

Leaving Sicily and Exploring The West Coast of Italy: Tropea Stop – April 28 – 30, 2018 – Tropea, Italy

By Tom Allin

We left Siracusa, Sicily about 10:15 for a quick drive to Messina, the ferry and on to Tropea. The first hour of our drive was easy and uneventful. Then things went a little wrong – seems we typed in the state of Messina, not the city of Messina to Google Maps.



This route took us to the west of Mt. Etna (snow covered peak in above photograph) through gorgeous mountains and wild flowers, on a dirt road, the occasional small town or village, farm houses and you get the idea. I wish we had stopped here for a night to give us more time to explore this area of Sicily.



We are now approaching Messina. Missed or didn't understand the signage but we wasted 30 to 45 minutes looking for the ferry. What can I say but during our almost two years of driving the world we have seen many areas off the beaten path – the advantage of always being lost.

We didn't begin the drive from the ferry dock to Tropea until 5:30 pm. I quickly deduced we would break one of my driving rules – don't drive at night. It was a beautiful drive but we only stopped two or three times to take in the rugged coastal views, maybe we should have made fewer stops on the un-planned Mt. Etna drive.



About 30 minutes outside of Tropea, Nancy began looking for a place to stay that evening. Typically I make reservations the night before but I hadn't for this stop. We are in the middle of a Saturday evening crowd of people and cars when I pull over and call a Lonely Planet recommendation. The person answering spoke only a bare minimum of English but I think we have a room. We find a parking place 0.4 miles from the B&B, grab bare necessities for a night and begin the downhill walk to our lodging.

I suspected we were in trouble for the simple reason every time I called the B&B I got no answer. The B&B is on a side street that Google Maps doesn't exactly locate but with the help of a shopkeeper or two we find the B&B. No answer to our knock. The waiter next door lets us know the manager left five minutes ago by taxi for his home. Oh well.



We then try a second Lonely Planet recommendation: Donnaciccina. What a great place! We agreed to rent a 3rd floor room – steps no elevator -- overlooking the main street Emanuele and the ocean between various buildings for two nights and the next morning changed our reservation to three nights. I have to note we changed our reservation before we discovered the great breakfast provided that included: eggs, bread, two different juices, yogurt, two or three cakes, fruits, coffee and more.



Tropea is a small town and the tourist area is easily negotiable by foot. It was just what we needed: a small area for interesting walks, a view of the wide beautiful beach and ocean below, lots of eating and drinking establishments, and a great room at Donnaciccina to kick back and relax.

One church we didn't visit. You can see the path up to it if you look hard.





The first evening we enjoyed listening to everyone having food, drinks and fun to well past midnight. Note: when closed the Donnaciccina's double paned glass doors opening to the balcony shuts out a great majority of the fun noise from the street below.

Sunday afternoon after lunch and a walk we are taking it easy in our room – then we hear the drumming. We get up to see and hear two drummers and watch two dancing giants. What or why they were dancing is a mystery to us.



Our second night in Tropea we ate dinner at La Pentola D'Oro. Nancy had veal with a mushroom sauce, I had a sausage pasta dish and we split the grilled vegetables and a half-liter of red wine. This was a very good meal and cost us E\$48/U.S.\$65. We plan to return here for dinner tonight.

Even on a Monday afternoon there are people walking and sitting. Looking down from our balcony.



Tomorrow morning we continue our drive toward Maratea (have reserved an Airbnb apartment – our 31st Airbnb stay -- for three nights and may extend for a fourth night), the Amalfi Coast (maybe 3 nights), and Naples (maybe 4 nights).

