

The Country of Poland

Jim and Emmy's Travel Journal

The Country of Portugal

1979

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Arrived in Luxembourg on August 26, visited Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Netherlands, Belgium, France and Spain.

We camped in Elva, Portugal after looking around the town. Found a large Roman aqueduct that must date from ancient times. The town was clean, there was a wall, and there were women washing clothes at a pond or tank made for that purpose, on the edge of Elva.

Campsite was empty except for a young couple who were on their way to visit her mother in Spain. We invited them over for popcorn and a Coke. They could speak a little English and told us about how hard it is making ends meet in Portugal. They said many things, including the cleanliness of the towns, became much worse a few years ago when some colony was lost in Africa and many people had to move to Portugal. These people didn't know how to live in a regular building, and most of them lacked job skills. They said we must be very careful of the Portuguese drivers, especially the taxi drivers.

Teresa is studying to be a lawyer, and her mother works with computers. Her husband works for Air Portugal and makes about \$400 a month, and they spend half that for rent. They said this trip is expensive for them, so they will sleep in the car while they travel. They mentioned that although there is a government medical plan in Portugal, they must wait forever for anything except a real emergency.

The man who came to collect the money for the campsite was supposed to bring some change, but he never showed again, so it cost about \$2.

November 1979

P, Elva, Nov 1, Thu - 40 - 245 - 7,370

Day started out sunny, then became cloudy for awhile.

November 1, All Saints Day (or something like that), is a holiday for most of Europe. We saw several trucks filled with cattle, apparently going to a fair, or to market. There were cars, trucks and people all over the place. We would have liked to stop, but it didn't look too organized. Then we saw a truck that had been in a wreck, some people had been injured, and there were Portuguese police and people all around, so this country fair didn't seem like a place for us. (Now wasn't that dumb on our part!)

Lisbon is sure a disappointment and a cultural shock. Lisbon is basically a nice city with lovely buildings and wide streets, but it is offensive with all the

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mess, clutter, posters, and graffiti. Also, there were crowds of men all over the place. They didn't seem to be doing anything, but it is scary. At the Hotel Sheraton we spent time in the lobby just trying to get over the culture shock of the messy city.

As we drove to the Lisbon campsite, we had to pass an area of cardboard and tin shack homes sitting in the mud. The campsite wasn't too bad, but we couldn't stand to see the poor, poor, people in the slum we had to drive through to get there. We drove on to Cascais, west of Lisbon.

At one place, hundreds of men got off a train and ran in a steady stream across the street, blocking traffic, waving their hands in the air, and hollering as they went. Don't know if it was a Portuguese political rally or a sporting event. We just don't feel comfortable when we see people acting in this manner, or when they are just standing around on the street corner, especially when we don't speak or understand the language. Wonder where the women are. (We do remember that Portugal is their country, and if we don't like it, we don't have to be here!)

Spent some time looking for the home of Dino, our waiter on a cruise ship a few years ago. We think we found the right apartment building, but received no answer to our knock. Left our card. and will try again in the morning. The apartment buildings in the area are built in a very solid manner, but there's mess and trash all over the place.

P, Cascais, Nov 2, Fri - 41 - 175 - 7,545

Stopped along the coast overlooking a fishing harbor and some tourist hotels. There were many tourists from England, and other northern cities. Went into a supermarket, at least as large as a small garage, and in the meat counter there was a whole calf, eyes and all. (They have Hypermarkets that are as big as a double garage.)

We found Dino's home again. Maria said she was home yesterday, but did not hear Emmy's knock. That is, she indicated she had been home, neither of us spoke the other's language. When we entered the apartment we could see quite a change. The living room was very, very small, but Dino and Maria had nice furniture, with a large TV and a loud stereo. Also, there were several locks on the door, which says something about living in Cascais.

Dino is working on the cruise ship, "Song of Norway" sailing out of Miami. He doesn't get home often, but could not make a living if he stayed in Portugal. Maria can visit Dino on the ship after he is gone for a certain length of time.

Drove back to Lisbon, and it didn't look any better in the bright sun. We drove across the large bridge and back, and past more cardboard shacks. Lisbon has so much potential, and is beautifully located.

There are miles of cork trees, they look similar to olive trees, but with the bark cut off, below the lowest limbs. The further south we go, the poorer the people seem. There is a big difference between poor people in the countryside, and the poor people in the city slums. The poor people in the countryside perhaps don't have some of the so-called "city" things of life, but we think they live a lot better than the people in cardboard and mud in Lisbon.

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Stopped in a little beach town recommended by the couple in the campsite the other night. Why they would recommend it we don't know. The road to the town was next to impassable, and the town had nothing of interest we could see. Of course there were men standing around on the street and sidewalk. The road down to the beach looked even worse than what we were on, so just turned around and went back to the highway. Driving the highway is difficult enough.

Drove to Logos and found a campsite with 2,000 spaces. Many people in northern Europe leave trailers parked on the Algarve Coast all year. Some are owned by more than one family. We saw several old railroad cars parked in campsites, then converted into a place to stay.

Many houses in the area have the front outside wall covered with ceramic tile. Some sidewalks are paved with small stones placed in a pattern.

P, Logos, Nov 3, Sat - 42 - 304 - 7,849

Logos is an interesting tourist town. Bought some brass objects, and Jim had his shoes shined. The shoe shine man had on a hat, coat and tie, Jim told him he looked like the mayor of Logos. He had no set price and said, "Pay what it's worth." Bet he gets two or three times the reward he would get if he charged a fixed amount. A very pleasant man, who did a very good job.

We went to a large tourist hotel to make a phone call to Linda. We had to wait for over two hours, as they needed to get through to Lisbon, then wait their turn for a phone line from there. The hotel seems a very pleasant tourist facility.

This part of Portugal is called the Algarve Coast. We have seen many instances in Southern Portugal where the family was traveling on a two-wheel mule cart. The houses seemed substantial, with colorful tile decoration.

Crossed the river between Portugal and Spain on a ferry, spent a few days in Spain then visited Morocco, Island of Majorca, France, Monaco, Italy, Switzerland, then back to Germany. We left from the Luxembourg airport, on November 29, and flew to Iceland for a couple of days, then home to the US.