

Dave Stiff Spain 2025 Travel Diary

Sunday 10/19/2025

Connie and Theresa left today on the first leg of their trip to Valencia Spain.

Monday 10/20/2025

My first flight from SLO was supposed to depart at 10:55AM. The inbound plane was late arriving, so we did not depart until 11:30AM. We arrived at SFO at 12:35PM.

My second flight from SFO to Frankfurt was scheduled to depart at 1:20PM. (an 11 hour flight) I did my best OJ impression to get from my domestic arrival gate to the international terminal gate. I arrived at that gate at 1:00PM. I was able to board and find my seat in premium economy with no problem. At 1:33PM, the captain came on the intercom to say there would be a "slight delay" since they had discovered a "hole in the plane" and were waiting for maintenance to determine how serious it was. The choices were it was not serious and do nothing or if they wanted local maintenance to repair it. They took pictures and sent them to the head of maintenance in Houston. At 3:00PM, they decided that the necessary parts were there at SFO and the local maintenance could make the required repairs. And our new departure time would be 3:40PM. Indeed, we finally took off at 3:40PM.

Tuesday 10/21/2025

I arrived in Frankfurt, Germany the following day at 11:03AM local time. My next flight from Frankfurt to Valencia was scheduled for 3:35PM. This plane actually departed at 4:00PM and I arrived in Valencia at 6:00PM. I gathered my checked suitcase and took a taxi across town. I arrived at the apartment at 6:50PM. It was a long couple of days of travel!

Wednesday 10/22/2025

I slept in until 10:00AM today. We went out for breakfast at a nearby local restaurant. I was not ambitious and ordered bacon and eggs with French toast and a cafe Americano. We walked to the Central Market of Valencia to look around. It was huge inside (259 vendors). And I would guess it covered about 5 city blocks (8,200 sq. Meters). It is the largest retail market in Europe. Valencia Market dates back to 1839. The current site was inaugurated in 1928. It sets next to the silk exchange and the church of Saints John. (St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist). The market has every type of food available. Fresh fish, meats, poultry and prepared food also. This market is open every day from 7:30AM until 3:00PM. Everyone comes to this market to get food for the day. There are traditional supermarkets a few blocks away. The apartment we are staying in is at **Carrer De Las Garrigues,8 Valencia Spain**. It is very nice and is spacious with 3 bedrooms and 2 baths in the heart of Valencia.

Thursday 10/23/2025

We went to visit the Cathedral of Valencia. Lovely old Gothic style Catholic Church. We had dinner at a Ukrainian restaurant (Casa Ucrainiana). The food was excellent, and we were able to try a variety of dishes.

Friday 10/24/2025

We had a reservation at 1:30 for dinner (midday meal) at Casa Carmela. It is located on the beach, about a 45 minute bus ride from the apartment. We had heard that they have the best paella in Valencia. It lived up to its reputation. They also had a Delicious!

Saturday 10/25/2025

We had a very nice breakfast at a restaurant called Bastard. When we finished, we decided that we would walk to the Del Nord train station to buy our tickets ahead of time for the final leg of our Spain adventure, a high speed train ride to Barcelona. We found the Del Nord station after a short walk. We waited for our turn in a line of 25-30 other patrons. When it was finally our turn, we told the agent that we wanted to buy our tickets for

Friday October 31 for our trip to Barcelona. He immediately told us he could only sell tickets for that day's travel. He informed us that we could buy them at the Joaquin Sorolla station which was just a short walk away. After an hour of walking, we finally arrived and we were able to secure our tickets for the future trip. While we were there, we asked about getting a transit card for all the local busses. "Oh no", she told us. "You can only buy those at the Del Nord station!" We went to have a cerveza instead. 😊

We went to Mass at 8:00PM at St. Nickolas. Of course, the mass was offered in Spanish but we were able to follow along in our minds in English. The Our Father was recited in Latin, the same as the old days.

Sunday 10/26/2025

Our day was spent at the apartment relaxing and preparing for our upcoming week.

Monday 10/27/2025

Took a Hop-On Hop-Off sightseeing tour of Valencia. We saw lots of sights and got to know the city a bit better.

Tuesday 10/28/2025

Connie, Theresa and I took another Hop-On Hop-Off bus to the Valencia Arts and Science Museum today. Parts of this ultra-modern museum were very interesting. We were fascinated by the pendulum (fulcrum) clock. We saw the Mars Exposition which featured a thorough review of the space program and how we got to where we are now. After the museum, we took a Municipal Transit bus back to the apartment. It was a bus route that we had never ridden on before and were unfamiliar with the exact route and what landmarks we should look for so that we would know when to get off. It was very crowded and standing room only. We were packed in like sardines for most of the trip. Theresa was able to secure a seat in the front row, next to the driver. However, Connie and I were forced to stand and hold on for dear life near the middle exit door. As we were being thrown back and forth, we continued to try to look for familiar landmarks. Connie and I both decided that we had seen the train station del Nord

twice. And this meant we had missed our stop and were heading back toward the museum. We said we HAD to get off. We tried to signal Theresa but there were throngs of passengers pushing their way off at this most popular stop. So we were forced off without having secured Theresa. And the bus rolled away as Theresa tried to convince the bus driver to stop, but to no avail. The bus continued to roll away and soon disappeared around the corner in this heavily congested area and construction zone. After a minute or two, Connie texted Theresa "Where ARE you?" Our pleas were soon joined by our friend Rita, who was back at the apartment, waiting the arrival of her long time friends. Now it was Rita and Connie and I all using the GPS locators on our iPhones to try to help Theresa reunite with us. We told Theresa that we would wait for her in front of the del Nord train station. Theresa started to work her way back to us. It took about 21 minutes for Theresa to find us. Now the 3 of us walked back to the apartment together, arriving at 6:00PM.

Alternate ending...

And the bus pulled off with Theresa still on board... As Theresa made her way through the concrete jungle, fighting off giant cranes and monstrous bulldozers (and an occasion cat-calling construction worker), we all began to wonder... "was she fully recovered from the stress of the blow to her head she suffered 3 days previous as she fell from the alter of God and landed on her left temple?" Would she remember who we are? Would she still be asking for a doctor? (Dr. Pepper, that is.) Our travel continues.

Wednesday 10/29/2025

Today Connie and I walked to the Silk Museum and took their tour. The silk industry started in Valencia in 1465. Silk worms feed on the leaves of mulberry trees. Black Mulberry trees adapt better in the coldest areas and require less care while White Mulberry trees grow faster and its leaves are soft and juicy. Both were planted here in the appropriate climate areas. The silk industry continues to thrive in Valencia today.

Thursday 10/30/2025

Today we went to the Silk Exchange, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The first stone of La Longa de la Seda was laid in 1492 and construction began the following year. The self-guided tour began in a lovely garden (jardin) which is at the center of the entire complex. The Exchange had many rooms, each of which had many ancient and beautiful things. The most interesting room for me was on the second floor and was named "The Consulate of the Sea". The ceiling was transferred here in 1548. And the tile floor had a unique design that made it seem like you were walking on a floor of 3 dimensional cubes. I was fascinated by this room and took many photos and videos of the Consulate of the Sea, its ceiling and its unique floor. We all went out for our final Dinner at Helen Berger Hotel dining room. Food was very good. Drinks were very good. Listened to the jazz band for about 30 minutes before making our way back to the apartment for the final time.

Friday 10/31/2025

Travel day. Taking high speed train 🚄 from Valencia to Barcelona. Departed station at 11:26AM. Lovely countryside so far. Many orange 🍊 groves. Traveling along the Eastern coast of Spain with wonderful views of the Mediterranean. We are scheduled to arrive at BCN-Sans at 14:50PM.

Saturday 11/01/2025

We took a tour of Antoni Gaudi's beloved Parc Guel estate. It was an early example of Gaudi's desire to incorporate nature into his architecture designs.

In the afternoon, we toured Gaudi's most famous achievement La Sagrada Familia. The project began in 1889. Although Gaudí died in 1926, though they continued to use private donations, and the project continued. The project was consecrated in 2010 by Pope Benedict and declared to be a Basilica.

Sunday 11/02/2025 We went for a tour on Hop-on Hop-Off bus. We took both the Green-Line and the Orange-Line tours.

Monday 11/03/2025

Today we visited Montserrat, a Benedictine Monastery founded in 1025. The name means “serrated mountains”. This was its 1,000 year anniversary. It lies on a mountain that is 1,236 meters high.

Tuesday 11/04/2025

We took a casual walk today. We walked through the Gothic Quarter where the first village that would become the Barcelona we know today. We had a wonderful dinner at an Iberian restaurant tonight complete with Sangria and wine. After dinner, we made our way back to the Barcelona Cathedral for one last look. There was a Super moon shining above it for our last impression. We then found a gelato store to finish off a near perfect day. Back at our H10 Cubic hotel, I fell fast asleep and woke up fully refreshed and ready to go. I got up and went to the bathroom. I brushed my teeth. I took my morning pills. I got dressed. And then Connie said “What are you doing?” I said “It’s 10:30. We have to be out by noon”. She laughed and said “**ITS 10:30 AT NIGHT!**” Oh my!

Wednesday 11/05/2025

We had breakfast at Starbucks to begin our day. After we packed our bags, we walked back to the public square in front of the Barcelona Cathedral. We enjoyed a refreshment there and then walked back to our H10 Cubic hotel. Connie and Theresa left for the airport about 1:00PM and I made my way to my new hotel **Melia Sky**. I have a nice room on the 16th floor.

Thursday 11/06/2025

My travel day began about 6:30AM when I received a text message from United airlines stating that my flight, which was scheduled to depart at 11:00AM, would be delayed by 2 hours. Since my layover at the end of this flight was to be 4-5 hours, I believed I was still okay. I showered and had breakfast and when I returned to my room, I received another text that said my initial flight was now delayed by 4 hours. Now I knew that I would **not** make my connecting flight. I called United airlines and was on the phone

with customer service for an hour. Finally, a supervisor came on the line and found me a flight from Barcelona to Frankfurt to SFO to Santa Barbara. But that meant I had to go to the airport immediately. Luckily, I was ready and I grabbed stuff and caught a taxi to the Barcelona airport. I checked my large suitcase and boarded my flight to Frankfurt. In Frankfurt, I was able to find a slightly earlier flight to SFO so I took it. 11 hours later, I arrived at SFO but my Air Tags showed me that my suitcase was still in Frankfurt. United airlines told me to continue to Santa Barbara and to fill out a "lost luggage form" there. I arrived at Santa Barbara airport at 11:59PM. I got a room for the night.

Friday 11/07/2025

I got up early and my air tag told me that my suitcase was still in Frankfurt. I took an Amtrack bus from Santa Barbara to San Luis Obispo. Connie picked me at 10:00AM. At this point, my suitcase showed as being at SFO. Later that evening my suitcase showed as being in Santa Barbara.

Saturday 11/08/2025

This morning, my suitcase showed as being back at SFO. I called United Airlines Last Luggage. Customer Service told me my suitcase had to be sent back to SFO so they could send it to San Luis Obispo. I was finally reunited with suitcase at 1:00PM.