

Still in an airport, but finally in France



Technically we arrived in France yesterday, 4 hours late, but missed our connections to Lourdes and had to reconfigure the final leg of the trip from top to bottom. What was supposed to be an easy transfer from the airport in Paris to the train to Lourdes ended up a traveler's nightmare with the missed train connection and no other trains available FOR DAYS. Literally. So we spent the night at the Ibis Styles at the airport after I found a round-a-bout way to Lourdes that involved a Paris-Frankfurt-Toulouse set of flights, plus a train from Toulouse to Lourdes.

Local transportation isn't an issue, but anything cross-country is a total mess right now. France is emerging from total Covid-19 lockdown and doesn't yet have the infrastructure in place to handle the travel backlog. It's not as if everything is jammed with people, but you can tell that people want to get moving faster than anyone thought would happen.

Today at the airport, waiting for our first leg to Frankfurt, is the first it's kind of felt like we're in France. First time we've had a decent French pastry; that's probably the real difference. First time Kevin's got to interact with locals (we took all the pastries a group of middle-aged French women behind us wanted... how could we know their tastes were the same as ours?). Smiles and desoles all around.

The airport. What a mess checking in! HUGE lines at check in, angry people at time, but while the check-in person said my son wasn't Star Gold (a level of airline status) so he'd have to pay for one of his bags, which I really didn't have an issue doing but she seemed to think I would, in the end there was no charge because things just weren't going right for her. Printing issues with the machine that does the bag labels and prints tickets.

We're going to hit the ground running, hard. No chance for a trial ride; we usually start these trips with a 50 miles shakedown ride up some local mountains, but we arrive in Lourdes at 9:30pm tonight, and catch a train to a far-away stage tomorrow morning 8am. Not much time to settle in! I'd consider skipping that first stage and doing a local ride instead, but that's not why Kevin's here; it's all about le Tour! So le Tour it shall be.