

## **Day 34 August 27, St. Pierre and Miquelon, France visit cancelled – Captain’s Reception - Baked Alaska**

**St. Pierre and Miquelon:** The day started with choppy sea, a stiff wind and fog. The ship was scheduled to dock in St. Pierre on the Island of Miquelon which is near the southern coast of Newfoundland. The Island of Miquelon is officially a French Overseas Region, which is politically equivalent to a mainland French Region. The population of St. Pierre is 6500 and the people are of Basque, Breton, Norman and other French regions. Many of the St. Pierre residents trace their history back to French colonists called Acadians. In the 1600s the Acadians settled the Canadian Maritime Provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island as well as the land that became the U.S. State of Maine. During the Seven Year War between the major powers of Europe (1755-1763), the British deported more than 14,000 of the French Acadians from the maritime region in what became known as “The Great Expulsion”. Many of the deported people later settled in Louisiana where they were known as Cajuns. In later history the island was apparently a lucrative way station for liquor on its way to the US during the years of prohibition. The Hotel Robert in St. Pierre was a “home away from home” for Al Capone during those times.

We were anticipating the ship docking at 8am and then we would walk in to the little town with no special plans. Luckily we hadn’t put much effort into planning because about 8am Captain Andre van Schoonhoven came on the PA system and announced that our visit to St. Pierre had been cancelled. He said several factors led to his decision:

1. There was heavy fog and wind in the harbor.
2. Under current wind conditions the docking facilities were marginal for a vessel the size of the Maasdam and the ship might sustain damage.
3. The St. Pierre pilot boat was not in operating condition and the rubber Zodiac boat the pilot had planned to use to get to the Maasdam was not adequate for the current wind conditions in the harbor. Therefore the pilot had cancelled his trip out to the ship. It was too risky to take the Maasdam in to the harbor without a local pilot.

With this decision being made the Maasdam headed for Boston with an extra sea day rather than a day in St. Pierre. It now appears we will arrive in Boston Harbor on the order of 4am on Saturday, August 29. That is a few hours earlier than originally scheduled and should make it easier to get our stuff transferred to the airport for the trip home.

We will not post any more on the blog until we arrive home and can post a wrap-up entry.

The information above was posted early on Aug. 27. The following blog info was posted on August 30 after we returned home.

**Captain's Reception:** About 4:30pm there was a Captain's Reception in the Rembrandt Lounge for the early dinner seating passengers. Champagne and white wine was served. Captain van Schoonhoven made some remarks explaining again why it was necessary to cancel today's visit to St. Pierre. His main presentation was about thanking the passengers for using Holland America and praising his staff for a job well done on the Voyage of the Vikings.

The Captain then proceeded to call the heads of all the departments up on stage as he recognized the contribution they had made to the service we



received during the cruise.

After the reception it was time for early seating in the Rotterdam Dining room. It was a formal dress night and as usual lobster tail was prominent on the menu.

**Baked Alaska:** Also part of the menu was the traditional baked Alaska dessert. The waiters all lined up and paraded around the dining room with a plastic LED light on each baked Alaska dish. While they paraded we all waved out napkins in the air as a band played an energetic marching piece. Here on the right, Caroline is doing her best with the napkin waving while behind her the dishes of baked Alaska can be seen held high as the waiters paraded around the room.





After the parade our waiters, Mike and Ari, brought our baked Alaska to the table and served each of us a generous portion. Very Good!

We were sailing smoothly toward Boston with a slight list to starboard because of a stiff wind. Tomorrow will be another day at sea. However, instead of relaxing all day, some time will have to be spent packing all our stuff and getting it ready for transfer off the ship in Boston early on Saturday morning (Aug. 29).