

Travel Tales

Star Flyer: Tall Ship Sailing from Malaga to the Canaries

Part 2

by

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Last month we began describing a cruise on the tall ship *Star Flyer* from Malaga, Spain to Grand Canary island in the Atlantic. This month we will discuss climbing the mast, the food on board, ship's tours, and a minor accident that affected the ship's schedule.



A passenger climbs the mast on Star Flyer.

Climbing the mast was popular with many passengers, including some in their 70s and 80s. This involved putting on a harness with a safety line, and climbing up the windward ratlines on the foremast, as high as the foretop, about 38 feet above the deck. The climax was squeezing through the “lubber’s hole” in the foretop platform, and emerging to see a terrific view of the sea, sails, lines and the deck far below. Passengers were carefully coached by Aneta Gradecka, an experienced hand who had served for a year as a cadet on the Polish sail training ship *Dar Młodzieży* ("The Gift of Youth"). She said that on the Polish vessel she would race up and down the 160-foot masts ten times a day, changing sails and going out on the yards, so she found this small climb quite easy.

One of the main activities on board is, naturally, eating. Unlike many large cruise ships, there were virtually no lines at the breakfast and lunch buffets. Service from the Filipino and Indonesian restaurant staff was fast and friendly, and

the food was excellent. Typical dishes included salmon wrapped in filo pastry and stuffed with spinach; tender grouper or sea bass; grilled shrimp; turkey roulade; T-bone steak; juicy pork medallions; and vegetarian choices such as sautéed or grilled vegetables and lots of fresh fruit. The sit down dinners always included several starter choices, a sorbet, three to four main dish

choices; and several desserts. Isle flotante (meringue islands floating in reduced cream) was an excellent dessert, and very appropriate for our destination.

The most interesting ship's tour (costing 31 Euros per person) was in Tangier, Morocco, where our charming local guide threaded us through the maze of the 1650 tiny passageways of the old Kasbah. He pointed out mansions formerly owned by Barbara Hutton and Malcolm Forbes, and kept us moving by having us chant "Yalla! Yalla!" – "Go! Go!"

He took us to an artist's cooperative where my wife and I were offered a beautiful red necklace for 120 Euros – far too much for us. As we were leaving the shop twenty minutes later, the merchant came approached me and said, "What price will you pay for the necklace?" I blurted out "Twenty Euros," and the deal was sealed -- a drop of 83 percent from the original asking price.



Our energetic guide in the Tangier Kasbah kept us moving.

Unfortunately, an accident disrupted the cruise. In the morning after the ship left Cadiz, a Filipino cook slipped and fell in the galley, when the ship was rolling. He hurt his hip and head, and the nurse on board was worried about his back. Captain Brunon Borowka wisely decided to turn back to the nearest port, Portimão in Portugal, about 100 nautical miles away, where the cruise line had an agent. Once inside the Portimão breakwater, the injured crewman was carefully moved in a litter from the deck to a tender, which was lowered to just above the surface of the water. Then the crew transferred him to a Portuguese search and rescue Zodiac, and he was taken ashore to the nearest hospital, attended by the port agent.



Musicians in Tangier entertained passengers ashore.

We heard later that the crewman was treated for a broken hip and released, and is expected to be fine.

This delay meant that *Star Flyer* was unable to stop at Madiera, a beautiful island we had been hoping to visit. Instead, a sea day allowed us to catch up with our schedule and make it to Grand Canary on time. Captain Borowka had hoped that favorable winds would allow passengers a few hours on Madiera, but the weak breeze reduced our speed, and we had to head straight for the Canaries. Despite the disappointment, the whole incident was handled very professionally, and we wish the unlucky cook a speedy recovery.

So we missed Madiera. And we still need to see the Azores and Cape Verdes. Sounds like more cruising in the future!

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It was dogs ("canines") like this one, not birds, that gave the Canary Islands their name.



Victorian glass in Malaga, Spain.



A parrot in the Columbus Museum in Las Palmas, Canary Islands

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