

Post



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La Bugue, Saint-Léon-sur-Vézère, Belves and Urval - May 17, 2022

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Today we're driving a ways, maybe ninety minutes out and the same back. We're up early (6:30) and are going by eight. Our first stop is another outdoor market, this one in La Bugue. We enjoy that style of shopping.

All the normal parking is already taken or is occupied by the vendors in the market. No worries. The street parking is full, too, so we park at the back of a big lot of a very large grocery store.

To get to the market we cross a long, old stone bridge across some wide river. Undoubtedly the river is the reason the town is there. The market is in full swing, and we glance at some fish and some cheese as we walk by. We're looking for more coffee and bread (croissant, pain au chocolate...) for immediate consumption. We find a café and install ourselves, as the French would say. We order and soon we're having what we've come to call our 'elevenses', an expression from the Lord of the Rings.

Break time over, Ron and Karen begin buying the finest ingredients for this evening's feast. They get together, over wine each evening, to plot out the next dinner. While they're doing that Nancy and I wander around and see what crazy things one can buy at these markets. As we walk, we're always offered samples. Needless to say, it's all good and I feel guilty taking a sample and not buying anything. But Karen and Ron are buying for us: Fish, bread, foie gras, veggies, and tapenade.

Shopping done we hike back to the car. The girls buy a bit more at the grocery store and finally we're off. Our next target is the small hamlet of Saint-Léon-sur-Vézère. The 'Sur' in the name means it's on a river and this one is. We see people backpacking on a trail and canoes paddle past. We search for a picnic spot and find one behind the big, ancient church. There are many tables, all filled but one. It is perfect for us, and we quickly have our tablecloth out, make our sandwiches and pop open the wine.

Lunch was great, however, at the end a huge group from some non-French country show up. They're looking for a table, and surmise we were packing up. Only a quarter of their group will get to sit at the table, so many of their group obnoxiously hover over us til we're gone. Sigh. Tourists. We walk the town (that takes all of ten minutes) and pile back into the car.

Our next stop is to an even smaller town/villa/hamlet. Its claim to fame is an old oven that's still usable. It was used in the 12th or 13th century and can still be used today. It's an annual tradition to get it fired up and use it. Back when, it was used daily. We're told women made their bread at home and brought them to be baked in this communal oven. To tell their loaves apart women developed their own scoring patterns. Interesting!

The drive home is that same 90 minutes... quite the trek. Thankfully along the way there is stuff to look at... homes, towns, businesses, animals, crops, vehicles, etc. At one point the GPS has us turn to go over a bridge. Underpasses always warn about limited height. In this case we're warned that the bridge is only two meters wide. As we get closer, we decide our car is wider than that. We turn around. We'll find a wider bridge.

We stop for gas. There's a handsome dog at the station. Many dogs in France are named Fido (pronounced fee-dough). I ask the station owner (who pumped the gas for us) the dog's name. "FiFi" (fee fee). Of course. It's a she.

Back home the girls figure out how to disable the childproof locks in the back seats where they sit. No longer will they be at our mercy to get out of the car.

We swim and whack a poor beach ball around the pool. Karen and Ron make salmon wrapped in phyllo dough. Halfway through the cooking the oven poops out. Yikes! Thankfully the fish was mostly done. We quickly called Pascal to come fix it! Ron grilled vegetables out on the barbecue. Yum!

After dinner with lots of wine the chefs bring out chocolate mousse for dessert. After that, powered by lots of wine, the group plays soccer and then has a very official (and sloppy) boules (pétanque) tournament. Yet another awesome day!

Photos









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