

Post



Scott Farnsworth

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# Les Baux - May 23, 2022

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[Photos](#) | [Previous](#) | [Next](#) | [Index](#)

Today's excitement is a trip to Les Baux. The well preserved, fortified hilltop town is just over an hour's drive away.

We do our normal morning rituals. Coffee's a bit of a goat rodeo. I bought pods for the wrong coffee maker. We have a Nespresso and I bought pods for the Norelco coffee maker, and they definitely aren't interchangeable! We use the few correct pods we do have and make French Press from ground coffee. The rest of breakfast is less dramatic.

Split up into our cars I double check with Doug that what's in my phone, for navigation, says "Les Baux". He confirms I'm not crazy (we've gotten into trouble not doing this a couple of times on the trip already). We start out caravanning, but if we get separated that's OK, everyone has a working smartphone and can navigate.

The route is much of what we have driven other days. After a while Ron, in the trailing vehicle, repeatedly flashes his headlights. I wonder if my trunk is open, do I have a flat, is my blinker on? Finally we pull over and I go back to the other car to find out what they need. "We're going the wrong way." I don't think so. My phone says we're going the right way. I show the navigator in that car that my phone says we're headed towards Les Baux. Maybe we are just taking different routes based on using different apps. I have an iPhone, they have an Android phone. That must be it. They're happy.

I get back in the lead car and immediately get back out. I ask "What's the complete name of the city we're going to?" The answer? Les-Baux-de-Provence. I look up Les Baux and Les-Baux-de-Provence. They're in opposite directions about two hours apart. We've been going the wrong way. We all turn around and start out again.

Eventually we get to Les-Baux-de-Provence. It's a very popular destination, we know, and the parking confirms it. Cars are parked on both sides of the road for quite a ways before you even get close. We park and pay the automated parking machine (with our US credit card). What a long way technology has come!

It's warm and it's not that late in the day. It's going to be a scorcher. We have a lunch reservation at some very nice, she-she place in about 90 minutes. We try to decide if after our visit to (what we're again calling) Les Baux should we then walk to lunch or go back to our cars and drive there. From the GPS we can't tell. The young man at the tourist office says we would need technical climbing equipment to get from the hilltop part of Les Baux down to that restaurant. So we plan to 'go around' (walking) and lock in when we'll need to leave for lunch.

The 'city' is nice enough, but is 100% for tourists. It's tchotchke shops, coffee shops, restaurants, gift shops, clothing shops. Nothing too exciting. The main draw is the big open expanse on top where soldiers could see from which direction the enemy is coming (and launch rocks at them with a catapult). We walk around and admire the view in so many directions. You can see seemingly forever. They have a full-sized working trébuchet up there which is most impressive. They don't offer a demo. Very defensible. There's no water up there, so it's prone to sieges, but otherwise it's a defensible spot.

We can finally see where we'll be having lunch from up there (La Cavro d'Or) and short of having a parachute or hang-glider we're not getting there directly. It'll be a long slog but we're up for it, we say.

Eventually it is time to head to lunch and off we go. It does turn out to be a very long slog. Those anxious to get there are out in front and continually turn around and ask if we're still going the right way. They say we must be going the wrong way given that we've already walked so far.

The spa/restaurant finally shows itself and we head in. We'll be sitting outside, under sun umbrellas, thankfully. It is a very fancy place with precision, well trained wait staff, mostly. The place is half-full when we arrive and packed by the time we're done with lunch. We were told shorts were not permitted and we were disappointed to see a number of gentlemen there in shorts. Grrr. The food, however, does turn out to be exquisite, thankfully. It's not cheap, but it is good. Delicious starter and main course plus multiple amuse bouche and dessert. And wine, of course.

After many hours we're done, happy we came. The girls were initially toying with the idea of everyone walking back to the cars, but now, after eating and drinking so much, they're happy to send the boys off to fetch the cars. It is a long, hot slog. Getting there was completely downhill. Sadly this means getting back is all uphill. In the now hotter sun. We don't perish, but almost.

The rest of the day is a blur. Dinner is just leftovers, and few of those are required. Most of the blood in our bodies has gone to our stomachs to digest our lovely lunch. Maybe we'll try to be better behaved tomorrow.

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[Previous](#) | [Next](#) | [Index](#)

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