

PLASTIC

07-28-2014 By Harry Zirkelbach

This Spanish train ride from Madrid to Cadiz began on time at 16:05. The First Class car comfortable, the ride smooth. We will relax until the 21:10 arrival at Cadiz about the time of the setting sun. We descend from 2200' elevation at Madrid, to the ocean at Cadiz, elevation never seeming to change these hours.

Our coach has a bar, serving sandwiches too, but Credit Cards are not accepted. We had spent our final pesetas on trinkets, intended Denver gifts, while walking the byways of Madrid 18 and 19 April 1998.

Some of this travel was spent during the popular Spanish siesta hours, the train keeps working; we're reminded of siesta at the Seville stop, by these words from Richard III.

I wasted time, and now time doth waste me;
For now time has made me his numbering clock;
My thoughts are minutes.

It is dusk at the final leg north to Cadiz, arriving on time at the San Francisco Plaza. We lodge at Hotel de Francisco y Paris, their restaurant closed.

Within a few blocks we find a bar that accepts Credit Cards, serves food.

Pondering the menu, a couple approach, interpret for us, agree to join us for a drink. They are Dave Bristow (Retired Canadian School Teacher), wife Sandy, both from Vancouver. Delightful companions. After we eat, the bill is brought. The Credit Card and I join the proprietor at a private room. He opens a box, removes the Credit Card Reader, brings it to his lips, blows off dust, then processes the plastic. A small drama performed, an audience of one.

The next morning before moving to our immediate goal, ROTA AIR BASE a few miles north, we walk the streets of Cadiz. This clean, bright city, is the first Atlantic major seaport north of the Straights of Gibraltar. Limited by land, the population decreasing over recent decades. Buildings shine brightly in the Andalusian sun. A massive breakwater protects the entrance to the city from the ravages of a sometime angry Atlantic Ocean.

In walking through a shop this morning Barbara finds a series of baubles she wants, buys.

At the final choice, a inventory of merchandise is prepared, a total set.
The plastic Credit Card is presented.

The Clerk runs the card while Barbara and I looked at other merchandise. Then we learned the Manager had been summoned. We joined then as the mystery deepens. Then from the corner of my eye, it was apparent that the Credit Card reader had not been plugged into an electrical outlet. Apologies are extended from one and all, laughter follows. and the transaction is complete.

These two day we witnessed the new Plastic world being introduced to

Cadiz, the western Old World's oldest city.

Cadiz, the very city Columbus sailed from on his second and fourth voyage.

Cadiz, destination for the billions of New World gold and jewels brought to Spain.

Cadiz, Spring 1998, inching into the New World's Plastic empire.

