

Post



Scott Farnsworth

Sep 3, 2023 · 7 min read

License and registration, please - September 4, 2023

Updated: Sep 8, 2023

SUMMARY

Leaving Dubrovnik and heading to Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Lots of driving along the scenic Adriatic coast with stops in the towns of Slano and Ston, both seaside and picturesque. Eventually we turn inland and into the mountains. After crossing the border and arriving at our hotel, not without some difficulty, we head out into pedestrian Old Town Mostar. It is like being on a movie set, quite unreal. The Old Bridge is magical to look at, rising in a suspended stone arch over the river Neretva. It is a sumbitch to walk over, having a steep incline and decline paved with shiny, smooth stone. Great fun and much laughter at dinner al

fresco with Ron and Nancy. - Karen

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

DETAIL

We're up early since we have to meet our ride to the airport at 8 am. We wash up, coffee up, and pack up. We message Ron and Nancy but get back crickets. Maybe they're getting ready, maybe they're still asleep due to jet lag. They're grown adults, we'll trust them.

It's an ordeal carrying so many bags, and groceries, down the stairs, back up the stairs of the "street" and then along the city wall. We find Niko, he's ready to go but has his young, cute girlfriend in the passenger's seat. Will there be six of us? No.

We hear from Ron and Nancy. They'd been at breakfast and the service was 'leisurely'. They arrive and we pack Niko's Renault. The drive to the airport is uneventful other than the constant "ooh's" and "ahh's" as we gaze over the deep blue Adriatic Sea under a sunny blue sky.

The airport big board for rental car agencies has dozens of two digit phone numbers, one for each company. None work. There's also a big arrow that says "50 m" so we follow that and find a small "city" of white buildings, one for each car rental company. Each has it's name on the side. My favorite is named "Carwiz".

After a lengthy wait it's our turn. Paper work is filled out and the pre-existing car defects are noted. We're in a "big" automatic "SUV", a Renault Kadjar. Our bags do fit, just barely. They know we're going to Mostar so they advise that if we're parking with our luggage in the car to leave the windows down, so our luggage can be stolen without damage to the car. Cheaper for us.

I adjust the mirrors and we tell the GPS where we're going, that freeways are OK, but "please no tolls". We head out and in 100 meters we're on a narrow goat trail. We stop, apologize to the GPS and say "Never mind, we're OK with tolls". Result? No change, we're on the narrow, windy goat trail. There's also a taxi on it, so maybe we're OK.

Thankfully the road gets better. They're actually quite good, although almost always a single lane in each direction. The scenery is beautiful, the hillsides, mountains, and sea.

We stop for coffee in Slano, a small marina town. It's breezy at our table at the marina cafe. The place is very full and we seem to be the only non-locals and non-smokers. At our high table for four we point to items on the menu: four coffees with cream and two breakfasts. Coffee is a big espresso cup with one shot of strong espresso and a huge dollop of perfectly extruded heavy whipped cream. Not what we ordered but very tasty.

We drive on to Ston. It's on the water, just barely, at the end of a long sea channel. This allowed the residents of long ago to capture and dry sea water to produce salt. Nearby is the "town" with a Franciscan Monastery. On the adjacent hillside is an amazing (and amazingly long) protective stone wall. This one too you can walk and for sure for many years soldiers did just that. We steal rosemary from Franciscan nuns and have lunch (adding the rosemary to taste). We have tomato salad, tuna salad (with corn, of course) and large shrimp (very hot, peel your own). It's all good, if different.

We drive on towards Mostar, looking for gas. When we got the car we agreed it only had a half tank, and that was many kilometers ago. We eventually go through passport control. We get our passports stamped, much to the delight of some in the car. We drive on. Yay! We're in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a new country for us. Or are we? A few KMs along there's another passport control. Duh! The previous one was for leaving Croatia and this one is for entering B & H. We're asked "Where are you going? Why? How long?" We answer: Mostar, bridge, one day. They nod and give back our passports.

Slowly driving on we answer the back seat: No passport stamps. There's a strong suggestion we back up the car and ask. We demur.

The country side maintenance is very different between Croatia and where we are now. Things grow well and they're pretty much left to their own devices in this country, apparently. We still need gas and eventually find it, on the other side of the road, but no trouble to turn around into the station. Gassed up we head out again, just one more U-turn.

Almost immediately there's an officer flagging us down. We stop and (per Karen's suggestion) I put the car in park before getting out. At the police car I offer up my Texas driver's license, as requested. U-turns? The road striping needs to have a dash somewhere if it's OK to cross. By the gas station there's none.

I violated the law here in Bosnia and Herzegovina twice and have only been in the country ten minutes. It's thirty Euros for each infraction, but he's just going to give me a warning (i.e. only charge me a single 30 euros). "Credit card... sure, here you go, you keep it" I think. The charge made, ticket given, and license and credit card back in hand I return to the car, tail between my legs. "Did you get a picture??" No, they hadn't. They thought about it but didn't want to get me into any more trouble than I'd already gotten myself into.

We drive off as the officer is flagging down another bewildered tourist. Nice racket if you can get it.

Eventually we make it to Mostar. Along the way we've seen many signs of the fighting not that many decades prior. Depressing and sobering. Following the GPS we're guided around under the "freeway" and down into the town proper. There are cars parked everywhere and barely enough room for a single car in a single direction. We hope for no oncoming traffic.

Frazzled we get to our hotel. Or do we? I stop the car and Ron and Nancy get out to reconnoiter. They ring a door bell we think is the hotel. It isn't. (Sorry!) Soon two young (10 year old) boys guide Ron and Nancy to the hotel and our host comes out and guides us to the parking. It's behind a tall rolling steel gate which will hopefully protect the car.

The hotel is dual purpose. It's a hotel, yes, but it's also a museum! There are our rooms (which could be museum exhibits themselves) and other cordoned off rooms decorated as they would have been back when some high ranking Bosnian dignitary lived here with his family. The occasional costumed mannequin startles us each time we enter. We're on the top floor (whimper). But it's the "Pasha Suite" which has a nice ring to it.

For dinner we walk through town, which is sometimes interesting and sometimes depressing. There are a few begging children. There are very many obviously Muslim families with the women at least with their heads covered but many completely covered (other than their eyes). The tourists are dressed 'western' with many of the girls in clingy tops obviously without bras, providing a stark contrast.

The Old Mostar Bridge is very impressive. It's history is amazing, including it's original construction 800 (?) years ago, and rebuilding after the civil war. The streets are either rounded, well polished river stone or flat, well polished, marble. All undoubtedly slick in the rain.

We walk to the restaurant recommended by our host. She gave us a promotional flyer that is good for a free aperitif for each of us. They (Travareetsa Rackia) are delivered in a small "Love Potion #9" shaped bottleS. It's some strong homemade liquor. There are two flavors: one is herb and the other is cherry flavored. They're both good, and both (according to our funny waiter DeeAirVoh) not poison. It's 69 degrees and breezy, it feels lovely.

We hear the wailing call to prayer coming from one of the many minarets nearby twice during dinner and try to surreptitiously observe how the fully burka'ed wife at the next table (whose eyes are all we can see) eats her dinner.

We order one giant meat/potato plater (beef/chicken/veal) and one giant veggie platter and one bottle (1 liter) of homemade wine. It's all delicious and we pretty much eat everything. And it's US\$80 for the four of us. We're unstable walking back to the museum, er, hotel. Before long we're asleep, cursing the big, hard pillows and hoping for no more calls to prayer.

Photos



One last view of the pretty city walls of the Old City of Dubrovnik



Niko, again our ride between the city and the airport



Our "big SUV"



"Coffee with cream"... maybe lost in translation



Ston and their protective walls, now walkable by tourists. So impressive. (We're not doing this walk)



We could climb the stairs and check it out. Nah. Let's go for lunch.



Konoba Bakus. Understandably popular.



The menu, pick your language



Ready to eat



Shrimp with yummy sauce.



Can't eat it all? There's someone nearby who's happy to help.



Our museum, er, hotel for the night



The reception with a huge kiwi fruit vine out front, absolutely laden with kiwi



Part of the museum



The entry to the museum. We're startled every time we walk in (our room is up those stairs, on the 3rd floor)



Our shower!



Some of the buildings in Mostar still show signs of motor shelling :-)



FARNSNIENTE



The famous bridge has been rebuilt at tremendous expense and effort. It's very impressive.



Transitioning from the slippery polished river stones of the walk to the slippery polished of the bridge





At dinner at last. Already feeling no pain.



Two drinks for one couple. Herb left and cherry right. Our waiter assured us that neither is poison



Not sure if it's those drinks or if Ron just thinks I may have head lice



Delicious dinner. We finished it all!

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

Subscribe Form

Email Address

Submit



©2023 by FarnsNiente. Proudly created with Wix.com