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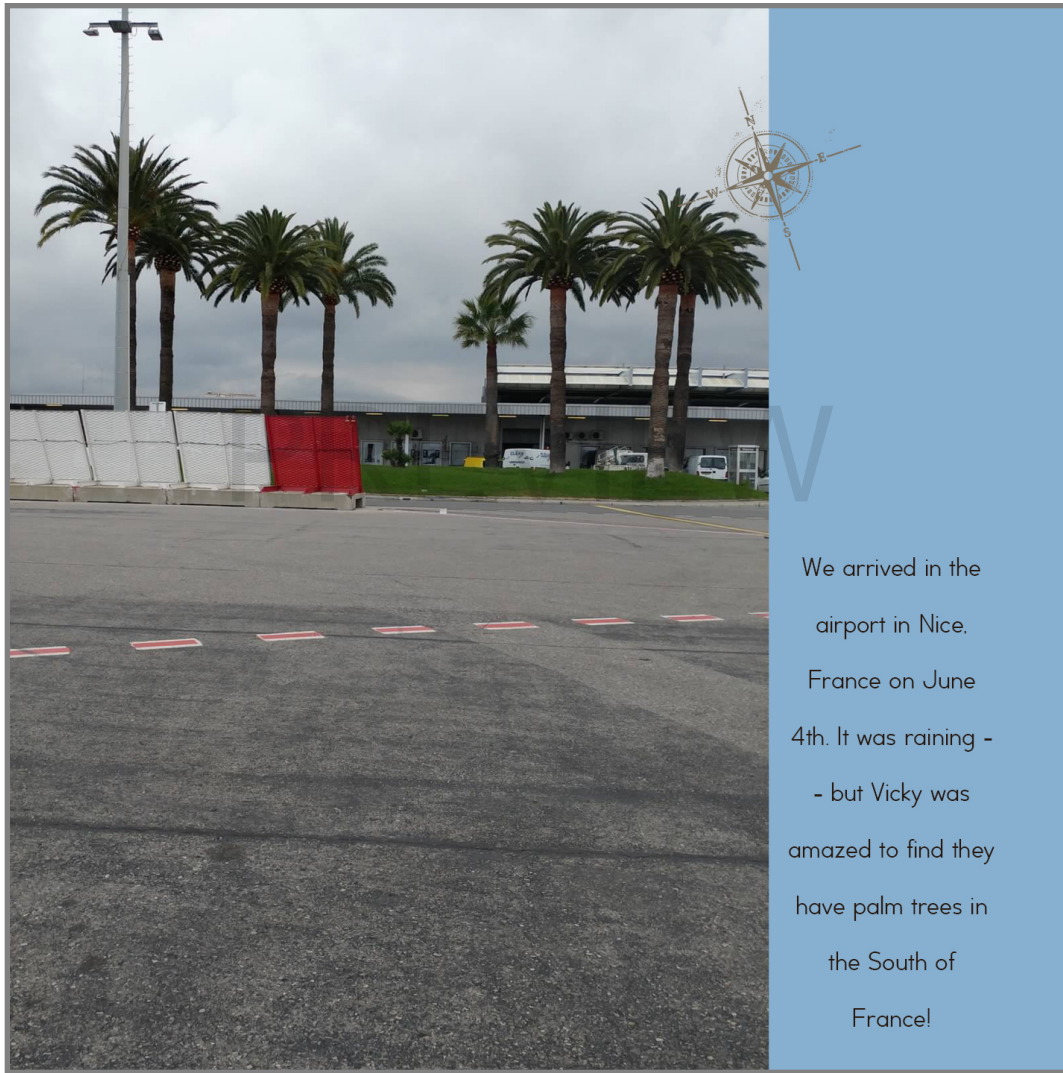
Vicky and Remi's trip to France

June 3 - 19, 2016

1	Cote D'Azur Aéroport	Aéroport Nice Côte d'Azur, 06206 Nice, France
2	Rémi's Hometown	83390 Cuers, France
3	Birthday Beach	Hyères, France
4	Closest City to Cuers	Toulon, France
5	Beach Day Part 2	Bandol, France
6	Lyon	Lyon, France
7	Alexis!!	Grenoble, France
8	Paris	Paris, France

Map of Our Trip

We started in the South and went North!



V

We arrived in the
airport in Nice,
France on June
4th. It was raining -
- but Vicky was
amazed to find they
have palm trees in
the South of
France!



Cuers: June 3 - 12

Cuers is the town where Rémi grew up. Cuers is a village in the Var county (closest U.S. equivalent) in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region in southeastern France, near the border with Italy. Cuers has 10,452 inhabitants. The oldest evidence of man discovered in Cuers dates back to the lower Palaeolithic (17,000 BC). The Ligurians and Romans settled in the Cuers area, leaving traces of three Roman camps, and an aqueduct.

The history of the village is marked by agriculture. Historically, Cuers traded in cereal culture, tobacco, silkworm, cattle, and sheep. The current agriculture is wine and oil productions--the town is part of the production area of olive oil from Provence AOC wines of the Moors (PGI) and Cotes de Provence.

It is a beautiful small town, with the only bilingual public school in Vars! This is where we spent the majority of our trip.



Portes anciennes du vieux village - Doors of Old Cuers



Pepsy Rémi's 12 year old cat.



Oppida pré-romains --
Ancient Roman aqueduct



Rues du Vieux Cuers --
Streets of Old Cuers
(remains of castle ruins)



This is a bird's eye view of Cuers, Rémi's hometown!





Patios outside in Rémi's backyard.



Pool area, also in Rémi's backyard.



Hut covered in ivy, in the pool area.



Inside view of hut, with a pizza oven!

La Plage de L'Almanarre

PREVIEW



June 6 -- Vicky's birthday!

Today, Rémi took me to the Mediterranean sea for my birthday!! He even put champagne in our picnic basket!! Later that night, his family took me out to eat at a beautiful seaside restaurant, La Marais (above).



June 9: We took a walk through Old Cuers. The office of tourism gave us a map with signs and descriptions of everything in the town. It's such a beautiful hike!

Top Left: Rémi and I at the top of Old Cuers!

Middle Left: Monument in front of the l'Eglise Notre-Dame de Santé

Bottom Left: Fountain of the Rooster in the center of Cuers

Top Right: l'Eglise Notre-Dame de Santé (the Church of Our Lady of Health)

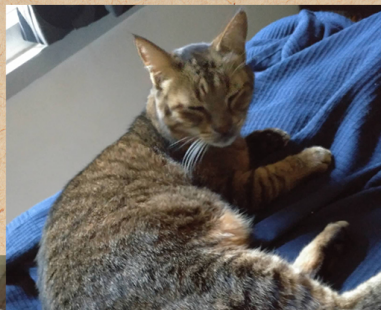


Staircase in Old Cuers, dating back to the era of Roman occupation. This is close to the beginning of the walking tour of Old Cuers set up by the Office of Tourism.



On June 10, Rémi and I took a trip to Toulon, the closest City to Cuers (about a 20 minute drive). We walked around to all the sights of Toulon -- the Opera, the many beautiful city squares, the Rugby stadium (RCT has won the European championship 3 years in a row!), and the harbour. There is a big navy base in Toulon, and next door is the Musée National de la Marine Toulon, chronicling the history of the harbour. We walked the pier and stopped for an ice cream. Here I discovered chocolat liegeois: chocolate milk, chocolate ice cream and chantilly cream!





Rémi's parents headed out to a wedding in Toulon, so Rémi, Pepsy, and I hung out at the beautiful homestead.

Rémi ended up with an awful sunburn from my birthday -- so we also spent the day nurturing his wounds.

June 11, Rémi and I took a trip to Bandol, a beautiful beach town about 40 minutes away from Cuers. We had another relaxing day of the beach, ice cream, shopping, and swimming in the Mediterranean sea.





Lyon & Grenoble: June 12 - 14

We spent the day in Lyon, a city about 3 hours away from Cuers and 1 hour away from Grenoble. It was crazy when we went because of the EuroCup football tournament, but the beauty of the city wasn't lost! We visited le Musée d'Histoire de Lyon within les Musées Gadagne, and took in the city.

Rémi decided it was a good idea for me to try biking for the first time because Lyon is very very bike friendly. So we did! We biked across the bridge that brought us into Old Lyon. The bike system is 1 euro per day, if you use the bikes in 30 minute intervals. Not bad at all! AND I felt completely safe the whole time. Who would have thought I would ever bike in a city? So trivial to Europeans but to me...a huge accomplishment.

We had a quick apéro in town and then we were on our way to visit Alexis!! We spent two nights with him as he showed us around his home town, Grenoble. We walked around the old town, visited the city park (complete with a garden maintained by the city AND their very own leaning tower!), saw the site of the Olympic torch when the event was held in Grenoble in 1968. Then after a beautiful French lunch...chartreuse!! We went to the distillery where chartreuse is made just outside of Grenoble in Voiron. There were over 5 million litres of chartreuse there! I finally made it to the promise land.

Life is Grand



Beautiful stained glass outside of a bakery!

In France, a boulangerie is a bakery that focuses mainly on baking breads. A patisserie is a bakery specializing in pastries, and headed by a pastry chef.



"Jackie Chan was not born in this house, has never lived here, and did not die here either."

Thanks for the notice, Lyon!



France has so many beautiful churches! This is another one in the heart of Old Lyon.



June 12

We spent the day in Lyon! This is one of the more peaceful cities I've ever seen. I even biked here. my first time ever cycling in a city!! It was unbelievable.



We arrived in Grenoble the night of June 12. We were so excited to see our friend Alexis Martin! We were to stay with him tomorrow night so he can show us around his city.



Get 27 might be one of my favourite liquors of all time -- tastes just like mint!



June 13 was spent exploring Grenoble.
The city park is very lush -- and they
have their own leaning tower (top right)!

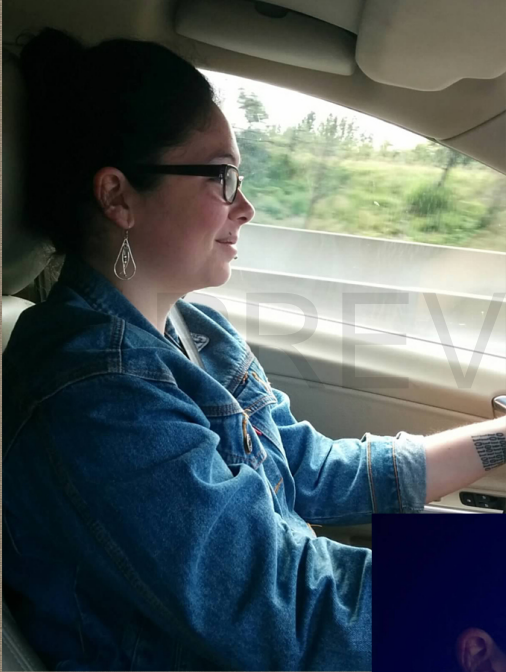


We took the car up to the Fort de la Bastille, which gave us a GREAT view of the city. Alexis and I hon hon hon'd all the way up the mountain.





We even got to go to the Chartreuse distillery! It was like heaven on earth. There are 2 monks who oversee the operation. We got to go into the "caves" where the barrels are -- and there were over 5 million litres of chartreuse down there! The barrels were enormous, and some quite ancient. We had a 3D movie presentation on the history of distilling chartreuse, and then a tasting!



June 14, we drove back to Cuers, where we would pack and head out for our trip to Paris. BUT! Rémi let me drive for two of the three hour ride! In France, folks drive on the right side of the road which made things much easier for me. What was hard was the strict enforcement of the speed limit..





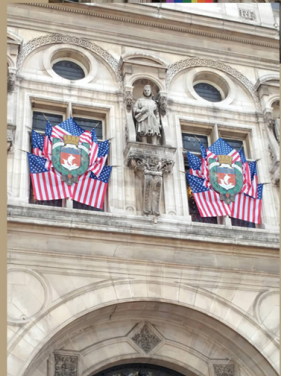
Paris: June 15 - June 19

We arrived back in Cuers on June 15th, and promptly left that evening for Paris. It was great to go back one more time before we moved on to the North of France. We got back in time for lunch with Rémi's parents, and then we packed up for Paris. Rémi's mom drove us to the train station in Toulon, where I would take my first ever high speed train! AND it was only 35 euros each! Wow.

I was really sad to leave the South, but Paris is Paris. Since I had never been to France before, Rémi and I both knew we had to go, and truthfully I was excited to see all the French national monuments, the historic sites, and experience some of the romance that the city boasts.

We stayed in Paris for the last three days of our trip, June 15 - 19th. We were able to stay with Rémi's friends Adrien and Camille while we were in the city, which was great because they were right near a central METRO line. The Paris subway system is superb -- clean, efficient, and well-scheduled. Such a difference from NYC!

ARRIVED



The city hall of Paris was graciously decorated to express their mourning at the deadliest mass shooting in US history, which took place at an LGBTQ bar on Latinx night. The rainbow flags flew in Paris.



TOP 10 THINGS TO DO IN PARIS

1. Have an authentic French dinner at the fabulously old-school Le Bouillon Chartier
2. Take an evening ride on the Grande Roue de Paris
3. Steal a kiss at the top of the Eiffel tower
4. Learn some history & pay your respects at the Panthéon
5. Shop your brains out at the Galeries Lafayette
6. Explore in the Bibliothèque nationale de France
7. Stroll through the Luxembourg gardens
8. Get up close to the Mona Lisa
9. Visit Notre Dame Cathedral
10. Eat. Drink wine. Repeat.



Notre Dame! It was so beautiful -- lots of stained glass windows and an elegantly painted interior.

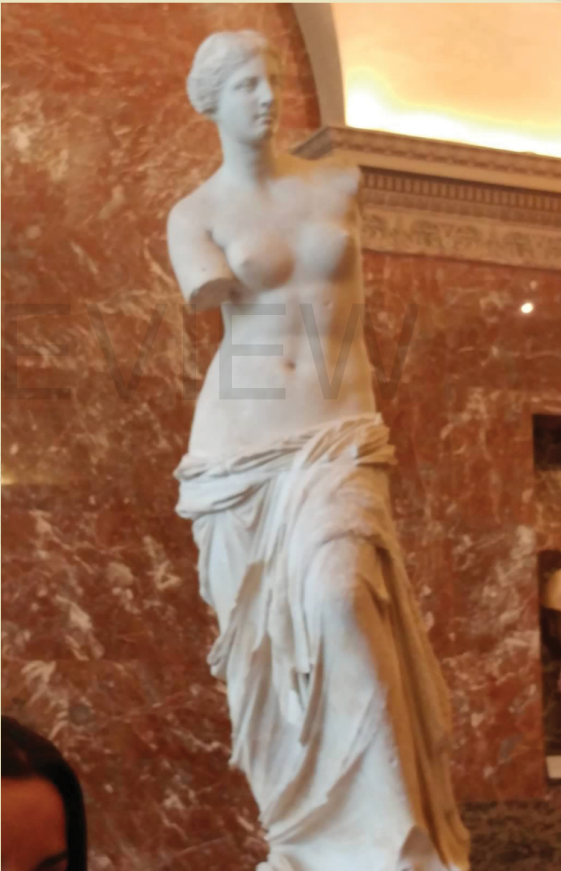
June 16: Musée du Louvre & L'arc de Triomphe



We got to explore around some of the historic sites in Paris today! After visting the Notre Dame, we walked down the Champs-Élysées to L'arc de Triomphe. After a proper 2 hour French lunch, we went to the Musée du Louvre, and proceeded to spend 3 hours just exploring the maze of artworks and historical monuments!

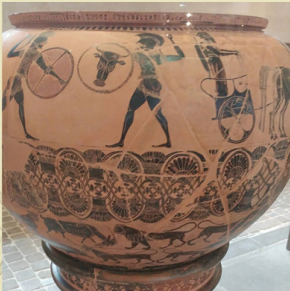


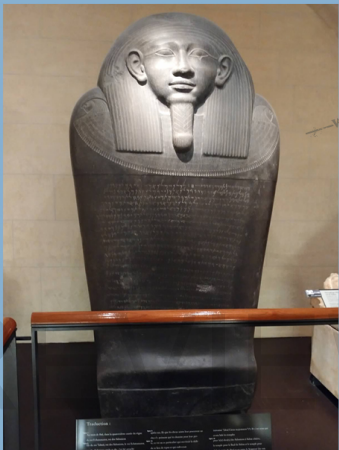
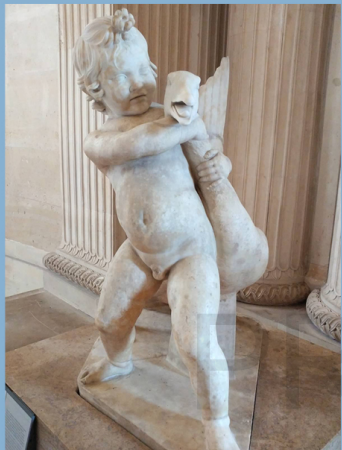
Top: Ancient Roman globe



Right: Aphrodite of Milos/Venus de Milo

Bottom: Ancient Grecian urn





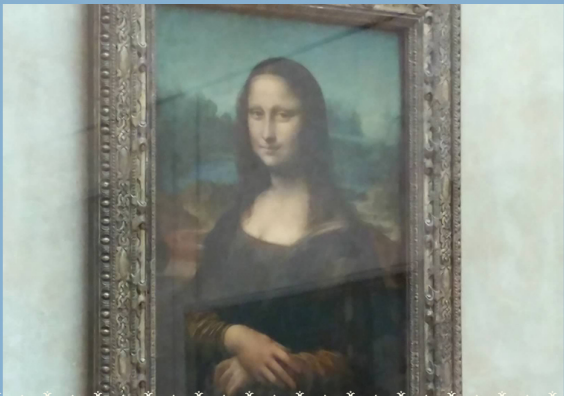
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Top Left: 'Boy Strangling
Goose'

**Vicky's favourite

Top Right: Sarcophagus of
Eshmunazar II, king of Sidon

Right: Da Vinci's "Mona Lisa"





'The Seated Scribe' painted circa 3800 - 1710 BC; Egyptian.



The Athena Mattei is exceptional in that it is a Roman replica of a Greek statue that has also survived.



That night we met Rémi's friend Nicolas for dinner and drinks! Rémi ordered a "demi" thinking it was 0.5L ... it was 0.25L

He wasn't very pleased...



June 17, we went to La tour Eiffel! Rémi and I walked the stairs, and then took the elevator to the top of the tower. We walked 1400 steps!



A birds-eye's view of Paris from the top of the Eiffel tower!

Sacre Coeur
The Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Paris



In France,
you drink
cider from
a bowl!

Le Mur des Je t'aime
The wall of I Love You







June 18: we visited the Bibliothèque Nationale de France! The librarians were on strike because they have no job security. Solidarity!!

What's cool about the BnF is that it is half a library and half a natural history museum. They have gardens and information about local wildlife and even some old astrophysics collections on display!

Church of Mary Magdalene



The longest spoon in France

Us in Paris! Dressed up a bit.





Foucault's pendulum, named after the French physicist Léon Foucault, is a simple device conceived as an experiment to demonstrate the rotation of the Earth

June 18

We visited the Panthéon, a building originally built as a church dedicated to St. Genevieve which now houses several national monuments, as well as a burial chamber for some of the most influential French people, such as Voltaire, Dumas, and Mary & Pierre Curie.

Above the crypt reads:
"AUX GRANDS HOMMES LA PATRIE
RECONNAISSANTE"
"To great men, the grateful homeland"





W

We walked from the
Panthéon to the
Jardin du
Luxembourg for
some R&R.





June 19:

Here we are at the Charles de Gaulle Airport, waiting for our flight back to NY.
We were already plotting ways to return!

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