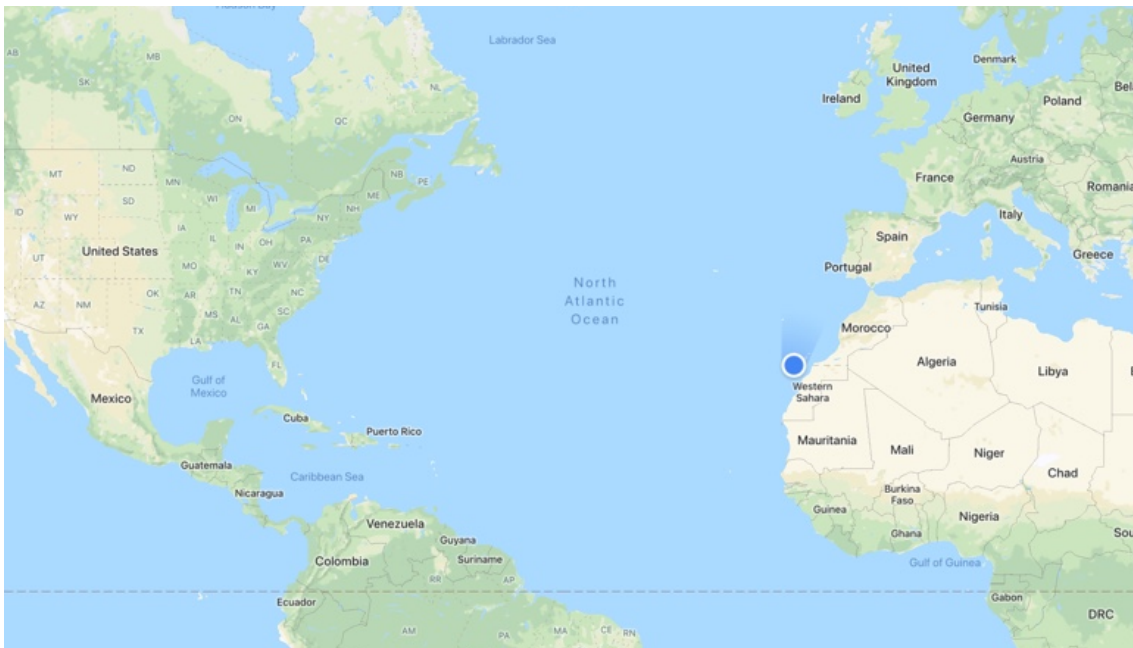


¡Hola de Gran Canaria!



This year we're going to the Canary Islands, off the coast of Africa, but part of Spain. The islands are a volcanic archipelago chain with world-famous beaches.



We finally managed to use our frequent flyer miles to get a stand-by upgrade to Business Class. This is plush! Judy gets comfy & cozy for the overnight flight to Madrid.



Arriving on Grand Canary Island, we are impressed by the large number of windmills.



Morning view from our 6th floor hotel room. Check out the mountains!
We'll head there in a few days, but first....



¡Vamos a la Playa!



That's 84.5 degrees for you Fahrenheiters. No humidity, no bugs, and almost cloudless!



The Beach is very wide and stretches for miles, so you are never crowded. The water temp is not as warm as the Caribbean, but not nearly as cold as our local beaches.



Behind us, the famous Maspalomas sand dunes. If you're up for it, you can take the long way to the beach and trudge through the dunes like a Bedouin.



It was a long enough hike to get to the beach the normal way,
but we had to try it, so we only did a short trek.



Judy kept humming the theme to “Lawrence of Arabia” ...!
I kept thinking, “Water... water...”



Back at the hotel, we clean up for a special dinner. It's our Wedding Anniversary—14 years!
(PS—I would only wear this shirt in the tropics!)



Chez Fernand — authentic French cuisine — in Spain!
I found it on Trip Advisor.



Judy had rabbit in a mustard cream sauce with fresh pasta. Spicy! (like our marriage)



I had the duck à l'orange. It was perfectly cooked with crispy skin and pink center. Sweet! (also like our marriage)



And, day after day, another perfect day at the beach... Ho-hum....



Splash in the water, soak up the rays, read our books, drink rum-and-coke, take a nap...
Totally b-o-o-o-r-i-i-i-n-n-g....



Dinner tonight — Judy's choice: Spanish food — in Spain! What a concept! And, it's seafood!



Appetizer: Octopus, Galician style, with paprika & olive oil (those are potatoes in the middle).



Mmmm, tentacle-icious! Judy loves octopus, it's her Mediterranean upbringing. (I swear, she makes me eat all this stuff, but actually, it's really good!).



Main course: Seafood Paella. Insanely delicious.



Another night, another restaurant I found on Trip Advisor: El Fuego, where you cook with fire!



A German concept, each table has a gas flame pit. Judy had chorizo, I had shrimp. You get gourmet salts (yes, salts!) and dipping sauces. It was tasty, fresh, and fun! (Too bad, no discount for cooking your own food)



Having had our fill of the beach, today we are going on a full-day group bus tour of the island's rugged volcanic interior. Glad I'm not driving—look at this road!



Up, up, up — 2000 meters, above the clouds!



They took us up to the caldera of the ancient volcano at the center of the island. This is it. It was about 20 degrees cooler than at sea level and the clouds kept rolling past.



It was pretty awesome, but also a little bit unsettling to think that 5,000 years ago, this spot was a bubbling cauldron of lava that erupted and formed the island!
(PS: so disappointing—I wore that cap for 2 days and not one person said “Go Eagles!”)



Fantastic views surround us as we continue into the mountains.



We had a little time to walk around that little village in the valley.



Judy gets up close with cacti — but not too close!



The “Grand Canyon” of Grand Canary



On top of the world!



After a week here, I really do feel like "Doctor Chil"!!
Live For Vacay!