



BUMBLING ALONG
EXPLORING EUROPE IN
OUR MOTORHOME



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PORTUGAL



Setúbal

Friday 23 January

Today, I did a check on our spend so far and it is looking good. On average we are spending around €11 per day on diesel and €17 per day everything else. The diesel average is inflated because of the high mileage to get to Portugal at the beginning of the journey, so I would imagine this will come down even further. It's looking like traveling around Europe will cost around £8,500 per annum. Not bad given we are doing what we want and when we want. Don't get me wrong we are not eating fillet steak 7 days a week, we are keeping things real but we are still having treats, meals out etc just like you would do at home. On top of the daily spend we have the motor insurance, health insurance, tax and service costs which total about £1,500. Not bad for a stress free life style, wish we'd done it sooner. That reminds me, we have a database of all the GPS positions of the places we've stayed, so if anyone would like a copy just let us know.

Vin Diesel the Motorhome has been well behaved. Our last Motorhome, Homer, was a handsome character but he gave us nothing but trouble and caused us endless issues. So having Vin who gives us no grief, feels solid, comfortable and actually feels like home, is making our journey even more enjoyable. I am actually putting together a section on our Motorhome with pictures, so you can see where we live and what goodies we've put on it.



We decided to stay at Setúbal for another day. Not because it's a great place but because Vin has turned in to a Chinese laundry and Craig hasn't mastered the art of driving whilst having a few bed sheets wrapped around his head. I have suggested a mobile toga party but I just get a look of utter disgust, I wonder why. With bedding strategically placed for maximum drying potential we headed off in to town. We'd only been out 10 minutes and it started to rain, so we took shelter in a nearby McDonald's and took advance of their free wifi. The clothes were all hanging inside Vin, so didn't matter about the rain...we learnt that trick the hard way and now we have well hidden internal washing lines and pegs! Classy eh!

Cycling around the town but nothing much to add unfortunately. Setúbal isn't packed with historic sites but it does have a load of fat pigeons that waddle. With all the fish places around here, I recon these fat sods are from the chip brigade. Oh I nearly forgot, Jose Marinhoe was born here and that is what put this place on the map. Apparently he still comes home and visits the place quite often, hope he comes today as it might brighten this place up. Bored of pigeons we cycled a little further down towards the beach and passed the plastic multicoloured dolphins. Then all of a sudden, what's this strange thing? It's a tsunami warning centre.

Well I didn't expect that. But thinking about it, Portugal did have an earthquake a couple of hundred years ago and I am sure they had a huge tsunami? I will check out the detail once we are in Lisbon. Ha, the centre is shut for the winter, what a joke.

We searched for something to entertain us but we found nowt, so headed back to a Vin. Not long and the afternoon mob were arriving. Hey we have something to watch. Every afternoon this group of elderly coupes turn up in their cars for a good old chin wag. The fella's get out the car and stand at the waters edge putting the world to rights whilst their wives just sit in the car. After each heated debate the men throw their arms in the air, get back in to their car and nod off. Then after about 10 minutes the wife chews their ear for farting and they get out again. This happens for about two hours, it's is highly entertaining. One wife is knitting, one is on the phone the other is eyeing up her cousin Pedro. Ever so often a few of them walk up to our windscreen and take a good look inside Vin. It doesn't seem to phase them at all that we are sat inside. Craig thought they maybe doggers and they are looking for new members! He does make me laugh at times. Just after sunset they all disappeared and we tucked in to our roast chicken dinner.



Lisbon

Saturday 24 January

What a night. We are shattered. First the Portuguese campers decided to whisper over 10 fields until the early hours then at midnight 1000's of young folk had a rave in the tsunami centre. The music was boom boom boom. At 4am it started to quieten down and finally we nodded off...for all of 10 seconds until the damn fisher men arrived. By God they were noisy and by the sounds of it, very grumpy. They were shouting and balling at each other and kicking beer bottles in anger. Eventually they got their boats ready and headed out to sea. Ahhh now kip time. What to bloody hell is that? Some stupid sod turned on the sprinkler system and jet propelled water squirted right on Vin and all the other Motorhomes Sounded like we we in the middle of an amplified car wash. Oh FFS, let's get up. Good job we both saw the funny side of the nights events otherwise we both be battling to kill each other. Neither of us do well with sleep deprivation.

We set off to Lisbon and within minutes of settling off my heart sunk. Oh no, we are going to a city and Craig's had no sleep. You can guarantee we will not find a place to park and then all hell will let loose. Think I will find some chilling tunes to get him in a calm mood.

The route to Lisbon was actually very pretty with little hills and colourful fields. Quiet different to the South and much prettier countryside. We called at the supermarket for some bits and then stopped on route for brunch. We passed quite a few Portuguese



vineyards all with elaborate entrances to attract the tourist trade. This part of Portugal is renowned for its wine and a number of the wine growers have also latched on to the fact that wine tours are good money. Just before Lisbon we spotted a Jumbo petrol station and quickly did a detour. Today, diesel at €1.03, so we will have some of that, please. Surprising enough there was a Cespa station just down the road offering diesel at €1.19 and it was empty.

We opted to use the bridge route in to Lisbon and pay €3.75 but it was sure worth it. The Vasco da Gama bridge over the Tagus river is the longest suspension bridge in Europe and Lisbon is the

smallest capital in Europe. The views as you look down from the massive suspension bridge over the city were amazing. Oh what's that? To our right was a huge statue of Jesus perched on top of an awful concrete stilts. It reminded of Rio de Janeiro but not as good. But then again, I am rather biased because I just loved working in Brazil. We drove down the main street keeping our eyes peeled for parking spots. Not a sausage. Plenty spaces for cars but no campers. They plot we'd spotted on Google maps was blocked off due a Tour de Lisbon cycle race. There are no Aires in Lisbon but a couple of parking spots that tolerate campers but they are miles out of the city and not on a bus route. After taking a bum turn and taking Vin on a hair

raising journey through the very steep and cobbly streets of Lisbon we finally found a spot. A car park right on the marina, brilliant. Just a couple of kilometers out of the centre and facing the Jesus statue. The concrete stilts looked more like 1960's platform shoes from down here.

We had a little stroll around nearby streets and then called it a day. Craig spotted some good graffiti and an exhaust fix with foam and plastic cup. The lack of sleep had caught up with us, so an early dinner and bed then we can have a good day tomorrow exploring Lisbon.

Jesus Christ looking over Lisbon





Lisbon

Sunday 25 January

We are doomed to have some sleep! We were happily snoring our heads off until around 3am then a load of cars turned up. Next minute one of the clubs sprung to life and everyone started shaking their booty. Boom boom bloody boom. If I hear one more boom I will scream. Not that Craig would know, he slept through the whole night without even blinking an eye lid. The benefits of chinning a bottle of red wine, I guess. When he finally woke at 7am he farted, smiled and said "what's that noise?". I growled and stuck my head back under the pillow.

By 8am I was up and taking a jog around the marina. The nightclub was just about wrapping up for the night and the final groups were piling on to the pavement. Not long after closing the bin men were out and cleaning up the rubbish. That is one good thing about Portugal, it is very clean.

We got our act together and cycled in to Lisbon centre, a reputation as the 8 wonder of the world. The route in was pretty good, following the waters edge all the way until we reached our starting point at Praco do Comércio, black horse square. After a toot around the little handicraft stalls we meandered around rossio before cycling up Avenida da Liberdade. Rossio is known for its black and white, highly decorative sidewalk tiles and they are very pretty. It also has a lovely station entrance, a bit 2 upside down horse shoes. Unlike the chap



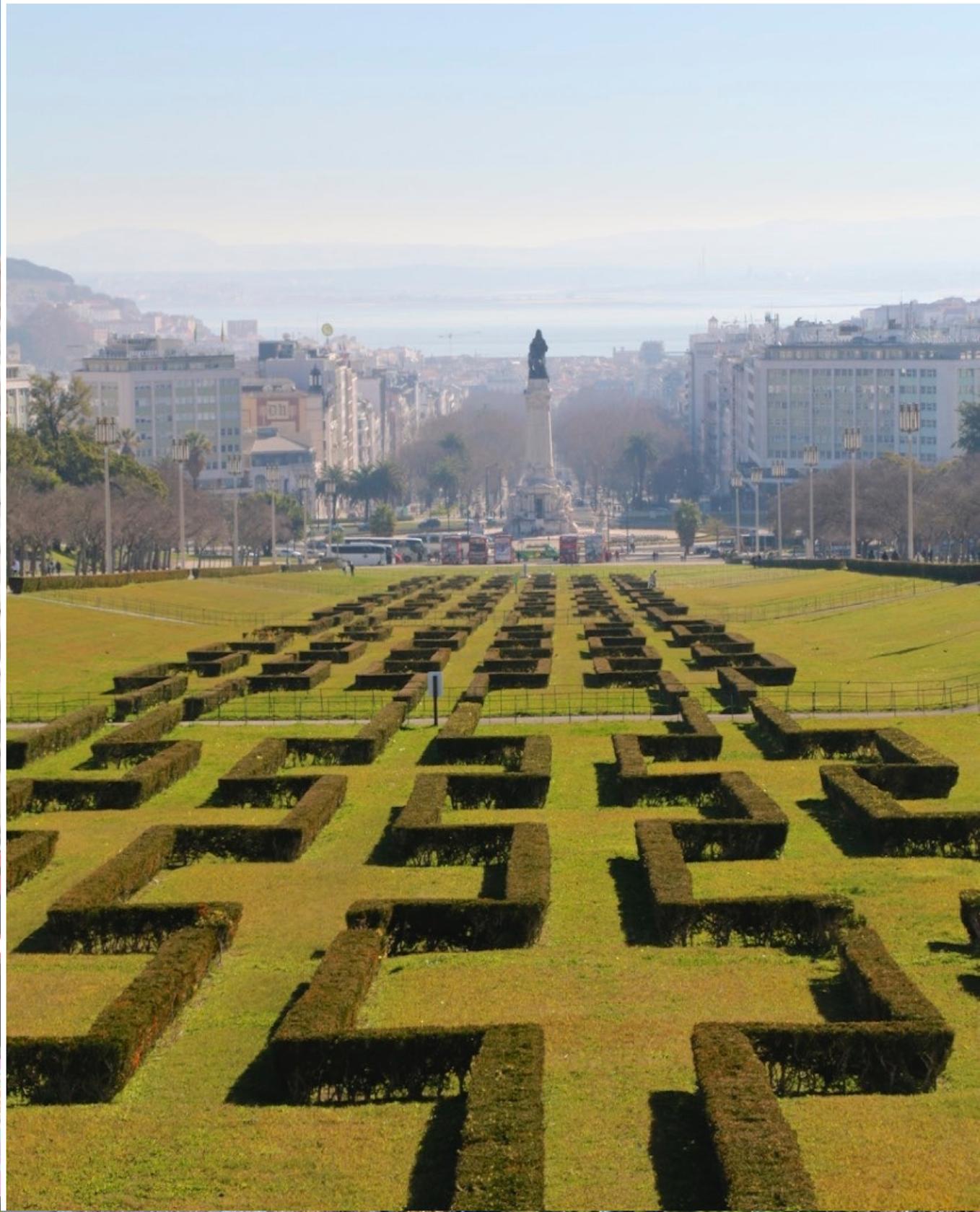
who asked Craig is he wanted some hash! Lisbon also known as the city of 7 hills were streets rise and fall but cycling up hills is tough, so need to avoid. The Avenida isn't steep but it is 1.5 km long with a gradual climb, so it certainly took its toll on our legs. It long and wide avenue was full of high end brand shops and boutiques. By the time we got to the top we were pooped but the views were awesome. From here we continued up a little further to Edward VII park for a view over the other side of the city before going back down the hill, which was fun and...fast. For lunch, we went cosmopolitan and opted for a McDonalds. Not brilliant but we were limited because of peanut. We then meandered in and out of the cobbled streets, bobbing in and out of churches to avoid the unsavory characters that lined this part of Lisbon. We discovered the earthquake of 1755 along with 49ft tidal wave and 22 aftershocks destroyed Lisbon. In 6 days over 60,000 were killed. Lisbon was rebuilt, repairing the old were possible and building new squares, statues and grand buildings. Now we know why Lisbon has so many statues.

Back in Vin, it was nice and warm. After a coffee, we decided to try and find somewhere else to sleep tonight. We drove down towards black horse square before Craig got a spurt of adventure and took Vin vertical up the streets of Lisbon. My toes were clenched tight as each turn got steeper and steeper. Folk on the street were looking at us as if to say, what the hell is a Motorhome doing up here! And I was looking back going, I dunno. Craig had a cheeky grin and was loving the site seeing tour from comfort of his home. Ever watched a high definition



movie with full stereo surround, well it felt like that but real...my settee whizzed through the streets of Lisbon like no tomorrow. The good news, we passed some awesome buildings that aren't listed on the tourist maps. Think we come back here another day!

Eventually we ended up a few kilometers out of town in the area of Belem. We arrived just in time for sunset and it was beautiful. We parked on spare land right at the side of the waterside. Unfortunately, we didn't get to see much because it soon went dark but what we did see looked stunning, so really looking forward to tomorrow's jaunt.





Belem

Monday 26 January

Got up all excited and what a disaster. By lunchtime we were back in Vin twiddling our thumbs, as everything in Belem is closed on a Monday. In fact, Belem was like a ghost town but we did have a nice walk around the fountains, statues, parliamentary residence and parks.

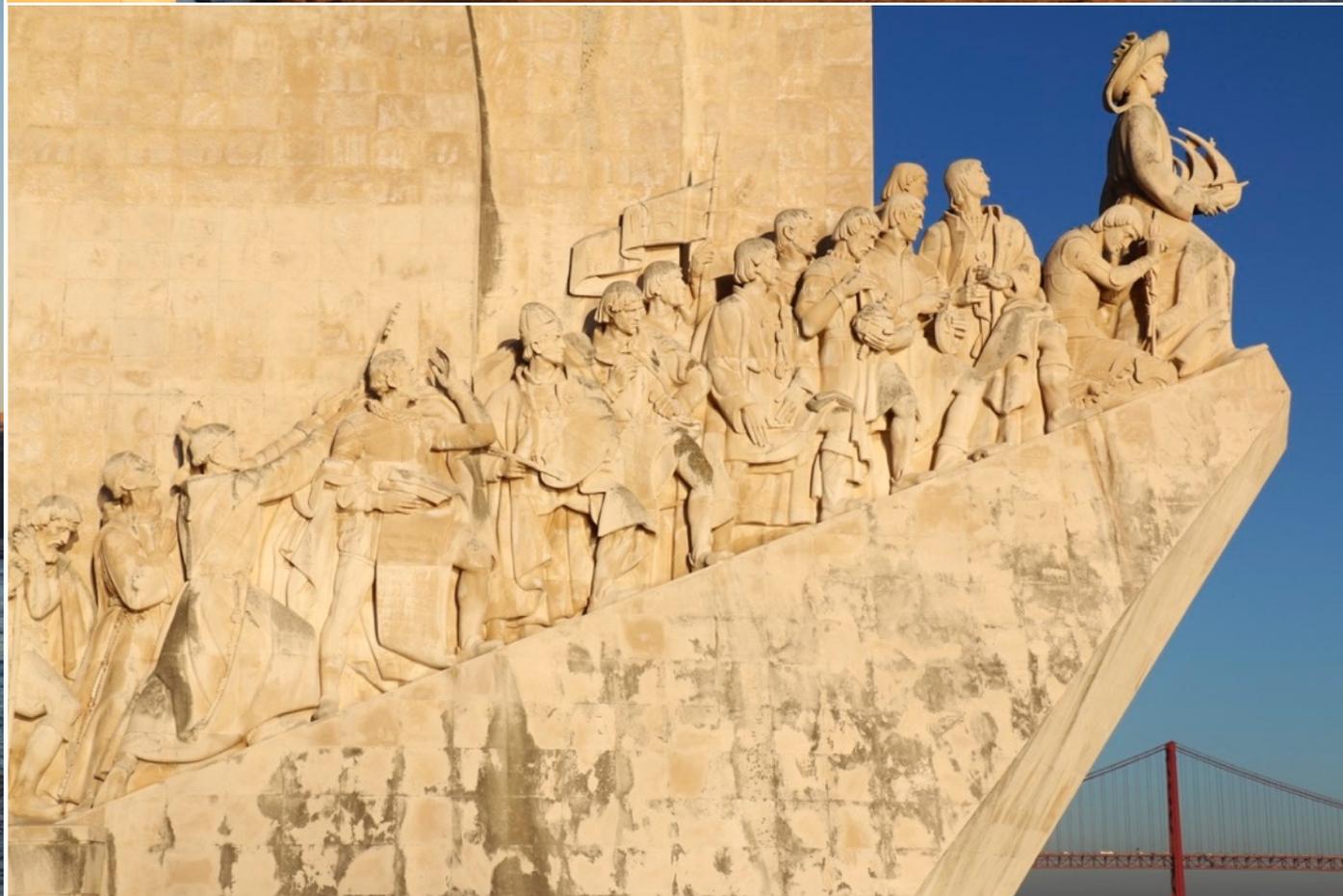
Belem sits right on the river and is the place where Vasco De Gama set sail for India. He returned with a cargo of pepper which started the spice trade and the connection to the orient. The Main Street that runs through Belem is called India street and everything in Belem is dedicated or based around the explorers and feels very different to Lisbon centre. The Jeronimos monastery along with Torre de Belem dates back to 1502 and is a great example of Manueline architecture. The government back in 1500 levied a tax on all the spices and the money they earned was put to one side to build the monastery and fort.

Just before sunset we got the Brompton's out and went for a cycle along the waterfront. It was a lovely sunset but boy it was cold. We cycled all the way to the end of the docks and right up to where the river meets the Atlantic. What a cycle but it was lovely. On route, we passed armed forces museum, Torre, obelisk and marina. The Torre or tower of Belém is fronted by a little park but surrounded by sea on 3 sides. The intricate detail and balconies give the impression of a



fairytale tower rather than a fortress to Lisbon's harbour. The monument to discoveries is massive structure right on the waterfront. In the shape of caravel with Henry the Navigator at the front holding a sailing ship. There is something about this monument that is truly captivating. We gawked at this monument until the sun disappeared and then peddled like mad to get back to Vin before it got too cold.







Sintra

Tuesday 27 January

Hey, everything is open! First we went in to the Monastery dos Jeronimos and the church lived up to everything we expected from the fantasy Manueline architecture. It was truly elaborate and breath taking. The entrance was extremely intricate and home to several tombs including Henry the Navigator and Vasco de Gama. As you went around the church you could see the how different sections were added at different times. Not just with the colour of the stone but with the architectural detail. After the church we went in to the grand cloisters, fantastically embellished with decorative vaults, twisting columns and detail at every turn.

We passed the coach museum and debated should we or shouldn't we...but then we saw the pictures of the internal and decided to give it a miss.

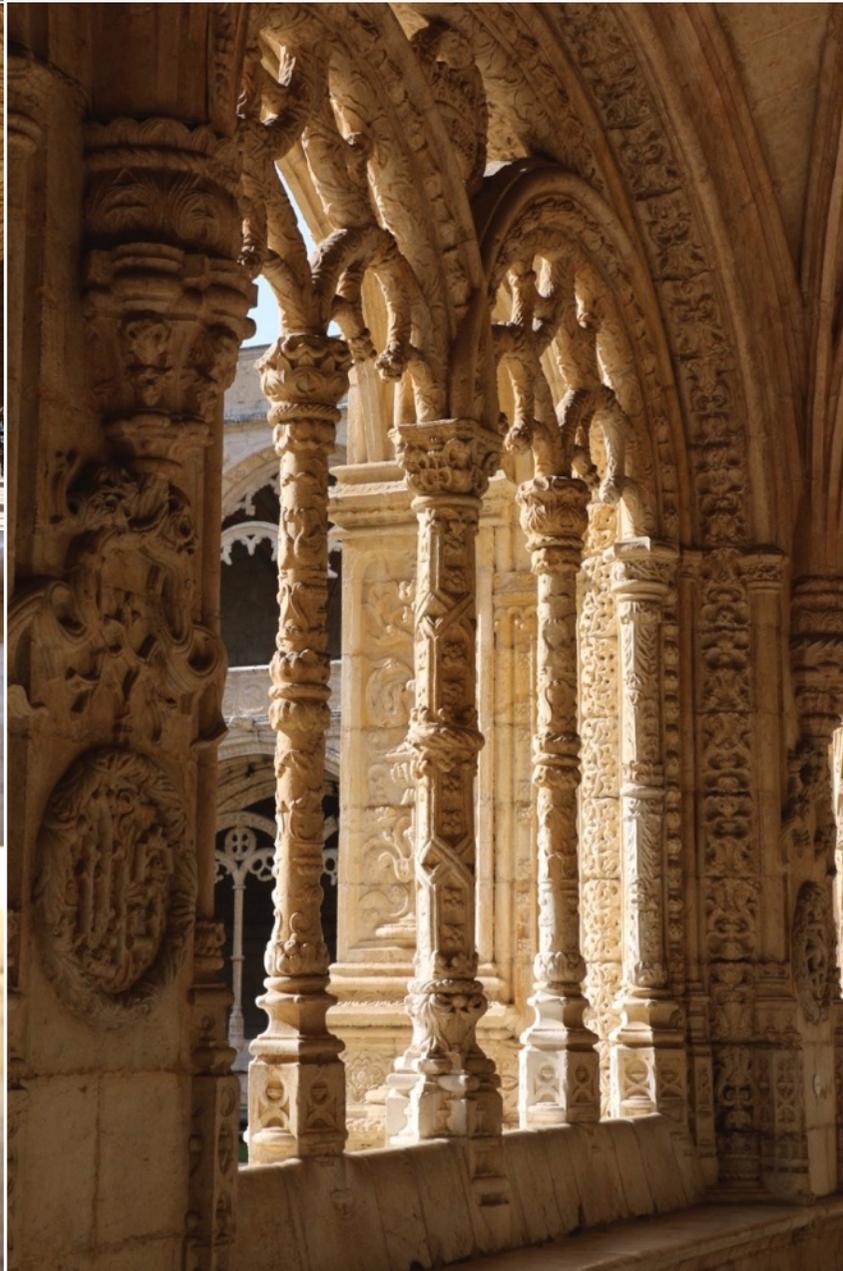
On the way back I couldn't resist and popped in to the well known pastry shop, Antiga Confeitaria de Belém. I opted for the pasteis de Belém the little flaky tartlet with custard like filling. In exchange for €1.05 she passed me a little paper bag with a sachet of cinnamon and a sachet of icing sugar. I carefully lifted out the warm pastry, sprinkled on the goodies, inhaled the aroma and then scooped it before Craig pinched it. Yum Yum. Mum you would love these little gems.



Crossing over the footbridge to Vin, Craig made me laugh as he made reference to the red brick building behind us. He reckons it's Willi Wonkers Chocolate factory and all the little people we could see were umpa lumpas. We then continued to point out Augustus Gloop, Mike TV, Veronica Salt...we struggled to see Willi but that's because he's got in to hiding!

After lunch we set off the Lidl and find parking near Lisbon castle. As soon as we crossed the railway tracks it went down hill...quickly. The multi laned spaghetti junction had us confused and before we knew it we were heading back across Vasco de Gamma bridge! At the other side, we had to travel

miles before we could turnaround and travel back over the bridge. But once again on the other side things just didn't go right and not long and Craig's patience snapped. Several hours later we arrived in Sintra and parked on the local football ground, which also offer parking spaces to Motorhomes and the proceeds go to helping keep the facilities. With such a fraught afternoon we called it quits for the day and tucked in to chocolate cake.



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Sao Pedro (Sintra)

Wednesday 28 January

The weather isn't great this morning. The Portuguese have a saying that the white cloud above Sintra are the Queen's fart, well not sure what she has been eating but them clouds are damn dark.

Rather than get wet through we decided to do some Vin work both inside and out whilst we have access to water. Craig gave the roof and the solar panels a good scrub, whilst I did inside. Craig likes washing Vin in the rain as it saves in rinsing! It didn't take too long to clean by which time the rain clouds had blown over and we were left with just grey, dull and drab clouds. We drove up and around the windy roads in to Sintra centre. Once in the centre the police stopped us and directed us left when we wanted to go right (to an aire). We asked if we could go right and they said the street too narrow. They also told Craig to put his seat belt on! Something I do on a regular basis to which he often ignores me. We turned left and then ended up doing a 3 point turn to get down a one way street. Eventually, we parked on a little cobbled car park in Sao Pedro, put on the thermals and walked to the centre.

Sintra was once a former royal retreat and is surrounded by opulent palaces and country estates. The town is situated amongst lots of green and woody ravines, which not only make the orientation confusing but damn steep in places. As we walked to the town we passed many a splendid mansion and grand gardens...but no more.



Most of the estates in and around were derelict or in need of repair. The municipal gardens were overgrown and all the paths and walls were broken and vandalised. This is not what we thought Sintra would be like. We know things never quite look the same when the weather is overcast but this place is not smudge on what it used to be. As we arrived in the centre and looked around it felt like going back in time. It's almost like this once royal retreat was kept in pristine condition until around 1980's and then they stopped. This place is stuck in a time warp and in desperate need to some cash. We walked around the national palace (now a museum) then walked up the tiny streets towards Monserrate gardens. The gardens were overgrown with moss and fern and the

greenhouse hadn't been used for a long time. The gardens and the estate were once owned by William Beckford and then later by Sir Francis Cook, who employed a guy called Kew to do his garden. Once lush with tropical plants but now just an overgrown path that winds up a hill. But it was a nice walk as we wound up and up towards Castelo dos Mouros. He views around were nice but not great but think this was something to do with the gloomy weather and abandoned estates.

By the time we reached Vin our legs were aching and our ears were ringing. We warmed up with a cup of coffee and dunked a few biscuits to keep hunger pangs at bay until tea time.





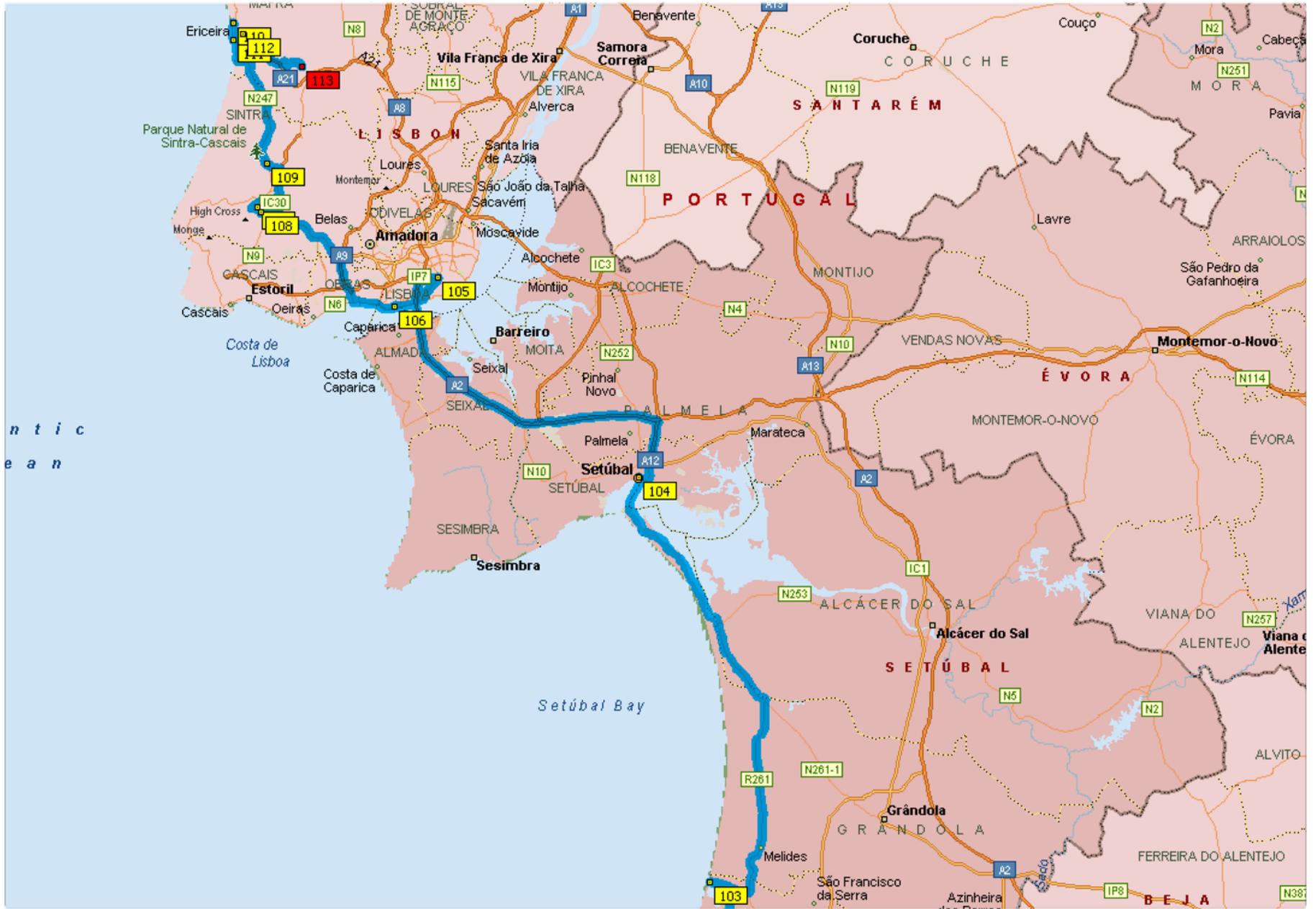
MUM LOOKING
WONDERFUL AND
HAPPY ON HER 82ND
BIRTHDAY WITH HER
GREAT GRANDSON
LUCAS



2

ROUTE SO FAR

THE LAST 7 DAYS OF OUR JOURNEY



Our Top 5 Places

- Seville
- Salamanca
- Alvor
- Lagos
- Belem

Our Hidden Jems

- Praia Do Arrifes
- Prais Do Amado
- Vila Do Bispo (forest)
- Porto Covo (dunes)