

Leixões

Sep 25, 2008 @ 18:35 41:11.17N 008:42.33W

We are 1/3 of the way down the Atlantic coast of Spain and Portugal.

As dawn broke, with Nigel and John finishing their 0400 to 0800 hours watch, the annoyingly variable winds of the night passage disappeared, leaving a flat calm sea and a close up view of white sandy beaches, seemingly stretching for miles, near enough to reach out and touch. With the engine on slow ahead, we bumbled south in an early morning heat haze, shorts and T shirts donned. Each of us in turn took a long shower! Oh the delights of an on board water maker!

The decision to call in at the next available port was not difficult. Mike studied the pilot guide and brought us safely into Leixões. The harbour staff were friendly and helpful, guiding us first to the fuel berth, then the local yacht club bar for a lunchtime beer and eventually a perfectly adequate, if not rather tight berth. As usual, the locals stood chatting and smoking on the harbour wall looking to see whether I could bring the boat in safely. I did not disappoint them, despite my heart being in my mouth! We greeted the crew of the boats around us, from Holland, Malta and of course Portugal, with a wave and a nod. Several are flying the ARC2008 flag, indicating that they are on their way across the Atlantic in November, just like us. We haven't shown our colours yet.

Most important, of course, it is John's Birthday. Not that we need any excuse to celebrate. Simply berthing up after a tough night passage is all we really need! However, Nigel cracked open the bottle of champagne he had on ice for the occasion and we spent a pleasant hour relaxing in the cockpit, before the inevitable cleaning chores began.

I guess we will venture out into the town later for dinner, Portuguese style. Our plan is to leave again, bright and early and head for Cascais, 170 nM further south, on the coast near Lisbon.

Nigel Backwith

Skipper

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