

GENERAL INFORMATION – BAC MALLORCA – MAY 2007

AIRPORT: The Palma airport is easy to negotiate. If you are arriving from the U.S., you will find your luggage and bicycle in the glass-enclosed baggage claim. However, if you have spent time in the EU first (and not merely connecting from the US), you will find your bicycle at the special bicycle collection area marked by a large sign – and your luggage at the appropriate carousel.

It is a good idea to get cash Euros at the airport if you haven't already done so. There is an ATM at the Delta Hotel but there is no guarantee it will always be working. I don't recommend using travelers cheques except as an emergency back-up. Be sure your ATM card has a 4 digit numerical PIN.

Taxis are plentiful and many, if not all, are big enough to accommodate your bicycle box. The fare is in the neighborhood of € 25. I was charged extra for my bike, but I don't think there is a standard for that.

DELTA HOTEL: This hotel is located away from the city – and is now near a growing community of vacation homes (where it once was merely in a pine forest). However, there are not a lot of services nearby – just a small complex of a few restaurants, paper store (postcards etc), and a pharmacy. There is no grocery store or post office.

Breakfast is at 7:00am – and is a plentiful and varied buffet. Dinner is at 7:00pm and is also a buffet that changes each night. If you buy a bottle of wine, they will put your name and room number on it for the next night. Breakfast and dinner are included at the Delta – as well as a "cyclist lunch". I'm not sure what that is, but will serve as a snack at least to tide you over until you stop for a "real" lunch.

There are coin-operated computers on the premises. All the bike boxes will be stored at the Delta. There are also buses that leave from the hotel that go into Palma. The bus schedule is at the desk. The Delta also has a beach resort with frequent shuttle service. It is less than a kilometer away and is a nice walk.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION: Despite Mallorca being a part of Spain, their services are driven by tourism. Meal times are much earlier than on the mainland. Generally, dinner in restaurants starts at 7:00 – 7:30, with even the occasional 6:30.

Water: Mallorca gets only seasonal rain – and has little water storage. Tap water is safe to drink (I have always filled my water bottles in the room) but occasionally it doesn't taste very good. Bottled water is available everywhere. You will always have to pay for water with meals. They wouldn't dream of serving tap water, so don't even ask. "Sin gas" means without gas. "Con gas" means....yup, you guessed it...with gas.

Telephone Calls: Many of you travel all the time and have worked out how you prefer to make phone calls locally or internationally. I have now succumbed to a European cell phone that roams all over the world – and I love the convenience. I will have a SIM card for this trip with a Spanish phone number so any calls you need to make to me will be a domestic call. If anyone else needs some advice as to what to do about making phone calls, you might want to consider getting a

calling card. The link below offers some of the best rates around, with wonderful convenience and was recommended by a friend who travels constantly.

http://www.enjoyprepaid.com/enjoyprepaid/jsp/ratesandplans/rpdetails.jsp?plan_id=15#rates

I have always used a rechargeable MCI card with great success but they are far from the least expensive. The Prepaid website has a list of toll-free access numbers for all countries to dial out of most hotels and (supposedly) all phone booths. You put in your PIN – and then you dial your number. Ask me if you need more information.

Mallorca is on the far western edge of the time zone. In early May, it is barely light at 6:30am – so those who like early starts can get their breakfast and still get on the road nearly as soon as the sun is up to maximize your day.

The riding options are plentiful. I have outlined the obvious ones in the itinerary – but you are welcome to make up routes as you go if you want to make your days longer or shorter. The island is very well signed, the roads in good condition and with your map you can modify nearly any day's ride. There are only 2 days that can't be made significantly shorter. Please don't hesitate to ask me about any ideas you might have about altering your route.

Catalan is the official language of the Islas Baleares, but Spanish, English and German are widely spoken. Most menus are in those 3 languages. The most common greeting in Spanish is "Hola" rather than the more formal "Buenos Dias". If you know some Spanish that is great, but English works just fine. You will also find names of places to be a mix of Spanish, Catalan, and Arabic which makes pronunciation a challenge sometimes.

I will be the van driver which means, on the days we change hotels, I will drive to the next destination as soon as everyone has loaded all their luggage into the van. I won't be sagging the ride. With the exception of Port de Pollensa, the luggage will remain in the van – and everyone will unload their own baggage. The van key will be left at the hotel desk. THERE IS ONLY ONE KEY. Need I say more? Once at the hotel, I will go out for a ride. I will have my cell phone if anyone needs to contact me.

George Root is creating route sheets and more detailed maps with his GPS system for the whole trip. I am truly indebted to him for all his efforts on our behalf. I'm sure you will agree when you see what he has produced – they are magnificent.

There are probably other questions you have or subjects I haven't covered. Just let me know and I'll do my best to answer them.