

We took a two week Spain and Transatlantic Cruise on Celebrity Equinox in November. We left home a few days early and spent three days in Madrid, then took the high speed train to Barcelona where we spent two more days before we boarded the Equinox. Madrid and Barcelona are both interesting cities with lots to see. We thought Spain was pretty easy to visit even though we don't know much Spanish.



**Prado**

In Madrid we took the Airport Express bus from the airport to the train station and the metro from there to a stop a few blocks from our hotel, Francisco I. Everything went very smoothly even with bags. The location of the hotel was great, right on the pedestrian mall and the hotel was very nice. The city is very easy to get around on foot. We visited the Royal Palace, The Prado Art Museum, and Centro de Arte Reina Sofia. We went to Casa Patas for a Flamenco Show and had hot chocolate and Irish Coffee at San Gines. The food was great and we were able to get

along with very minimal Spanish.

We took the Metro back to the train station and took the train to Barcelona. The train ride was smooth and very easy. We took the Metro from the train station to a stop near our hotel, NH Hoteles Barcelona Central. The hotel was very nice and in a great location. We did a fun Tapas Walking Tour the first evening and then spent the next day on Montjuic. We walked all the way up to the Castle. The views were amazing. We visited El Poble Espanol. There is an entrance fee to the village. I thought it was fun, but it is mostly shopping and restaurants. We walked to the Barceloneta area for dinner and had very good sea food at Saluda del Mar. Then we went to a Flamenco concert at the Palau de Musica which was good. The next morning we wandered around the market and the Gothic quarter before we boarded the ship. We had been in Barcelona before so we did not go to Sagrada Familia.



**Sagrada Familia from Montjuic**



**Alhambra in Granada**

Our first port was Cartagena where we wandered around on our own. Cartagena is small and we docked right in town. The city has a number of Roman Ruins that are all well signed and easy to find. We had lunch at a local bar. Our next port was Malaga where we participated in a private tour to the Alhambra in Granada. The Alhambra is beautiful and well worth the long bus ride. The next day we docked in Cadiz and did another private tour to Sevilla which is another beautiful city and again worth the bus ride. The next day was Lisbon which we did on our own. We used Rick Steve's book on Lisbon and wandered around the Alfama and Baixa areas. We had lunch and pastry in town and tried the cherry liqueur. It was fun, but not as memorable as Granada and Sevilla.

We had a sea day and then stopped in Tenerife in the Canary Islands. We did a ship's tour for a half day into Teide National Park. It was a big bus, but it was pretty good. The volcanic area was interesting to see. The rest of the day we spent on our own in Tenerife having lunch and walking around. We were there on Sunday so it was pretty quiet, many shops were closed.

The next seven days were at sea. We kept very busy. The ship scheduled dance lessons, speakers, and lots of activities so we didn't get bored. Seven days of ship in a row were just too many for us. I wouldn't do that many sea days again. We had very good weather, fairly warm with a few showers and no high seas.