

# STEPPING OFF THE EDGE

travels of a reluctant retiree

**MARCH 4, 2020 BY MIKE T**

## A long walk, a longer river, and a ghost tour

We rolled into San Antonio with anticipation and not a little dread at what our house would look like after our experience in Austin. The place was warm, charming, old, and had a great host. Ok, this one checks all the marks... a quick unpack, dinner of Salt Lick brisket and a can of beans. Now we were really vagabonds, the only missing elements were eating them out of the can and having all of our belongings in a bindle over our backs. This might be a good time to talk about our pack/unpack regimen. One day: just carry on. Two days: carry on and perhaps an item from the foot lockers. Did I mention we are, in addition to nine suitcases, traveling with two foot lockers either of which could comfortably fit a body. This from advice by uncle Carlo, "Always travel with room enough for a body or two." I am certain his advice had nothing to do with the espresso machine, pasta roller and various and sundry beauty supplies, but good advice nonetheless. Now three days required digging through various suitcases for that favorite pair of shoes or long sleeved shirt to make the stay just right, not to mention the dreaded bathroom scale. Yes, faithful reader, we travel with a bathroom scale (in one of the foot lockers, of course) . Because as everyone knows, going a whole three days without weighing yourself cannot come to pass. In truth, it has been instrumental in either an unnatural amount of guilt or occasionally providing just enough weight loss to send me on a binge of some local favorite. God help us in New Orleans.

Mental note after eating BBQ two meals in a row, pasta primavera tomorrow for sure.

We did manage to fit a walk in (naturally), just a short one to look for a grocery store. We found several on Google maps, so what could go wrong. By the way, we could see this enormous spire from our house, I think it was left over from a world's fair in the 60's. I joked, "Gee, if we get lost we can always find our way home, since surely you can see that thing from everywhere." This was to be more useful than you might think.

Can we talk about Google and their maps and searching for places? Not obscure places, not looking to find the one true cross or anything like that. How about a GROCERY STORE! We walked miles and miles and found a gift shop in a hotel, a chi chi restaurant with several dozen cans of food obviously put there for decoration, and a bombed out shell of something that was at one time called Big Daddy's Food Mart.

Remember that tower? Well, I kept it in my sights and lo and behold it did keep us on the straight and narrow. True, it did shrink considerably the further from our original path we wandered, but it was always there. In the end we surrendered and ate our brisket on some stale bread that I brought back to life with a spray of water, aluminum foil and the oven... did I mention the can of beans?

Next morning, out and about in the rain with Mrs T to a 100+ year old flour mill, Gunther House, with what turned out to be a pretty passable breakfast. Mrs T had a phone date with her buds back in Santa Cruz. At this point allow me to mention that the time zones do confuse the amazing Mrs T . She is constantly time shifting so when we sit down to make the call I asked:

What time are they expecting a call?

Mrs. T : oh, four or so

Me: so, it is two, what do you think?

Mrs T: just in time

No, it was noon back home, so off for another walk.

That night we did take on a ghost tour of the various hotels in the downtown, and in spite of me having hypothermia while our guide waxed on about severed limbs and swan dives off of 12 story buildings.

All in all, I recommend it, perhaps in the summer!

We did drive to the downtown, thank goodness. As cold as I was I would have gladly just curled up on a park bench for the night and let the fates take me if we had to walk back. And then there was this... we had the GPS bring us back to our house, and in spite of satellites circling the earth in geocentric orbit, despite the efforts of thousands of software developers, and despite the dominatrix attitude of the lady in the speaker, we got lost in front of our house! Yes friend, we drove back and forth and could not for the life of us recognize where we were living... well, thank goodness for the tower. It was in sight the whole time, so naturally I was calm.





*rolling on the river*

The following day, our third and last in this fine city, finds us having Mexican food for breakfast thanks to our intermittent fast program ... by the time we have waited 16 hours since the previous night's dinner, there just is not breakfast anywhere! And so, we walked what seemed like the length of the river. We neglected to recognize that unlike more dependable rivers throughout the world, this devious one had many "horseshoes" in which to lose your way. That little detour of a few miles got us home in time to have dinner with SC friends who had relocated. We met at the Pearl. This is a famous former brewery which later, after acquiring another beer company, became Paps Blue Ribbon. The amazing transformation from abandoned industrial complex to trendy eating and drinking center was impressive. We had drinks in the old tank room, complete with many of the ancient pieces of equipment still in place.





Our dinner was at a place calle Cured. The entry was a huge curing chamber for the many

many meats in residence. Apologies in advance for the following picture as well as the menu to my vegetarian followers... it is what it is.



*meat wall at Cured*

We were immediately relieved of our coats by the hostess upon our arrival, no doubt anticipating the meat sweats we were about to have.

Here is the menu and let me say, it was fabulous. I had, in addition to the often discarded parts of various animals, carefully dried and salted, a bucket of mussels... yes, many miles from the ocean and I went for the mussels and they were great.





Three day trip coming to a close, and by the way, since it was three days why the hell could I not find my wingtip sneakers, just acquired for Valentine's Day? Oh well, it will give me



something to think about on our way to Galveston tomorrow.



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