

Trip 3 – Episode #14: To Say We've Been In Labrador

In keeping with our tradition of making things up on the fly, after leaving Viking territory, we decided, almost on the spur of the moment, to take the ferry to Labrador. I mean, it's there. Why not? And afterwards, we could say we've been to Labrador.



They had an unusual system. You checked in to buy your ticket, and they gave you a number and told you where to line up. We got #10. We parked where they told us to park. And then, when they started loading vehicles, they would ask what our number was, and then tell us to wait, and eventually, when there was nobody else to load, they waved us ahead.



Not too long after setting out, there was a commotion and everyone was looking off the port side. Quite a distance out, we could see a few whales frolicking. They were breaching and diving and making great splashes. Unfortunately, through the lens of my little iPhone, it looks like nothing. But it was something.



The other interesting thing about the ferry was that it went from Pigeon Cove, Newfoundland to Blanc Sablon, Quebec. Which meant when we arrived, the time was an hour and a half earlier. But if we drove east for about fifteen minutes, we were in Labrador and put our clocks ahead by an hour and a half again!



And then, just to remind us that we hadn't left Newfoundland humour behind, there was this:



As we drove along the only road there is, the views seemed similar to Newfoundland.







A great place to be if you like your own company.



Lots of grand vistas.



Not a lot of trees. Which made it easy to see where the road ahead was taking you







There was a lot of construction along the (only) highway.



And some of it was a little scary. (But of course, we're intrepid, so no problem...)





We had a lovely chat with one of the construction people along the way. She was from Red Bay, which was our destination. She told us where to eat (which was pretty simple because there's only one restaurant.) And she told us what to eat. (Fish & Chips of course). Here, she's showing us that if you go jiggin' (fishing for cod), the fish has to be this size, or else you have to toss it back. Good to know.



A lot of the construction workers wore protective screens over their faces to keep the black flies away. (We'd been warned that if it isn't windy, the black flies could be pretty bad. And they were!)



We continued our drive through rugged but starkly beautiful countryside.





And after a couple of hours, we got to our destination, Red Bay.



Just inside the townline, there was a kind of welcome stand, inside of which was a whale, demonstrating the significance whales have in the area's history.



There was also another proud representative of the area.



But most of all, it offered a beautiful view of the town we were about to visit.



As we drove around the bay, and saw it at different angles, it really seemed like one of the loveliest little towns we'd seen.







We'd seen these Welcome Home signs in lots of places across Newfoundland, as part of the celebration that people were allowed to return after the pandemic. But this one struck me as kind of humorous.



A significant part of Red Bay's history was discovered in 1977, when they found a sunken ship, the San Juan. It proved that the area had been a regular destination for hundreds of Basque whalers, between the early 1500s and the early 1600s. They fished for whale and returned to Europe with hundreds of barrels of blubber. Their stylishly-designed museum, another World Heritage Site, tells the story.







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After a busy day, we settled into our campsite for the night, right beside the town's gas station/grocery store. But the sights weren't over.





At one point, I kept hearing ducks quacking nearby, and finally I found the source, as one of our neighbours guided a bunch of them into their pen for the night. I especially appreciated that she wore her special crossing guard uniform.



As the sun set, we assumed that would be it for the night.



But we were wrong. Because that was the night of the Sturgeon Supermoon, and we had a perfect night for it. This is just from my little iPhone (as are all these photos), so the shots aren't magazine-worthy, but trust me, it was stunning.





The next grey morning, we headed back toward Blanc Sablon, along the same (only) highway.





We were able to view the progress they'd made in the construction. The day before, this had been a hole we had to drive around.





Because we didn't get held up by construction, we made better time than we'd anticipated, so we thought we'd try to catch an earlier ferry. We got there just as vehicles were emptying off the recently arrived ferry, so I ran into the office, hoping we'd be able to get on, and remembering our experience the day before.

Not only did we get a ticket, but when we drove up, they waved us forward and we were the first ones they boarded!

So we said goodbye to Labrador and its flag – which I kept trying to get a good photo of, but this was the best I could do.



It was a fun adventure. And now, we can say we've been to Labrador.