



# A Moving Experience: 5 Days. Whining and dining on Pandora



CFlisi Just now · 4 min read ★



Image by [indigo papillon](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Every morning it's like the first scene in *Avatar*. My eyes fly open and I am wondering what universe lies around me. (For

sure it is not Pandora).

Today the anxiety alarm woke me at 5 am. I washed my hair and realized that the hair dryer was already packed. No time to nudge it out so on with the day, hair come what come may.

In an apartment building you can't start banging around boxes in the early hours. I opted to screw together Giada's cage, since that is a quiet task. Seeing it complete again, I wondered how in the world I will manage to handle it and my dog at the same time, leaving aside my other suitcase, my carry-on luggage, and my handbag. No point in thinking about that now. I had to convince my dog to get inside the now-enclosed space (less inviting, more frightening) so I could take a picture of her as requested by the agency. Accomplished by tossing a snacky into the cage and snapping a quick pix of her as she lunged for it, before she realized that she didn't want to be inside and backed out.

Shortly after sending the picture, the agency wrote back: "Thank you for your response. Please verify that when your dog stands up in the cage, her ears do not touch the ceiling." This precision is probably why it costs more to send a dog across the ocean one way in storage than it does to send a human round-trip in business class.

We have more space to move around given the absence of furniture and the removal of 34 cartons. But we are quickly taping together other cartons to box up the many — oh how many! — household goods that have not yet found their

cardboard shelter.

Such as our wine. We are not wine connoisseurs and I barely drink, but we do have a couple of cases of good wine for special occasions (think: Thanksgiving). I had planned to ship them to the US because the wine is a label not easily found stateside and the price is more than double.

Well, hold on. The moving company was flexible and accommodating about most of our shipment contents, but wine, they said, would be a problem. Italy doesn't care how much wine you export, but the US is fanatical about how much wine you import. It's legal to import a personal wine collection as part of a household shipment, but it costs more money in fees and duties, and will delay delivery for weeks to give customs officers a chance to inspect the contents, according to the shippers. They were undoubtedly telling me the truth, but I suspect they would have gone the extra mile for a client billing at least € 10,000. Since mine is a far more modest project, they weren't inclined to extend themselves.

The shipping agent explained that aficionados with hundreds of valuable bottles are willing to take this route, but did it really make sense for two cases of amarone? He suggested that I take four bottles of .75 liters each in my hand baggage, and save the rest for my next trip. That might make sense if I weren't massively overloaded already because of my dog.

So the wine had to be cuddled in paper and carefully stored in sturdy cartons. Same for the unopened bottles of EVOO, aceto

balsamico, and condiments. According to the labels, nothing was set to expire in less than three years; therefore we could reclaim them upon our return without running any alimentary risks.

As storage space dwindles, it becomes harder and harder to remember where essential items are. For example: blank paper. We had stacks of blank paper, needed for printing a seemingly endless number of official documents. But they were moved when the storage unit holding them was sold, and who knows where they are now? We earmarked little corner for magic markers, scotch tape, masking tape, scissors, paper clips, and labels. Fortunately that corner is a built-in shelf of the apartment, so it can't go anywhere.

A moment of angst when I was boiling pasta for a meal: had I already packed the *scollapasta* (colander)? Thank goodness it was in plain sight in an open carton waiting to be taped shut.

The spice cabinet hasn't been touched yet, or so I thought. When I went to grind pepper on my pasta, I remembered that the pepper mill was already on its way to Virginia.

In the late afternoon, we went to say goodbye to my *cognata* (sister-in-law) and her husband. They will be keeping family items that we don't want to carry across the ocean and back. They didn't ask how the move was going and we didn't volunteer: explanations would have been useless. Like most Italians of their generation, they have lived in the same place since marriage. They have no concept of what it is like to pack

up one's life in boxes and start afresh somewhere else. It's as foreign to them as Pandora is to humans in *Avatar*.

[Moving](#) [Italy](#) [Packing](#) [Wine](#) [Avatar](#)

[About](#) [Help](#) [Legal](#)