



AROUND THE WORLD 2022

Our travels in October—November 2022 took us around the world from west to east. Join us as our journey concludes with the trip home, and the epilogue. We visited [Greece, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Oman, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand](#).

Part 6: Thailand ... Home

29 November 2022

Bangkok [100° E] - Tokyo [140° E] - Vancouver [123° W] - Bellingham [122° W]

After a short night, we got up at 02:00. Quickly dressing, we were in the Lobby at 02:15, grabbed a coffee, juice, and pastry, and waited for our group to be called to board the bus for the airport. Our luggage was waiting for us in the terminal, and we were on the road by 03:00. Fortunately, traffic is very light at that hour, and we arrived at the airport by 04:30. The transfer was so efficient that we had to wait for ½ hour for the check-in to open.

Once checked in, we went through security and emigration. The first flight, on Thai Airlines took us to Narita, Japan. We landed on time, which is always a good thing when you have less than two hours to make the connection. Once there, we went through security again and found our next flight, on Air Canada to Vancouver. We almost messed that up, there was an ANA flight leaving about the same time for Vancouver, just a few gates away. Fortunately, the ANA gate agent directed us to the proper place.

The second flight departed late due to a number of issues. Some maintenance was needed, which initially delayed us about 20 minutes. Then, the computer system for boarding was not working, so manual procedures caused further delay. Finally, a passenger decided at the last minute to not fly, which meant we had to wait until her bags were offloaded. We arrived in Vancouver 1¼ hours late, which was not a problem for us but did impact some travelers with connecting flights.

We had planned to take the SkyTrain to Pacific Central Station to catch our southbound bus. We decided to take an Uber instead because we had lost over an hour, we were tired, and it was snowing (or maybe we were lazy). Whatever, we were at the station with ½ hour to spare. Onto the bus, and off to the U.S. Border.

Like our trip north, we had to dismount the bus at the border, gather our luggage and go through immigration. Took about 45 minutes because there was only one agent working the line for much of the time, they finally added two more which sped up the process. Back on the bus, the trip into Bellingham was a bit slower than normal due to snowy conditions.

Friends picked us up at the bus stop at 15:30 and whisked us home. We had about 20 minutes to freshen up before gathering with our normal Tuesday@Four Happy Hour group. They thoughtfully provided pizza and beer and we stayed until 18:30 talking about our and their adventures of the past five weeks.

Home, a rum and coke to reminisce, and we were off to bed for 14 hours sleep.

For those wondering why I put the longitude at each destination, here's a recap:

Bellingham [122° W] - Vancouver [123° W] - Munich [11° E] - Athens [24° E] - Haifa, Israel [32° E] - Port Said, Egypt [32° E] - Suez Canal, Egypt [32° E] - Safaga, Egypt [33° E] - Aqaba, Jordan [35° E] - Salalah, Oman [54° E] - Muscat, Oman [58° E] - Mumbai, India [72° E] - Goa, India [73° E] - Colombo, Sri Lanka [79° E] - Galle, Sri Lanka [80° E] - George Town, Malaysia [100° E] - Port Klang, Malaysia [101° E] - Singapore [103° E, 1° N] - Koh Samui, Thailand [100° E] - Bangkok, Thailand [100° E] - Tokyo [140° E] - Vancouver [123° W] - Bellingham [122° W]

Traveling (almost) always east, we circumnavigated the world in 37 days. The majority (280°) by air, but a very interesting part (80°) by ship.

A Few Days Later

Home in Bellingham, Washington, USA [122° W]

We have been home for most of a week, ample time to reflect on the trip but not so long that we have forgotten too much!

Some of you know that we had planned an around-the-world trip to be taken in March and April of 2020. The opportunity for such a trip is rare, it requires that a cruise line decide to relocate a ship from the Mediterranean market to the Australian or East Asian markets, or vice-versa. This does not happen often. We were a bit despondent when that was cancelled, thinking the opportunity may not arise again. When the opportunity did arise with Viking Ocean Cruises, we jumped on it.

Following are comments on time, weather, money, people, and value of the trip. These are my thoughts; Meredith might not agree with all of them.

Was the trip worth doing? Absolutely. We revisited a few places we had seen before (Greece, Israel, Egypt, Singapore) and visited six countries that were new to us (Jordan, Oman, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand). We might never have visited many of the latter if we had not taken this trip. We crossed two major places off the bucket list—Suez Canal, Egypt, and Petra, Jordan—and were surprised by the modern façades of cities like Muscat, Oman, Colombo, Sri Lanka, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Bangkok, Thailand. Having been on the ground and out in the communities of these countries gives us a new perspective on this area of the world.

Going to the far side of the world is not an easy task, certainly not in travel time and time change adjustments. At the beginning and end of the trip we had 24+ hour travel days. The first 24-hour segment, we “gained” 10 hours in our travel from Bellingham to Athens. The flight was an overnight journey and sleeping on an airplane is difficult at best. After one long day of travel, we spent five weeks gaining six hours from Athens to Kuala Lumpur, but then lost one from KL to Bangkok. Our last 24 hours we “gained” 9 hours but “lost” a day traveling from Bangkok to Bellingham.

It seems to take us about a day to compensate for every two hours' time change, so we were a bit off at the beginning of the trip and again since returning home. We seem to be finally back to Pacific time. The best advice we have seen, and which we try to follow, is to adopt the new time zone's schedule as soon as you arrive, do not

try to ease into it. You might end up sleeping a bit longer for a day or two, or need a nap, but the sooner you go all in the sooner you will begin to enjoy the benefits of the new place.

The weather during our trip was not what we are used to. We like temperatures between 40° and 80° Fahrenheit (5° to 25° C). What we got were temperatures consistently above 25° C, sometimes into the 30s. Those were bearable in the desert countries from Israel to Oman because the humidity was low. Once we arrived in India, however, and on through Thailand, the same temperatures were very uncomfortable due to the high humidity. Lots of perspiration, I will leave it at that. On the plus side, there were only two days with significant rain, and we were only caught outside in rain once, the last day of our trip in Bangkok.

Most of the places we visited were happy to take credit card payments for any significant purchase (more than US \$10). Most would take US cash for smaller purchases, at an exchange rate that was not too bad. However, we prefer to purchase and tip in local currency. The excursion schedule we were on rarely allowed for time to visit ATMs. When we could, we would visit an ATM to get local currency. We usually withdrew close to the amount we would spend but took a bit more for places that we intend to visit again in the future.

We met some very interesting people on the trip. Two couples from Australia, both husbands have the same name! They did not know each other before the trip, now they and we are Facebook friends. Another couple from New Zealand. A couple of guys from Canada. And several couples from the US. We may never see these folks in person again, but we have enlarged our circle of former-traveling-companion friends and I expect we will share each other's adventures for years to come (a few of you know exactly what I mean).

Would we do this trip again? Probably not. There are more places in the world we want to visit, and we do not have forever to visit them. That will be our first priority. If we do take a trip like this again, I expect we will be less ambitious in our shore excursion choice. We tended to choose excursions that gave us a lot of time on shore, seeing a lot of things, with the result that we were rather tired each evening. A more leisurely pace might suit us better when we get old.

If you have read this far, thank you for journeying with us. I have sorted through the 3000 or so pictures we have taken, and edited and posted the good ones in albums on Facebook and Flickr. Links to each set on Flickr are embedded in earlier logs. Time to plan a new adventure ...