

CRUISING AGAIN!

CARTAGENA TO BALEARICS

JUNE 30, 2020

SAD TO LEAVE CARTAGENA...
BUT HAPPY TO BE UNDERWAY AGAIN



One of our final chores in Cartagena before getting underway was to lengthen our anchor rode by splicing on 175' of heavy rope onto our 200' of chain. Vicki is seen here marking the final few feet of chain coming out of the anchor locker so we know when the rope will be next.

WELCOME ABOARD IGNACIO

We're always delighted to have guests aboard, and we're fortunate to have our good friend Ignacio Peñuelas this time. We're fortunate to be *muy amigos* with the Familia Peñuelas from our time living in Rota, 2000-2003. Charlie and Ben went to school with Ignacio and his older brother Juanito, and Shelby went to school with their sisters,

Palomita and Lola. You may also recall that Juan sailed with us from Puerto Banús to Cartagena, and it's great to have his son aboard for the next leg of our Mediterranean adventure.



Ignacio quickly became a valuable member of our happy crew. He's seen at left helping Vicki retrieve our lines and fenders as we departed Real Club de Regatas de Cartagena, which had been our home since January. At right, he's helping Vicki in the galley for our first evening meal underway. We'll see later other reasons why it's great to have Ignacio aboard.

A SHORT BUT INTERESTING PASSAGE TO FORMENTERA, ISLAS BALEARES

Formentera lies approximately 150 nautical miles from Cartagena, and it's a straight shot after rounding Cabo de Palos, which shelters Cartagena from strong Levante winds from the east and northeast. The winds and seas were expected to be mostly on our nose; however, they were forecast to be light enough so our journey wouldn't be a rollercoaster. We departed under sunny skies around noon and we estimated a noontime arrival the following day.

We ended up motoring directly into the wind for 16 hours before we had a favorable wind shift; however, we had annoying cross swells that rocked us from side to side more than we would have liked. Hoisting the mizzen helped to dampen the rolling a little, but only a little. Other than that, the only newsworthy events from the first half of the passage were the traffic in the commercial shipping lanes and the disappointment of not catching any fish despite trolling two lines from almost the moment we left harbor.



Top left. We crossed the shipping lane at an angle. This shot of our chart plotter shows why you should cross them at a right angle. Four large commercial ships within 3nm of us!

Top right. Taking an afternoon sun line. Vicki bought me a classic Navy sextant as a retirement gift. My celestial nav skills from USNA are, shall we say, rusty, but it's fun to practice.

Bottom left. Vicki repairing the snap fasteners on our clear eisenglass storm windows.

Bottom right. We never tire of a sunset at sea on a calm night.

At the 0400 change of watch, we noticed the wind had shifted from the bow to our starboard quarter, and it had remained at 6-9kts for quite a while, just enough for sailing, perhaps. We first tried the light air drifter, which along with the mizzen gave us a good 3kts. After the sun came up, however, the wind dropped to 6kts and our boat speed to 1.8 -2kts, ordinarily a definite call for motorsailing. But it was so peaceful not hearing the Perkins chugging away that we decided to keep sailing, especially since we were several hours ahead of schedule, and it made no sense to arrive at our anchorage at 0800. We broke out the spinnaker and briefly flew both it and the drifter, and although we picked up speed the combo didn't work well with respect to chafe. We therefore doused drifter and did the remaining 4 hours under the spinnaker and mizzen. The wind remained light, though, allowing us to maintain just 2-3 knots, but it was pure relaxation to be under sail on a glassy sea with the only the sound of the water sweeping past *At First Sight's* hull.

When the wind dropped further and we felt compelled to motorsail the final 12 miles to maintain rudder authority into the Cala Saona anchorage, our relaxation quickly changed to alarm because for the first time in the 6 years we've lived aboard *At First Sight*, our über reliable Perkins failed to start. (To be completely truthful, she hasn't started several times before, but in those instances the problem was clearly electrical –

12 volts weren't making it from the battery to the starter motor. This time was different. The starter motor was cranking over the Perkins just fine, but she simply didn't want to light off.) We concluded right away the problem was either fuel or air, and most likely the former. Fortunately, we were right and the Perkins sputtered to life and then purred again after changing the engine mounted fuel filter and then bleeding air from all 6 fuel injector lines. By this time, we were only a couple of miles from Cala Saona. Time to douse the spinnaker and set the sea and anchor detail.

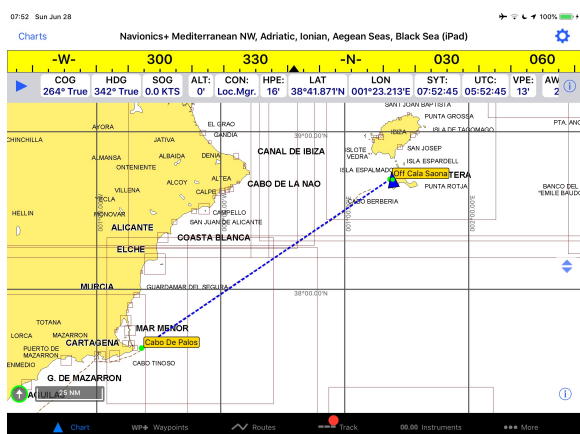


It was fun to fly our red, white, and blue spinnaker with the light air drifter, even though it's not a good pairing, as you can see, with the spinnaker sheet rubbing along the leach of the orange and yellow drifter. But it was nevertheless a lot of laundry up to catch what little wind we had.

Aside from a minor hiccup dousing the spinnaker when it's cover sleeve got caught 55' up at the head of the furled genoa, the remainder of approach was thankfully uneventful, and we entered the crowded Cala Saona anchorage, dropped the hook in 20' of pristine sapphire blue water and began to enjoy the Balearics. Swim call!



CHILLIN' IN FORMENTERA



Formentera, which lies ~140nm northeast of Cartagena, is part of the Ibiza island group in Spain's Islas Baleares. It is sparsely developed, which accounts for its pristine water, unspoiled natural beaches, and idyllic anchorages.

Formentera is the only major island in the Balearics without an airport; and as a result, it's the least developed of the group and therefore a favored destination for charterers and day sailors wanting to "get away" from civilization. It's also remarkably flat and low-lying, and is noted for its beautiful sandy beaches. We anchored out for 3 nights at Cala Saona, on the west coast, which has the most crystal clear, sapphire blue water we've seen anywhere. During the days, we exercised, swam, fished, rowed and sailed *2nd Sight* (our dinghy), and enjoyed good food and each other's company.

Cruising life in Cala Saona. Ignacio was a fantastic hunter with his speargun, ensuring we had fresh fish for dinner every night. We also rowed and sailed our dinghy around the cove, and did PT on the fantail in the mornings before breakfast. We also made time for siestas, too!



We had planned to spend a few days each at several different anchorages around Formentera; however, our watermaker went on the fritz and we needed to (1) go to a marina or quay to take on fresh water, and (2) see if a hardware store or chandlery had

the parts we needed to make the watermaker functional. So we weighed anchor in Cala Soana earlier than we had planned, and set sail for the island of Ibiza, which in contrast to quiet, off-the-grid Formentera, lays claim as one of Europe's most hedonistic destinations.



We had a different neighbor on each of our three nights in Cala Soana, Formentera. We liked #3 the best.

We're anxious to see and experience what Ibiza has to offer. While it is universally known for its wild nightlife, it is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site with nearly 3,000 years of fascinating history. More to follow...