

It has been hard finding spare time to blog over the last few days. We have really made the most of our time here and in spite of some frustrations, we have thoroughly enjoyed it. I am writing this sitting in the sun next to Big Thunder Railroad. It's our last couple of hours here and we are maximizing ride time for the kids. By getting fast passes with each of our four tickets, the kids can have two consecutive rides through the priority queue. Big Thunder Railroad has experienced some technical problems this morning (these are quite common too, we suspect the engineers may be involved in the strike as well!) but it seems ok now.

A couple more rounds of Big Thunder, Indiana Jones and Pirates of the Caribbean should ensure that we leave the park with two very happy kids. We have been very lucky with the weather here. Apart from the chilly temperatures and showers on Tuesday, it has been lovely. It would be a very different experience in the rain.

We have now escaped Disneyland and are settled in St-Remy de Provence in Southern France. This village is only a three hour train ride and a short drive away from Disneyland, but it feels a million miles. The crowds at Disneyland this morning got steadily worse. It got to the point where there was no point in queuing for rides. The kids were perfectly happy to spend their last half an hour racing around Adventure Isle. The crowds made it much easier to say goodbye, but we were puzzled why they were so bad.

We caught the TGV train direct from the Disneyland station to Avignon. We were on the top deck of a double decked train. It was a lovely clear day so we could see all the way to the French alps. At Avignon station we were met by a representative from Peugeot Eurolease in our brand new Peugeot 308 SW. After driving into Avignon to complete paperwork, we were set loose on the right (wrong?) side of the road. Our car (yet to be named) had 10km on the clock when we departed from Avignon. We are told where to go by the talking Sat Nav (christened Nav-Madame by Anna). She may get rather irritating after a while, but at the moment she is our best friend.



It was only a short drive to our apartment in St-Remy de Provence. The apartment complex is in an unusual location in the middle of an industrial area, but once you are inside the gates it is a beautiful setting. The units are set around a large grassy area with a pétanque court and swimming pool. We had good intentions of cooking dinner, but the nearby supermarket was closed and we had absolutely no food. The hotel manager explained that it was a public holiday (Ascension Day) – suddenly the crazy Disneyland crowds made sense!



Our new lodgings





We walked the 10 minutes in to town to find a kid-friendly restaurant. With two very tired and hungry kids it was not the time for unfamiliar food, so we settled for an Italian restaurant. Not very Provencale, but the most authentic and delicious Italian we have ever eaten. Most of the diners were at the bar that wrapped right around the cooking area. That provided entertainment and a distraction from empty tummies while the food was cooked. The food was delicious - simple but incredibly fresh and a perfect cure for the recent nugget and fries overdose. Matt is now hooked on Parma ham!

Once the tummies were full, we could enjoy a wander around the beautiful town of St-Remy. It is such a contrast from Disneyland, just what we all needed. We stumbled across a glacerie on the way back to the hotel, and had to check that the ice cream here was up to standard - it was!