

1-18-10

Yes, Paris continues to be amazing. Tonight we walked to a recital by a master's level cello student performing suites #1, #2, and #5, of unaccompanied cello by Bach. I have been working on Suite 1 for about 1 1/2 years. It was an amazing concert in a tiny, ancient church with excellent acoustics. We had a terrible time finding it so we ended up walking in circles and asking directions of policemen. One finally got a book of maps of the area and pointed us in the right direction. We soon found it. On the way back it was maybe 7 minutes walk from our place. On the way we found a nearby post office, even though there is one even closer.

The young woman's performance was quite wonderful. We sat in the front row with an audience of about 20 people in a church that could have held at least 100.

The fellow who sold the tickets agreed that the church is hard to find. We talked with him a bit. He was a trumpet player in the Paris Police band but has retired. He said he played the Presidents fan fare when GW Bush came to Paris. He asked if we liked Bush and we told him NO. (he didn't like him either). It was a nice conversation.

The two months review of French really paid off. I can understand almost everything and am using my broken French and mostly they understand me. They are used to lots of different people speaking French badly. There are immigrants here from everywhere. Our taxi driver from the airport was a refugee from the Khmer Rouge thirty years ago. He gave us the skinny on how poor everyone is in Paris.

Yesterday we met Barbara my old roomie and she took us to get a Navigo card, which is a rechargeable discount metro/bus/train pass and showed us how and where to recharge it. So we are good to go. As it turns out, we won't use the pass very much since we are getting acquainted with our local neighborhood which involves walking the streets. Sundays are very lively.



Today is Monday and most of the shops were closed. Ernie went to the hardware store on rue Mouffetard and the entire street was closed. It is a pedestrian street with open air stands in front of the regular stores. It is quite colorful and full of wonderful produce, cheeses, cooked food, prepared food,

flowers, and all kinds of wonderful things. I remember it from previous trips to Paris. So it was a surprise to find all the shops closed.

While I was cleaning the floor in the kitchen I found a shelf very near the floor that had the manual for the microwave/convection oven. I have never used such an animal so it is one of the things I need to learn. It is not intuitive and the images the French use to explain functions are different than what I expect. So I was greatly relieved to find the booklet. It is the only oven in the tiny kitchen so I have to make peace with it.

Today we had a great adventure with the washing machine. Again, there is no booklet and the images were not very helpful to us. Between us, we managed to get two loads washed and spun dry, then hung up. [Ernie disagrees. "I did the first loads and it was a snap."]

So it's like pushing a boulder up a glass mountain. We are making progress and gradually getting used to the different routines and ways of getting things done.

Yes, we call this fun.

We had dinner after the cello concert at nearby Café Bistro Périgourdin. I had the Mignon de porc (pork steak) with risotto and parmesan – very creamy, sweet and perfumed.

We drank Brouilly.

Ernie had gigot d'agneau with noodles (leg of lamb cooked to falling apart tenderness) and for dessert a Calvados and espresso I had 3 pots of crème brûlée, one was classic, another with hazelnut and a third with vanilla or something sweet.

The walk home was about 7 minutes and very direct. The Église de St-Ephrem has a series of concerts 5 nights a week. We will go again. They advertise them as concerts by candlelight.

