

November 27, 2005 – Bay Front Park

We awoke fairly early (for us) due to the noise of the repair work going on next door. Our road is lined with hotels, most of them being small affairs 2 – 4 stories high, none of them being part of any corporate chains. This was the cheap part of town. All the hotels on our street lay on the west side of the street, with a sandy beach and the Atlantic Ocean on the east side of the street. Therefore, one two-lane road and one sandy beach totaling ~300 feet separated us from any storm surge if a hurricane were to come ashore. This short distance offers little protection, hence all the buildings on our street showed hurricane damage; broken windows, ripped-up sidewalks, cracked walls, crumpled roofs, etc... Repair work and construction was going on inside of, on top of, and in front of many of the hotels here. Breakfast was continental style at our hotel and consisted of pastries, Danishes, rolls, tea and coffee.

Figure 1: This is the beach in front of our hotel in Miami Beach.



We then drove to Little Havana. This is the Cuban part of town, and stretches from the middle of Miami to the coast. It is comprised of one long central road, NW 8th Street, where all the shops are located, and the surrounding neighborhoods where the Cubans live. The Cubans living here were the wealthy folks who fled Cuba due

to Castro's rise to power. They brought their money here and bought up this land, so the land here is actually quite expensive even though the houses look quite shabby and run-down. We parked just off the central road, and walked up and down the area. All the stores had signs in Spanish, and we did not hear a word of English anywhere in this town. Lunch was at a sidewalk café where nobody spoke English, except for one customer who got us seats and then had to leave. Newton ordered the soup of the day, and was handed oxtail soup. Yes, there was a big tail in the soup, complete with several vertebrae. Casy got eggs with rice and beans.

After lunch we drove to Bay Front Park in Miami, which is an expensive, fully developed section of the beach front in Miami. We got on a harbor cruise; \$15.00 per person. The boat was dressed up to look like a pirate boat, though the crew looked either too fat or too old to do much pillaging. This 2-hour cruise took us around Miami ocean front, and showed us the rich and expensive homes of the famous people. We saw the residences of Madonna, Ricky Martin, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Antonio Banderas, and Jennifer Lopez, Angelina Jolie, among others. Many of these mansions showed hurricane damage; damaged roofs, up-rooted trees, boarded-up windows, etc... We also saw capsized and half-sunk yachts everywhere in the harbor; victims of this summer's hurricane season. After the cruise, we walked around the shops in Bay Front Park and had dinner at the food court. We drove back to the hotel after this.

Figure 2: Beach House of Madonna



Figure 3: Beach House of Ricky Martin

