

Bill and Cathy McArthur in Spain: 1

We left Philadelphia airport Saturday evening, January 11 and flew to London for a short stopover before proceeding to Malaga. We arrived in Malaga around noon on Sunday. We were met by a driver who gave us a brief tour and gave us the news that our living arrangement had been changed. Our new address was to be:

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Peco, our driver, dropped us at our new house where we were met by our landlady, Toni. She showed us our small, but workable, room, the two bathrooms, the routine for getting hot water (don't ask), and where the toilet tissue is located in the kitchen – the essentials. She either doesn't or won't speak English. Just when we were about to despair, we met two of the other students living here: a willowy Dutch girl just out of high school and a Peruvian guy who's getting a masters in graphic design at Malaga U. At our first lunch we were able to get some questions answered in English. Lunch is the biggest meal of the day and served at 2:30 pm. I tried to make it clear that I don't drink wine when I was handed a glass of it and that I don't eat meat when I was staring at a soup that had unknown ingredients. The food is peasant grade, salty, but good. There are also four children in the family: 2 pretty daughters (16 and 24) and 2 sons (who cares how old?).

The school looks a bit better in the brochure and seems to have about eight students in three classes. Our class is just us with Cathy at the top of the class and me the dunce. We have two teachers, a woman for grammar and a guy for conversation. We are somewhat overwhelmed with the amount of material that we've been given in a short time, but we're learning fairly quickly. Classes begin at 10:00 am and end at 2:00 pm with a short and a longer break. Homework takes hours.

Our house is near and the school is on the beach in El Palo where all of the rest of the attached pictures were shot. The Mediterranean Sea looks very much like the Atlantic Ocean near Cape May with similar-sized waves. The beach is blackish sand and looks volcanic like Tahiti's sand, but we don't know if this is a volcanic region. There are some large mountains to the west, right on the coast, rising above the city of Malaga. There are hills covered with mansions to the east.

As soon as I tried to connect my laptop to the network at school, I discovered that my computer has forgotten that it used to know the TCP/IP protocol for connectivity. I was intending to access the Internet via the school's DSL connection. I tried to restore the registry to no avail. My choices seem to be to re-install Windows with the possible loss of all of my application programs, or to leave it as is and not be able to connect it to anything else. I'm leaning toward the latter approach. We have gone to a local Internet cafe daily to process email. I've purchased the highest level of Yahoo! email account to make email as smooth as possible. With a Spanish keyboard and web-based email, smooth is not a good adjective. In order to move any work to and from the Internet, I will have to employ floppy disks and CDs.

To make phone calls, I've made a deal with the dutch girl to borrow her cell phone. On Monday night I sat on her bed and called Bill while Cathy thought I was in the kitchen. We are six hours later than U.S. Eastern time.

We miss you all and will try to write from time to time.

Bill and Cathy