

Post



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# Ships off towards China - April 24, 2023

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## ***SUMMARY***

A "Day at Sea" and thus the perfect opportunity to put our Farnsniente philosophy to the test. It turns out that these Farnsworths aren't that great at "doing nothing". We spent a fair amount of time in the gym and Scott attended a couple of lectures. Dinner was a Chef's Table special dinner with 7 courses of Italian food with wine pairings. TOO much food, TOO much wine! - Karen

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## ***DETAIL***

Up at six and again at seven. Or was it five and then six? We're not sure. The clocks got turned back last night and we're at sea (for the whole day), so there's no internet. We're not really sure what time it is. But ship crew is up and getting coffee, so there's coffee, yay. That's all that really matters.

We do have internet access, for sure when we're in port but often when we've been within sight of land. Of course even that's not guaranteed. The land is frequently empty of buildings and humans, so again we may be out of touch.

When we do have connectivity we normally fetch our email and podcasts. The news stories and podcast themes will remind us what time of year it is. President's day, Easter, or more recently Earth Day. That last one was brought home today as we saw occasional pieces of trash floating by as we motor southward.

The movie *The Princess Bride* gave us many memorable quotes including "There's dead and there's almost dead". Here at sea, with the internet, that quote comes back to us. There's connectivity and then there's almost connectivity. Some small messages might creep through ("Your sprinkler system thinks the soil is wet enough that it's going to skip the next cycle"). And there are enticing message that get through briefly, but are pulled back once the phone realizes there's not enough bandwidth to pull down the whole thing ("You got an email from XYZ person that starts 'Hey guys, we have some exciting news...'"") but then it's "Too bad, so sad, can't fetch that, oh well". It's fun but frustrating.

The captain comes on the PA and says hi. He fills us in on where we are, when we'll get into Taipei, and weather info. Give or take, we're about 200 nautical miles from land north, south, east, and west. West is China (212 nautical miles to be exact, presumably so that we're unquestionably in international waters) and we're a bit south of Shanghai. East of us is Okinawa. North is the city we left yesterday (Kagoshima) and south of us is our destination, Taipei, Taiwan (or a port close to it). Captain says that if we keep going East we'll get to Mount Everest. Further along we'll hit Tampa Bay and even later we'll get to Tenerife in the Canary Islands.

After some gym time, our first real 'appointment' of the day is going to a 10am briefing. Again it's with Colonel Kinck, this time on cooperation and challenges with China, mostly the later. China gets great kudos for lifting so many out of poverty so quickly, but they are a challenge to stability in the region and seem to (understandable and sadly) do whatever they want. The good Colonel doesn't think there'll be armed conflict in the next 18 to 24 months, so we should be OK to visit Taipei tomorrow. (He will be).

After a light lunch we attend the 2pm briefing about the history and culture of Taiwan. The Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish certainly did get around back in the day. Portuguese sailors did a fly-by but didn't stop. In their trip notes they referred to the lush, green island as "Fabulous", which in Portuguese is Formosa, hence the island's name for a long time, and the name of the strait to this day (me thinks).

Further back, in the last big ice age, the mainland and Taiwan were joined. There were (and still are) indigenous people, from which the name Taiwan comes. The Dutch and Spanish ruled the island for a while, and the Japanese ruled it for 50 years. During the Second World War the US bombed Taiwan as it was Japanese territory. There were rebellions and civil wars, so whose is Taiwan, good question.

In 1947 Chiang Kai-Shek was elected president of the China in Taiwan and was a founding member of the UN. He asked the UN NOT to have two China's in the UN, thus the One China policy we have today. Whoops! Chiang Kai-Shek felt he'd reunite all of China under him, so why have two Chinas? Oh what a tangled weave we web.

In the evening, on the starboard side of the ship our cabin's on (i.e. towards the Chinese mainland) we see many ships. They look like fishing vessels, but hey, who knows? Be careful what you say. To port, not many ships at all.

We listen to some fun music up in the crows nest room, here called the living room. Later we do our 'Chef's Table'. It's a prix fixe dinner with normally 12 guests and a theme. It includes food and wine and tonight it's Italian. We're sitting next to Andrew and Susie who are from Australia. They just started their vacation with this cruise. They'll stay on in Singapore where we're getting off. They'll continue on to Sri Lanka and Jordan. Once off they'll continue their travels (by car and train and plane and boat) til the entire 88 days of their holidays are over. We thought we were bad with 72 days!

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## Photos



The good Colonel making us feel smarter,  
and more nervous, about China and  
Taiwan.



In the direction of China we see boats. Lots of boats. Are those poles for maneuvering fishing nets or masts for picking up radio signals. Hm...



Where are, according to GPS





The band is really quite good, but Karen's not up for dancing if we're going to be the only ones on the floor.



Drinks? Those we'll do. A Pisco sour for me (a nod to my Peruvian heritage) and a Aperol Spritz (cause she likes it)



We missed taking pictures of the first six courses of dinner, but here's dessert.  
Tiramisu and a delightful amaretto



After dinner we did a bit of walking on the track. To the west, towards China, so many boats. Hm...

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