

MANTA, ECUADOR



When we arrive at the port of Manta, it is early in the morning, and another ship, the "Saga Rose" is already berthed up alongside the Van Gogh. Yes, this is the ship that Nana travelled on so frequently, and it is interesting to note that it is about the same size as the Van Gogh.

As we have been to Manta before, and not been too impressed with it, we have decided today to take the shuttle bus to a shopping mall on the outskirts of the town.

The bus takes us on the same route we travelled on last year, through the city, with its dilapidated shops, rubbish tips and levelled buildings. There are armed police everywhere; some are even sitting on top of the many old trucks carrying fish from the docks.



The shopping mall is pleasant enough, and we feel fairly safe. There are a number of fellow passengers here, and we spend a few hours wandering around the modern shops, buying some basic supplies from a supermarket, and having a drink, and a bite to eat, in one of the fast food restaurants on the top floor.

We are due to leave at 3.30pm, and there is an announcement from our Cruise Director, asking for 3 passengers to contact Reception urgently. We all have to show our plastic swipe cards when we embark or disembark the ship, so this announcement can only mean one thing - we still have 3 missing passengers!

Eventually the 3 people concerned are seen getting out of a taxi and rushing up the gang plank. Passengers on the top decks can be heard cheering the intrepid group as they make their way onto the ship. We are very glad that it is not us receiving all the attention!

