



November 21st, 2023 edition # 2

## How to enjoy a moment?

As an adventurous teenager and child I often found myself cutting through sublime places like the odd waterfall or a high panoramic hiding spot provided by a wobbly tree. The swooping birds and mountains that cut skies often called forth one thought, “How can I burn this into my brain?” ‘Photos’, of course, was my grand idea. Photos of everything from places to food. And of the many photos I’ve taken, a few have pulled me back to reminisce on the emotions experienced in the moment. We all have such snapshots and unfortunately the camera can only take us so far. As a tool to reminisce it can sometimes reignite forgotten memories, to successfully capture one moment the way we experience it often only snatches a glimpse.

When I joined Class Afloat, similarly, I questioned how to best utilise my time, how to “best enjoy the Class Afloat experience?” I asked a friend 3 weeks in. He responded with ideas of universal friendship, and through such bonds the moments experienced would be far more meaningful. It reminded me of when I was convinced to get up at 5am to climb a big tree with some mates to watch the sunrise.



☀  
Taken by Tom during the sunset  
✓

We gave each other a more encompassing view and fresh thoughts. The people certainly do give a moment its character.

Fast forward a month and a bit, an additional 1000 photos line my back pocket. We step into the Sahara Desert with anticipation the dunes grow further we stride into the desert. We sit. We dance. We eat. And we climb to the peak of the largest dune an awe infused atmosphere catches us. Megan sets the mood with a few thoughtful words and we enjoy, in silence and togetherness, eight memorable minutes. A peach gold sky reflected the dunes. I breath in the silence only broken by the shutter of a camera or blow of the breeze. A great force of contemplation - the silence. I thought “possibly another factor in deciding the moment’s value”. It holds you in place and makes you take a minute. But a good minute is one where you can be truly present.

-Tom Abel

## -Our travels so far-

As of November 20th 2023 at 7:30pm, we’ve travelled a total of 387.9 NM.

Through night and day watch we’ve all experienced five days of bus rides (and a ferry ride), calm seas, having 12 sails up with the engine off, warm weather, and dolphins. November 21st marks the twenty-seventh day of sailing, and by now we have learned lots of German sail commands.

### Ordinary seaman objectives:

- To become a part of the crew to work alongside the regular crew
- Be able to guide backshaft crew
- To become an able-bodied seaman



The Beacon stands by: Truth, Authenticity, Respect, Integrity, Fairness, and Engagement



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## Ocean Article



I've been on countless planes. These huge, manmade, metal contraptions that soar through the skies, carrying millions of people across countries, continents – even the globe. I've been on underwater trains, experienced immersive virtual reality, studied rocket ships and satellites. I have a computer in my back pocket, one on my wrist, and another tucked away in my bag.

My world is – and always has been – steeped in human innovation. The inventive leaps and bounds taken by those before us, and the steps being taken now are overlooked by many, not the least by me. However, in the past couple weeks, it hasn't been any of the current inventions that have affected me. Not the scientifically manufactured pig embryos, or the artificial plastic-eating worms.

It's a metal boat called the Alexander von Humboldt II. It was at some point during the muddled seasick days that all felt like the same 12 hours that I began to foster this deep respect for the Alex II. My body couldn't keep any food down, couldn't stand for more than a couple of minutes and God forbid I tried to look at words on a page or a moving screen. Yet the Alex II kept crashing along through the waves, and me with it.

Even with all of my 21st century innovation piled up to my ankles around me, nothing could make these tumbling days easier. I'd gone into this trip blind, never having even been on a schooner before. My parents, with a similarly vague idea of what sailing on the Alex would be like, packed my bag with seasickness medication and I was certain that'd be plenty. I imagine its along these same lines of thought that sailors of the past set off, with a little less Dramamine and a little more fish oil.

However, the sailors of years past are infinitely stronger than me, because to spend the day nibbling bread in the fetal position was just simply not possible. There was work to be done, and the wooden boats of the 15th century had no room for moaning and groaning. The Alex II, and this trip in its entirety, is the product of hundreds of years of developments on the front of taming the sea. We are in the easiest possible position, and yet no one on this boat would ever call this journey thus far “comfortable”.



It's a testament to the human condition that it is some crew members third or fourth times on this boat, that despite the work and the discomfort and the downright pain that comes with these green sails, they cannot resist. Like moths to a flame, humans are drawn to what they cannot control.

If you had asked me a couple of months ago, I would say that humans have tamed the sea the same way we have the earth. It's only recently, having stared out at the fine line between steel-grey sea and the horizon for hours at a time while the spray whips at me like bullets at a hundred kilometers an hour, that I've recognized the sea as the untamable beast she is.

Sailing is not a conquest, or we humans would have abandoned this battle years ago. It is a trade. We respect the ocean, tell the world of the sea and her unfathomable strength, and in so she allows us to bob along, nosediving again and again into her waves, just barely coming out on top. We sing and speak of the sea, and in return she lets us sail.

- Francesca Hayes

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## Journey: Storm Reflection

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A journey always has a transformative aspect whether it be physical or mental, but it always leaves one with a new perspective when complete. Every journey has a different outcome regardless of who has the journey and how identical they are. In the article “Journeys: Exploring Your World Inside Out” by Abigail Brenner, she states that “the journey is often the key to moving [people] into new phases of their lives.” Regardless of the positives or negatives, the journey takes you away from your starting position and leaves you with memories and experience. I came to Natura as someone who never sailed a day in their life but was excited to travel and embrace this adventure. As we progressed through the beginning of the school year and I built connections with my peers and got a sense of the structure and how Class Afloat was run, we moved on to beautiful Heino in the Netherlands. In Heino, I experience a large amount of people in my cabin as a preview to the boat, as well as lovely hot chocolates from the restaurant named Buffees.



Taken by Jordon 



 Taken by Henry M

Eventually, I got to the boat and what a first portion of a journey I had: throwing up 18 times, sliding from starboard to port and no cellular data all played a crucial role in my experience toughening up and destroying me at the same time. The storm was the ultimate testament to my journey so far: sending me flying, dismantling my diet, and worst of all, delaying my long awaited short leave due to the category 3 hurricane with 80 knot winds. In this experience, I discovered that with high tensions and low sleep, keeping the peace with minimally sarcastic comments and targeted jokes is a win win for all. The journey in this situation was overcoming all the hardships I faced, for example, eating bread several times a day when the cook was injured as well as keeping my balance while carrying dishes of all kinds, praying a wave doesn't send me soaring into the porthole which it did several times. The storm had a negative impact on me in the end and I took great sorrow in my delay of arrival to Porto. My classmates and I have similar sentiments to our lag in the ocean going: demoralized and tired beyond our belief. A learning aspect of this all is just simply that I can persevere when it come down to it which gives me an abundance of confidence. The journey I had through the storm is evidence of my overcoming hardship and is something I will never forget.

- Joseph Kostko





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## Porto, Portugal Food Review!

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Reviews written by: Lily and Simone

### Pastel De Nata

Expectation: 10/10

Reality: 15/10

Coming to Porto we had extremely high hopes for Pastel de Natas. After talking to some people familiar with the Porto area and scouring Google Maps we were ready to take on the challenge of eating as many Pastel de Natas that could fill us up. Not that we needed to use Google Maps; there are seemingly endless bakeries and pastry shops lining the streets of Porto. Anyway, after many, many Pastel de Natas from different shops, the results are in. The price of Pastel de Natas can range anywhere from 0.40 euro (grocery store and surprisingly amazing) to 2.40 euro (do not buy these you are getting scammed) each, but on average a really good Pastel de Nata goes for around 1-1.20 euro. Collectively, the best Pastel de Natas were from Fabrique de Nata, famous in Porto for having the best Pastel de Natas around. They definitely lived up to the hype. Picture biting into flaky, buttery pastry, and crispy from the oven, filled with warm, sweet, smooth vanilla custard. Picture how good that would be and make it 10x better. That's what the Pastel de Natas tasted like!



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### Francesinha

Expectation: 4/10

Reality: 6.5/10

The Francesinha is an extremely popular sandwich found all over Porto. It is a combination of many different meats (sausage, ham, and steak or veal) between two pieces of white bread covered in cheese and in a sauce (some ingredients include: onion, white wine, ketchup, port wine, Worcestershire sauce, and oxtail soup mix). There are many different reviews of this confusing dish. Some thought it was very good, some told us not to try it, and some did not mind it, but thought it was a weird combination in a sandwich. Personally, I felt that it wasn't bad, but it was strange altogether. The bread got soggy because of the cheese and sauce and that was a little gross. It is also very heavy in the stomach, but it could be nice to eat on a cold rainy day. I tried it because it is famous in Porto, but I don't feel like I need to have it again.







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## Porto, Portugal Food Review!

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Reviews written by: Lily and Simone

### Fire Roasted Chorizo

Expectation: 8/10

Reality: 8/10

Walking into a restaurant we walked past a table and decided we need to try the sausage on fire that they had on their table. We ordered it, it was put on the table on a skewer in a dish filled with alcohol and then they set the alcohol on fire. We had a moment where we were wondering if we blow it out or if we keep it on fire. When we tried to blow it out the flame only grew bigger, so we left it. Eventually the fire does go out, but if you don't turn the stick, one side will get burnt. Unfortunately, this did happen to us because we didn't realize we had to rotate the chorizo. However, it was still very juicy and flavorful, and it had the perfect amount of spice.

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### Alheira

Expectation: 7/10

Reality: 9/10 By the end of shore leave in each country, meals become more and more of a selective affair. Budgets are running low, and stomachs are getting upset from all the rich, unfamiliar food. This night was our second-last in Porto and after many restaurants being closed, unavailable for groups, or too expensive, we were ready to eat just about anywhere. We finally found a spot for four in a cute little restaurant on the river that met all the criteria for that night: within budget, traditional Portuguese food, and walking distance to the bus stop needed to get back home. I specifically was on a budget and wanted traditional Portuguese food. Alheira was affordable and I'd never heard of it, so it seemed like a great option. After googling what it was, I learned it was a Portuguese 'everything' sausage, known to be garlicky and slightly spicy. As someone who adores garlic this sounded perfect. My sausage came, filled with different meats, breadcrumbs, and the promised garlic and spices. It was delicious, especially when combined with the sliced tomatoes, lemons, and spicy herb breadcrumb blend that came on the side. I'm not normally much of a sausage fan, but after this I might just have changed my mind.



### Sweet Potato Garlic Bread

Expectation: N/A

Reality: 10/10 Good things to keep in mind while reading this: I LOVE garlic bread and had been severely deprived for two months of wonderful garlic bread before having this. On night one in Porto, the atmosphere on the ship was so beyond relieved and excited. We had just sailed through a cyclone and crazy weather and were all itching to get off the ship to eat something other than sandwiches. As usual we separated into our little groups and off we went. My group was celebrating a special occasion; we had just had a birthday in the group and were ready to spoil our friend with a nice birthday supper. After some intense Google Mapping (sense a theme?) and review-reading we had found the lucky restaurant and were all settled in looking at our menus. Our waitress that night was the sweetest lady ever and was very excited to explain her country's food to us. As we were waiting for our meals, the life-changing moment occurred. Trays of garlic bread were brought out to us by our lovely waitress. "You have to try this!" she exclaimed and once the smell wafted over to us, we were hooked. She explained how the garlic bread was made from start to finish, as well as all the sources of the ingredients. She explained that in her culture it was traditional to include sweet potato in the kind of bread we were served, and that it was her kids' favorite due to the bright orange color the sweet potato provided. Best garlic bread ever.





## Snack tips!

Hungry, tired, or just bored of everyday boat food? In this article we will explore what snack is worth to pack and what food is best on cruise. The floaties, teachers, and crew on Alexander Von Humboldt 11 have been asked and a plethora of snacks have been brought forth. Oreos, granola bars, gummies, chips, pretzels, and more keep the sailors at bay. Ramen - for those missed meals, cereal - for those late night cravings and chocolate for those... well, whenever! If you're bored on watch, shell some peanuts or strategically trade dried fruit. (Hint: mango and pineapple are the best). Juice boxes may also spice up your life, and pop tarts may save your day. Wanna feel like a chef? Cut a mango and sprinkle it with some tajin. Feeling brave? Ask the cook to freeze grapes. Fresh fruit is a treat, but canned lasts more than a week. An interesting thing to do in a different country is try their local munchies. There are many more foods that can be bought and it is not vital to stock up, but it is said that good food can change your mood. So next time you're about to take sail fill your snack pail.

-Ali

lost to the ocean never to be found again.  
if found somehow give to owner. very missed ♥  
Contact at : [lost@shoes.gmail](mailto:lost@shoes.gmail)

## WRITERS WANTED

Do you want your writing, art, or photos to be seen by the Class Afloat community? Do you want to contribute your ideas, stories, or topics for our team to read?

Then your on the right page!

If interested in adding to our next edition of "The Beacon", Please contact one of the newspaper team.

Team: Ali, Lily, EsaBella, Tom, Henry C, Francesca, or Simone. And hopefully more to come!







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Everyone knew everyone, all of us were getting close. The roots of lifelong friendships had begun their hold and the sense of community we all so craved was finally noticeably present.

## The Strength it Takes to Sail

In my initial Class Afloat interview, I was warned that Class Afloat was not a holiday. I was told that it would be extremely mentally difficult, and that sometimes the enjoyment that would have been so rampant during ports and experiencing new places would be overshadowed by the fact that I was plain exhausted. After that interview I got shaky and had my doubts. What I have learned since then is that life truly has the highest highs and the lowest lows.

I have severe anxiety and had to go through therapy for it multiple times. For years, my fear and anxiety kept me from getting close to people, experiencing new things, being away from home, and doing the things I loved. It controlled my life and I was deeply unhappy. Being mentally ill like that takes its toll on the body and causes even more exhaustion. I remember fighting against my mind every single second of every single day for a year, coming home from school in tears and not having enough energy to even get myself a snack. I used to wonder if there was even a point in trying to fight against it or trying to strengthen my mind if I was just going to feeling low all the time. I am beyond proud of how far I have come since those years and the resilience I have shown in healing. Now, I can approach situations with a level mind and I have enough confidence in myself to be assured that no matter what life throws at me, I will be able to push through it and thrive again. Yes, of course I still have insecurities and my doubts still get in my way sometimes, but overall I am immeasurably stronger. However, I was nervous to come to Class Afloat, and have to be vulnerable around people I did not know, constantly have people in my bubble, and not be able to avoid conflict should it arise.

Looking back over the last two months, it is insane to see my growth and the growth of my peers around me. When you look back, you mainly remember the good parts, I suppose. I remember seeing the ship for the first time. Compared to meeting everyone at Natura, it was crazy how far we had come.

Those first few days in Bremerhaven were a whirlwind of adrenaline, nerves, longing, and preparing to be truly isolated from the world for the first time. Our first sail to Cherbourg was a sail full of vomit, stumbling around, and adjustment. That's not to say there weren't good parts. Overshadowing anything negative was the wonder of the full night sky, the marvel of travelling to new shores surrounded by new best friends, all by way of a sailing tall ship... crazy. Walking through Cherbourg was a shock in itself since we were all land sick and dizzy. Sitting down for supper that night, my entire group was convinced that the floor was slanted; shocker: it wasn't, we were just going crazy. As we departed Cherbourg and bid farewell to phone service once again, we had no idea what we were in for. At least for me, and I'm sure for many others, the sail from Cherbourg to Porto was undoubtedly the biggest challenge of the Class Afloat journey to this point, and for me, one of the most mentally challenging experiences I have had to go through. In fact, the reason I am writing this article and willingly sharing my mental health history is due to that sail, and what I learned about myself and others.

Sailing through the Bay of Biscay, through a Category 3 Hurricane- equivalent storm and then the constant not knowing when we would see land again brought me down further than I thought Class Afloat could ever do to me. I was exhausted and sleeping any spare moment I could. I even slept through classes and through meals. Everything in my life was hectic and I could never get a moment of peace which I desperately needed. I couldn't walk straight down a hallway and I couldn't open my closet without everything exploding and falling over the floor. I couldn't shower without bracing against a wall and I couldn't pee in a toilet without gripping the sink and I couldn't eat. Not eating was the worst, because I was hungry all the time but the thought of food was nauseating. Breakfast, lunch, and supper were comprised of whatever food I could stomach, and more often than not, just green apples and plain crackers. It was probably one of the hardest weeks of my life.





## The Strength it Takes to Sail -Cont.

Especially when the storm started, and then we couldn't even see the sky. Waking up dead in the middle of the night for watch, where only 2 students were allowed up on the deck at a time, clipped in and stationary in one spot, was draining. Sleeping took energy which is so oxymoronic, but true. If not falling out of bed was a battle, getting to sleep was a war. I will never forget having to do lookout from the helm, and being terrified for my life, having heard all the old sailors' stories. I remember the sea looking like walls and those towers of water pummeling our poor ship. The waves would crash over the bow and the spray would hit us all the way back at the helm, pelting like the sharpest hail. One day when it was too rough to cook, we had sandwiches for breakfast, lunch, and supper. Every morning at colours, we would be on our toes waiting for good news, and every morning we would be disappointed. More days would be added onto our journey and Porto became a fantasy. That was when I discovered there could be many meanings to the term 'lost at sea'. Being lost does not always mean dead or unable to be found. To me, it meant feeling like the world was spinning in my mind, dragging me down, and not being able to see a way out.

However, now that passage is over, and a calmer one has begun. It's better now to reflect and realize that everything does happen for a reason; that rough sail steeled us and strengthened our tolerance of discomfort and forced growth. This sail has seemed glorious and knowing how bad the ocean can get makes us appreciate the good days even more. If you think about it, days are just filled with minutes and there are always at least some good minutes in a day, even when you're sailing through a hurricane. Now we can brag forever, and appreciate the calm seas ahead of us. This experience broadens your mind and makes you clue in to just how beautiful the natural world is. Would I have signed up for Class Afloat if I knew I would be sailing through 15 metre waves and hurricane-force winds? Probably not.

But now that I have been through that experience and been better for it, I see the beauty of the world even clearer than before. It is difficult to be in a bad mood when the sun is shining, the ship is in full sail, the ocean is such a deep, beautiful blue, and you are surrounded by wonderful, genuine people. Even night watch now holds an appeal: laying in a huge cuddle puddle with people you get closer to every day, singing Christmas carols because who cares that Christmas is still a month away? Watching the bioluminescence in the sea as waves fold over, and the ethereal sight of watching dolphins seemingly glowing in the dark as they swim through it. It makes you take a deep breath and think "life is good".

- Anonymous



Taken by Jacob





# Art Page!

This page is meant to present pieces of art, poems, stories, photography, or anything that shows self expression from the crew, faculty or students.

## Mother Moon

By: EsaBella

Goodbye mother moon  
as father sun will arise  
He's coming soon  
Don't be surprised

It's a ritual of balance  
Mother, you tuck away your stars  
and father you take away the dark malice  
but I know mother you wont be far

Mother moon don't be sad  
father sun will aluminate the dark we had  
Your shining grace makes us calm  
But you won't be gone for long



Photographs By: Liam



Art by: Luna