

Post



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A drive out west - May 30, 2025

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SUMMARY

The Spanish weathermen failed us again. Forecast was for partly cloudy and we got completely cloudy with intermittent drizzle and mist all day. From a video we'd seen, we had an itinerary in mind so we decided to follow it, weather be damned. First stop is the pretty little seaside town of Cudillero, then to Cabo Vidio and Silence Beach for the views. Nice but all would have been better in the sunshine. Beautiful (low) mountain drive to Oviedo, a lively, charming city, for some urban hiking then to a really hopping sidreria for a yummy dinner. - Karen

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DETAIL

OK, let's try this again. Yesterday we thought it'd be cold and it was blazing hot. Today we're hugging the coast, heading west for a while, then turning south and then back to Gijón. We're targeting some fishing village, a lighthouse, some dramatic rock outcroppings, and the town of Oviedo. After yesterday's heat I'm in shorts and sandals (but have long pants, socks and shoes in the trunk). The skies so far have been grey and misty, if not downright rainy, but I have hope. We're prepared but not thrilled. We can certainly see how this area stays so lush and green.

At our first stop is parked in a parking lot for a 'picturesque' fishing village (turned tourist village). I'm standing just outside the car with the door open getting pelted by moderate rain drops. I've stripped to my underwear so that I can put on the warmer clothes that I have in the trunk. This is Europe so I'm sure no one's offended. We've given up on warmth or sunshine today.

The walk into town is a choice between a winding coastline around tall, tree-covered cliffs, or a stroll through (what looks like) a sewage canal. We opt for the latter. The walking path in the tunnel is barely two feet wide and we tread carefully so as to not fall into the water rushing inches away. The passage is slightly uphill and surprisingly long. If you're traversing under an entire mountain we guess this is to be expected.

Out the other end we're in the middle of "town", uphill, in a slightly residential area. This small fishing village seems to have one street that folds back on itself as it goes up a steep hill. We all would love to find a restroom and so are happy when we see a sign declaring "lavabo" or some such thing. We follow obediently only to find a big, old community laundry facility (a big basin for water and flat rocks on which to slap your clothes). We're sure they'd prefer we not pee in here.

Down hill, around a curve and past a few touristy tchotchke shops we duck into a cafe. We order two coffees and the waiter waves us over to an open table. We remain standing at the bar. We're getting the less expensive standing version of the coffee. So be it. Having made a purchase, the girls head back to the bathroom. Ron and I follow once they're back and our coffees are drained.

After a bit more wondering around we discover it's past noon. We find a well reviewed restaurant and are shown to a table. That out of the way all of the wait staff go for a long smoke break nearby. Being a fishing village, smoke break over, we order lunch, all seafood and all quite good. English, from the waiters, is limited, but the exchanges work out for both parties.

We collect our car and push on, driving through the mist. Next stop is an old lighthouse. The tall, impossibly vertical cliffs hint at why a lighthouse here would be a good idea. It's beautiful and scary. There's a long zig-zag path one could take down to the beach which gives us an even better idea as to how high up we are. Hopefully no one is afraid of heights. Around us are endless scrub filled with yellow and white little flowers. It really is lovely, in a harsh, rustic way.

Our next stop is similar, but without the lighthouse. There's a slice of tall, grass-covered land projecting out into the ocean, with a small key-hole cut into the rock just down near the water. There's a beach, a long way down, and people walk down there for a lie down, though less today with the rain and clouds.

Our final stop is a bit more promising. It's the city of Oviedo and it's the capital of the state we're in. As such it's pretty nice, with impressive buildings and a huge, old green, manicured park right at the city center. The park has an exhibition areas where they're showing off area handicrafts and animals. I swear a goat was making eyes at me, but maybe not. We're in town to check out the covered market. It has the distinction of being the [fill in blank here] market in all of [indicate scope of area]. OK, we didn't take good notes. In any case the market was all but closed.

We do visit the statue (not very tall) of Woody Allen. Apparently he had a particular affection for the city and they wanted to pay pack his kindness with a statue. Not sure if the funds were limited, which limited the material available for the artwork or if he's just not that tall.

Nancy had made a dinner reservation, which is good. It is at a place that has an uphill location and a downhill location. We go into one and they point us next door. That's not it and eventually we get to the right place. It's amazing. The menu is like the Sear's Catalog Christmas Toys Edition. It was maybe thirty pages with loads of options all photographed in high resolution color.

We order a bunch of stuff, water and wine. First that comes out are four big wooden blocks for the table to handle the two big wooden platters coming. Lots of wine and music. It's a Cider place (a Sidreria) where they pour the cider from the bottle into the glass with the bottle as high as physically possible and the glass as low as possible. It's crazy.

The food is incredible, if not terribly healthy. At 9:30 the lights go out and everyone in the restaurant sings a song. This happens nightly, we're told. We're in shock.

For the drive back to the hotel we have to collect our car from the parking garage. Scott, where's the parking ticket? I lost it. Hi... billetto perditto (lost ticket). They look up our license plate number in their system and print us a new ticket.

It's a quick 30 minute drive back to Gijón and we're in bed in no time but it'll be a while before we've digested all the crazy stuff we've ingested tonight. Maybe we'll be better behaved tomorrow. [just kidding]

Photos



Upon reaching the fishing village of Cudillero, the view that greeted us was (and remains) a mystery. Cod fish collars? Why?



In the parking lot where I changed from shorts and sandals to pants and shoes. This rain's not going away soon. The high rocks in the distance are schist turned on it's side by nature. Beautiful.



The shortcut into town. Under the mountain. It looks like a sewer but it's not.



The cute fishing village that's such a draw.



Eating time again. Lunch.



Among other things: garlic shrimp and monk fish (a truly ugly fish).



Moving on. At a lighthouse at Cabo Vidio. Shear cliffs all around. If you're eyes are really good you might see the people on the beach in the distance.



A picture of the arial view of where they put the lighthouse. This outcropping isn't a friend to boats.



At the next stop it's a similar outcropping, but no lighthouse. Again there are tiny people on the beach down there. Don't miss the hole in the rock to the left at water level.



In Oviedo, the covered market, famous for... (we forget)



In the square the town bag pipe band gave a fun, impromptu performance. They were good and the music was rousing. The traditional costumes weren't bad either.



In the big central park was a fair with lots of booths with local craftspeople's wares. Also were local animals, including this inquisitive guy.



You can't think of Woody Allen without thinking of Oviedo, am I right? Anyway, he's here. Is he really that short?



Such a good dinner at the lively sidreria (cider place). Great food and very entertaining.



All of us.



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Our waitress, who was a true hoot, pouring cider, the whole point of being there. How is it done? The bottle and glass are as far away from each other as possible. Normally this is done without the pourer looking at either the glass or the bottle. Crazy.



And behind of us for at least part of the meal? This crazy band. Great fun. (Do you think Amazon carries those hats??)

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