

# Eau de Vie

a wine, spirits, and travel newsletter

Vol.43 July 2022

## EURO & DOLLAR FIND PARITY, 1=1

Last century, when traveling to Europe, it was important to make sure you had the right currency. Often back then, in tourist areas, you could find exchange booths. There would be a person sitting inside a small booth, like a telephone booth, which don't exist anymore either, and they'd exchange your Spanish pesetas for French francs or American dollars for Dutch guilders or British pounds for German marks. It was annoying because if it was the weekend you couldn't exchange any money; also every time you exchanged money you were assessed a fee. So changing money cost money but it was also kind of cool because all the coins and bills were different. It was also important to remember the current exchange rate. Each country had a value compared to the US dollar and to every other country. In the end you'd inevitably come home with pockets of random coins and bills.

This all changed when the EU, except Britain, adopted the euro. In 2002 the Euro was invented as a physical currency. Gone were the marks, francs, guilders and pesetas and instead there was just the euro. Except for a brief period of time the euro has been worth more than the dollar.

Now, when traveling continental Europe, the process to get money is to stop at an ATM machine, which are almost on every corner in most places in France, insert a card, and wait for it to spit out money... of course for a fee... and then you spend that money having to only remember one exchange rate.

When Sara and I started canal boating in 2011 the value of the euro to the dollar was: 1.43 dollars bought 1 euro.

Today, for the first time since the euro was introduced, the value of the dollar to the euro is 99 cents. This means it cost 99 cents to buy 1 euro! While this price will fluctuate, this is considered by many as a place called parity.

Why does this matter? Because eleven years ago, when the price was 1.43, that meant that the 10 euro lunch actually cost \$14.30. Now that same 10 euros costs \$9.90. Of course lunches don't cost 10 euros anymore, but that's true for here or there.

Euro to dollar parity is something I've been curious to see for many years. Hopefully parity will last until my next trip in the Spring - it will make calculating the cost of everything so much easier!

## DÎNER EN BLANC REMINDER

Next month on August 13th, rain or shine or fog, we will host *Dîner en Blanc*. *RSVP required!*

If you are unsure what this is please read the [May edition](#) of the *Eau de Vie*.

This quirky French picnic, *Dîner en Blanc* ~ *Duluth*, will be at our house, 2620 E. Superior Street, in the yard.

Here's what you need to know:

 **It is BYOE:** (*Bring Your Own Everything.*) Literally everything. Food, chairs, drink. You can make this as fancy or as simple as you like ~ table and chairs or a blanket.

 **Dress code:** all white. Really. This is a fancy, all white dress up picnic. Although my tux has some black on it. I did say it's quirky.

 **RSVP:** (*rezpondez s'il vous plait*) to [david@savvynomad.com](mailto:david@savvynomad.com).

 **August 13th, 2022.** Come set up between 6-7pm, share in the *Votre Sante*, (*to your health*) toast at 7pm. Eat and drink at your leisure.

Will you join us for *Dîner en Blanc*?

# TIMING TRAVEL'S RETURN

You might have been hearing horror stories about current travel delays and impediments. While some people are frustrated when traveling I'm not convinced we are living in a time that is worthy of the title "the worst."

Keep in mind when planning your travel to anywhere, be it the grocery store or a different continent, the only thing you have control over is how much time you allow for the chore. Yes, travel from point A to B is a chore. I call these days, travel days. They are long, sweaty, tiring and confusing. Covid has made travel days worse but disease has always been part of travel so this isn't anything different. (The removal of a testing requirement to come into the USA was the last great Covid-19 impediment. Vaccination is still required to enter many countries but this isn't a true impediment to travel, just an impediment to some mindsets.)

If you book a flight with a one hour connection and you miss it, then who is actually to blame? Let me clue you in, it's not the airlines, security lines, immigration lines, baggage handlers or size of the airport. It's you. One hour! No. One hour has never been enough time. If that's your only option then you aren't searching enough.

When the taxi doesn't show up have you allowed enough time to take the metro? Twice this year, we had travelers who had to scramble onto the metro in Paris because their morning taxis to the train station canceled right before pick up. They made it. Breathless, they stepped onto the TGV, sweaty but proud they could navigate the alternative. They were also a bit

cross at the number of steps in the metro and the weight and girth of their luggage. But the metro has always had that many steps. Who is to blame? French planners from the 1880s or your packing skills?

Traveling has always required careful consideration of timing. In the trip that Sara and I just completed we took: 4 flights, 15 trains, 3 taxis, stayed in 8 different hotels, rented 1 car and rode the Paris and Strasbourg public transport countless times. We both caught tiny little colds (tested negative for Covid, the world is full of diseases!). We felt chilly in Burgundian spring rains and roasted in the heat of Southwest France. Our only solace was deep shade, the cool crystal clear waters of the river Charente, and bottles of Rosé with lunch. We drank water from the tap, or when on the boat, the tank. We drank wine at lunch, had fantastic large salads and crusty bread with slabs of sea salted butter. We ate sweet strawberries straight from the market basket and meatballs drenched in spicy mustard sauce with spatzle. We found new moldy cheeses to smear onto our baguettes and cheap Sauvignon Blancs that made me say "Hello summer!"

Our trip was busy and odd. I went from sanding and refinishing the pilot house on our boat to wearing a three piece linen suit at a Chateau wedding. We traveled briefly to England where we got sun burned

and quickly back to France and a boat where for days I hardly got out of my swimsuit. We learned our neighborhood around the Strasbourg marina and engaged in the French ritual of the daily "Bonjour, ça va?" with our marina neighbors. They heartily took us in and lent us umbrellas, tools, advice and translations. Boaters the world over are great people.

Through it all we traveled with a sensible plan for the timing of our connections, for doing laundry, for clothes, fancy and rough, and we didn't miss any connections because we allowed enough time to travel.

Even now, having only been back for one week, I'm dreaming about our little boat in Strasbourg. I'm thinking and plotting and planning the next adventure. I'm coming up with a plan and trying to time it just right. If you are interested in learning more about joining our boat trips next year send an email to me at [david@savvynomad.com](mailto:david@savvynomad.com) and I'll add you to our notification list. We have a little more planning to consider but I'm getting close to hammering out the details and I will let those interested know first. It's never too early to start timing the return to travel.

