mind to reach 100 km on cycling in France, only getting in about 5 miles.

Once I returned to my hotel, I put my bike back into my room. Next, I reserved a seat on the train to Barcelona for the next day, there was only 5 seats left on the train. After some grocery shopping, I ate in my room and went to bed around midnight.

(Daily bike miles 5.34 miles; Total trip bike miles 612.33 miles)

Day 28, Sunday, October 13, 2024

I woke up at 7:00 AM to find my phone only half charged, I felt it was due to the inconsistent current at the hotel. The hotel offered a free breakfast as an apology for the previous day's 2-hour check-in delay, so I took advantage of that before heading to the train station at 9:00 AM. The train to Barcelona didn't depart until 10:17 AM, so I biked around Montpellier for about an hour.

Once on board the train, space for luggage was tight, with my bike I am a baggage hog. There are a lot of people with extra bags and occasionally a bike. People just hop on the train with their stuff, then figure out what to do and other people often help you find room if they can. At first, I sat on the stairwell of the train, it was not comfortable. I was looking to see if I could get into my assigned seat. The seat people in my cubicle were gone and a man across the aisle from my seat from North Dakota suggested that I try getting my stuff under the seat. I was able to get my large handlebar bag in the overhead, the overhead was very narrow on that train. I put my carry-on suitcase under my seat and the seat next to me did not have a person yet, so I put my bike in that seat. From my assigned train seat, I could see flamingos in the Mediterranean Sea. No one claimed the empty seat next to me on the next stop, then the stop after that a lady claimed her seat next to me. The new lady had 2 big suitcases and put them in the aisle near the luggage rack, I put my bike in the aisle next to me as well. At that point people had trouble getting past my bike and the ladies 2 large suitcases. Then someone departed the train with a big suitcase at a train stop. The lady next to me with the 2 big suitcases had me put (she was trapped in next to me – between me and the window) one of her suitcases in place of the one just removed from the train. Then I moved her other suitcase and my bike a little closer to the baggage rack in the back of our train car. My bike was still partially blocking the aisle. The guy across the aisle suggested putting it under his seat, that did not work, but I was able to get it under the table near him. But then he was

trapped between my bike and the window. He seemed OK with that. The next stop someone was trying to get out their suitcase around my seat mate's suitcase. I helped her get the suitcase out and then I was able to get my seatmates second suitcase and my bike in the luggage rack on the train. For the last 2 stops of the train, I was comfortable. I had the same problem charging my phone on the train as did the previous night in the Montpellier Best Western hotel. I assumed the current on the train was too low to charge my phone. On the last stop I had to get my bag that was stuffed in the overhead, my backpack behind my seat, the suitcase under my seat and the bike in the luggage rack off the train. It was the last stop of the train so I let most of the other people get off the train before getting my stuff off the train.

Once off the train in Barcelona, I put my stuff on my bike and walked around the train station. I needed time before checking into my hotel. I cycled to the Brompton bike shop in search of a bike box without success. I then went to my hotel at a little after 3:00 PM (check in time) and was able to get into my room.

After checking in, I biked over to the Sagrada Familia and explored Barcelona a bit more. Then I took my bike back to my hotel room and I walked to a grocery store to get food for dinner. Once back at my hotel, I ate dinner and snacks while planning my route for the next day to visit Montjuïc Castle and Güell Park. I was trying to cover as much of the Hop-on Hop-off tour route as possible, but the attractions were spread out and complicated. I saved the route to my GPS. I noticed that my phone was not charging at the Barcelona hotel, like the previous night. I tried changing the charger the previous night and that was not the problem. So, on this night I tried changing the USB charging cable and that solved the issue with my phone not charging. I went to sleep around midnight.

(Daily bike miles 18.71 miles; Total trip bike miles 631.04 miles)

Day 29, Monday, October 14, 2024

I woke up around 7:00 AM and set off cycling by 8:00 AM, following a route I had mapped out the night before. I used some points from the Hop-On Hop-Off bus map, though it was tricky to pinpoint specific stops that I wanted to explore. The route included quite a bit of uphill riding, taking me through scenic trails that were more like hiking paths in places. My first stop was a viewpoint overlooking the harbor, then I continued on, passing Montjuïc Castle before heading downhill.

Along the way, I picked up a piece of cardboard to protect my bike and held onto it until I could find a proper Brompton box. When I reached Park Güell, I discovered it was fully booked, similar to the Sagrada Familia the day before. Next, I found the Brompton shop, where they kindly gave me a box for my bike, so I could ship my bike home on the airplane.

I had to cycle about 3.5 miles back to my hotel with one hand holding the box steady and the other steering, which caught the attention of a nearby police officer. He stopped to inform me that biking with one hand wasn't allowed in Barcelona. I thought I was going to have to walk the remaining 1.5 miles to my hotel (I was about half way back when he stopped me), but he let me continue as long as I used both hands on the handlebars.

Back at the hotel, I dropped off my Brompton bike box and using the hotel internet to determined where to find a Pinchos bar (Chris told me about these places, but I did not see one as I cycled around). Once I found them on-line, it seemed like most were clustered near the Museum of Nacional Art de Catalunya, so I cycled there, enjoyed 4 Pinchos (one tooth pick per treat/ Pinchos) with a Coke, and then biked up the hill to the museum. Afterward, I returned to the hotel, passing the hotel I found a shopping center. I

went back to the hotel and dropped off my bike. Then I walked back to the mall to buy groceries and a new suitcase (since my old carry-on had a broken wheel from day one). The new suitcase was medium-sized, perfect for my return flight since I could check in two bags.

That evening, I went through my belongings, packed my bike in the Brompton box, and organized everything for my flight home. I also checked my terminal information for Barcelona El Prat Airport (BCN) and found the cost for the Bus 46, which I'd take to the airport. I was not sure how to pay for the bus yet. I went to bed around midnight.

(Daily bike miles 30.15 miles; Total trip bike miles 661.19 miles)

Day 30, Tuesday, October 15, 2024

I woke up around 7:00 AM, spent some time on my computer, and then checked out of the hotel around 8:30 AM. I asked the hotel clerk about the bus to Barcelona airport and payment method, and he said I could use a credit card on the number 46 bus. I also asked if he could confirm my terminal for international flights, but he wasn't certain, though I figured I already had a good idea.

Around 9:00 AM, I boarded bus 46 to Josep Tarradellas Barcelona-El Prat Airport (BCN Airport). The bus ride was simple and convenient, with easy credit card payment, large doors for boarding with luggage, and a monitor with all the stops. I had already noted down the stops, which helped me recognize when to get off at BCN Terminal 1. It was a good thing I had already figured out which terminal I needed to go for my flight at the airport, it was a very long distance between terminal 1 and terminal 2. I was relieved to have bought the new suitcase; I could balance my boxed bike on top of it and navigate easily. At the airport, I found a luggage cart and headed to the Delta check-in, which took a little searching in the large terminal. After asking for help and checking the flight monitor, I finally found the correct check-in counter. I checked in my two bags, passed through security, and explored Terminals A and B before heading to my gate in Terminal D. To access Terminals D and E, I had to go through passport control, but luckily, the line wasn't too long. Boarding started about 15 minutes after I arrived at the gate, and my flight to John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) took off on time. They served meals, which was a nice change since my Icelandair flight to Europe hadn't included one.

At JFK, customs took about 10 minutes, and I had to recheck my bags before going through TSA (Transportation Security Administration) security. The TSA security line was very long and took over an hour. I am not sure what ICE is, but that line seemed quick. They also had pre-TSA, not sure what that line looked like. My flight to Portland was smooth, but upon arrival, I discovered my bike hadn't made it. Thankfully, my Samsung Galaxy SmartTag showed it was still at JFK. I reported it to Delta, and they confirmed it should be on the next flight to Portland and delivered to my home the following day—a bit of unexpected luck since it allowed me to travel home with just one suitcase. I was able to easily take the max with one suitcase, if I would have had the bike I might have decided to take a taxi. They deliver my bike to my house the next day.

Catching the last MAX train of the night, I transferred to a bus at the Rose Quarter and arrived home by 1:06 AM on Wednesday. My journey from Barcelona, Spain to Portland, Oregon spanned about 25 hours from leaving my hotel to arriving home, involving two buses, two flights, some walking, and a MAX train ride.

(Daily bike miles 0 miles; Total trip bike miles 661.19 miles)