

Bill and Cathy McArthur in Spain: 4

We guess that we're learning a lot of Spanish, because we're working very hard, but we don't feel at all competent yet. When our attempt at an Internet hotel reservation in Cádiz got no response, we were faced with calling our hotel of choice. Luckily, the reservation desk spoke English and we secured a two night reservation for the Hotel Parador Atlantica on the ocean in old town Cádiz. We left school a half hour early on Friday and hopped a local bus with our luggage and headed to central Malaga. We walked to the bus station lugging our bags, stopping for lunch at the food court of the central shopping mall. We had our usual problem identifying the food choices on the menu. Our bottom line is always, "Sin carne" (no meat).

We caught the 3:30 PM bus for Cádiz. We liked the looks of the seat right behind the bus driver and slid into it. As the bus loaded, we saw someone tell someone else that they were in the wrong seat. We didn't realize that there were assigned seats. I checked out tickets and discovered that we had taken the correct seats purely by accident. I don't know whether to call us "Innocents Abroad" or "Clueless in Spain". We caught our first glimpse of the rock of Gibraltar from the bus; it was unmistakable and beautiful. We could clearly see the facing mountains of north Africa across the narrow strait. The ride was long (4 hours), but very interesting because of the variety of terrain we were able to view. We arrived at the bus station in Cádiz and took a cab to the hotel. The ride cost \$2.50 (Toto, I don't think we're in New York). The desk clerk invited us to reserve a spot for dinner and a Flamenco show in the hotel dining room; we accepted a reservation for 8:30 PM. We freshened up and enjoyed a luxury meal compared to our usual fare. The flamenco show was purely amateur hour stuff, but the chica had plenty of curves, so it was OK. We really enjoyed reading an English language newspaper and listening to CNN in English before getting a good night's rest in a spacious room.

Saturday's tour of Cádiz on foot reminded us of our Christmastime visit to Charleston a few years ago. The temperature was in the 30s for all of the morning and the wind was howling. The sky was sparkling blue and the sun was hot, so we were able to eat lunch at an outdoor café.

Cádiz is the oldest city in Europe. This is quite a statement when you think about some of the other contenders (Rome, Athens, Monte Carlo). We wanted to go to the Museo de Cádiz to view some history. We saw some incredible artifacts beginning from 5000 B.C. Cádiz was a very important city in the Roman Empire. This surprises us because it is on the Atlantic Ocean, outside of the Mediterranean. We continued to walk around the old city. We found the alleys very reminiscent of Venice. We toured the cathedral which took over 100 years to build. We saw two Castillos (forts)

and the old gate of the walled city. One of the attached photos is from the window of our room looking out over the water north up the Atlantic coast of Spain. The other photos of Cádiz show the forts, city gate, our hotel, and one of the alleys.

We have also attached a photo of our room in El Palo, our landlords, and one of the two Dutch students that live with us. We will probably confine our travels to the Costa Del Sol for the next month.

Bill and Cathy