

Monika von Borthwick

# *Chorizo & Co*



Overwintering in Spain in a different way

## MoWuKnuffels?

After the painful death of my well-travelled dog **Wuschel**, a new member joined our small family. We fostered **Wurschtel** from an animal shelter and he explored a part of the wide world for the first time on this journey. This made him so enthusiastic that he wanted to tell all his friends at home about his experiences. He shifted to writing letters. But if the events exceeded his horizon of experience, his mistress **Monika** intervened helpfully with additions. The ten-year-old dog **Knuffi** endured with calmness the many ups and downs of a long motorhome journey. After all, she had already accompanied her owner to Canada, Mexico and the USA. So, she wasn't easily impressed.

In his diary, Wurschtel describes his daily experiences continuously and comprehensively, and with his own sense of humor he reflects on the host country and the people he met.

**Monika von Borthwick** belongs to the older generation and lives in culturally rich Upper Bavaria. In addition to her professional activity, she looked after bus travelers as a tour guide in Europe. Even then she wrote down her experiences in the country and its people in detail. After the death of her husband, she decided to travel alone and explored numerous areas in Europe and North America on her own with her newly acquired motorhome and her two dogs. She discovered her love for storytelling and sent detailed reports home by email. In this winter diary about Spain the newcomer Wurschtel is now enthusiastically at her side.

**Wurschtel was as a dog  
a catastrophe,  
but as a person  
irreplaceable.**

*(based on Kurt Tucholsky)*



## **Chorizo & Co Overwintering in Spain -in a differen way**

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## **Introduction**

### **Spain in winter?**

“Is that something for us?” That’s what I asked myself during the ongoing preparation. Sure, all three of us did not belong to the youngest generation anymore, but having winter “pensioner holidays” in Spain so early? To escape the wet and cold winter weather of our region, I only saw this way out. Thank God I still had some emergency money left over from the reserves for the next adventure in North America and I decided to dare this experiment.

In my team there was a new family member, which I took on such a long journey for the first time after the death of my big dog Wuschel last year.

Wurschtel is a medium sized male dog, who was pushed around in an animal shelter for years: never had a permanent home. He thanks the new love for him with intensive attention and affection. His temperament and his sociability must still be sometimes guided in ways, so this can be exhausting at times.

He gave the present book its title: “Chorizo”. It is a certain type of Spanish sausage and means “Wurschtel” in the figurative sense.

Knuffi is a quiet and affectionate lady who has become used to travelling with me for ten years. She can easily deal with stuff. She has inherited her hunting instinct from her mother and her obstinacy from her father. I calculated about five months for this long-term journey. Portugal had been too wet for me this time last year, so I took the coast of Spain. How far south we would drive was to be decided by fate.

An indispensable advisor and companion, as well as the basis of my explorations on this long journey, were the one or other compact guides from the WOMO publishing house, Mittelsdorf and the omnipresent Internet. For geographical illustration, I chose the freely usable “Map Creator 2” from the Internet.

This diary does not replace an official travel guide. It is rather meant to be a stimulus to travel with open eyes and hearts and to open up small and big encounters. My friendly and bright dogs always played a big role as a human catalyst.

Upper Bavaria, in summer 2019  
Monika von Borthwick

## **Wurschtel and Knuffi**









## **Introduction**

### **Get to know me!**

#### **A new family**

Hurray! I have a family again! From today I am living with the Mo(Wu)Knuffels! My name is Lucky, but I strongly suspect that my new mum will soon give me another name with Wu... Otherwise the “family name” would have to be changed! But it doesn’t matter if I still feel comfortable with it.

I am a male dog in his best years (8 years old) and therefore a perfect fit for my new “sister” Knuffi (7 years old). At the moment she is still a little bitchy - like women sometimes are! - but I bring a huge portion of patience into this chaotic household.

Although I am a sensitive and calm companion, I ended up in an animal shelter for the second time, because nobody really had time for me. Now I hope that my current name will bring me luck after all. I am looking forward to long walks with the two new friends and I will surely see a lot of the wide world. Of course, I must take care of my unusual mistress. That’s why I am always close to her and accompany her at every turn. Only the kitchen and the bathroom are unfortunately taboo for me, and I am not allowed to join my mistress on the bed (yet)!

I think the coming days will be quite exciting for all three, until each of us gets used to the other. I like to travel by car,

but the motorhome took a lot of getting used to. In one month, we will go on our first common trial holiday to a lake in Bavaria.

I will not be able to replace Wuschel, my predecessor. She was much, much bigger than me and accompanied my new mistress through thick and thin. I have a different personality; I am very alert and radiate a lot of charm. Unfortunately, I do not know who else has contributed to my mixture besides "Pomeranien". Does that matter? I have already quickly learned to bark with Knuffi in duets. My new sister takes over the soprano and I alternate between bass, baritone and indefinable cough... It sounds terrifying!

## **Trial vacation**

For the first time in my life, I could travel in a motor home. At the beginning, this was anything but pleasant, because my new companion had already taken the passenger seat as co-pilot. "Common law" she let it be known and growled at me accordingly. So, I had to take Wuschel's former place under the table. I didn't like that at all, because as a curious and open-minded dog I really wanted to know everything! Besides, I had never been restricted in my movements with a three-point belt before. So, I panted, kicked and gasped all the time until it seemed to be too much for my new boss. After all, she had to concentrate on the traffic. Without further ado she declared me an "emergency case" and gave me an herbal dog pill with lots of sausage. Suddenly I realized: it was great to sleep on the floor undisturbed! The others could do the work in the meantime.

The camping site was great! We had a nice shady place, far away from annoying people, all for ourselves. Apparently, my new lady was unsure that I would behave and preferred to keep us isolated. At the beginning this was

justified but I learned quickly and thoroughly. You must know that my boss had trained children before. Now it was my turn! Very consistent.

To compensate for my efforts, she prepared a beautiful place for me, where I can overlook everything while the doghouse is parked. It is near the fridge and the kitchen stove. There all the delicious smells pass by my nose, which makes my mouth water all the time. Monika thinks I am greedy. I am not a gourmand but a gourmet: one with endless preferences.

Going for a walk already works out very well. Knuffi sticks her nose into our newspaper "nature" together with me, runs alongside on the leash and pees over my markings. I have already understood two new commands: "Slowly!" - then my mistress stops abruptly and "Wait" - I do the same as Knuffi and step on the brake. Well, my new mistress is no longer the youngest either, she only walks on two paws and must watch her heartbeat a little. So I must just be patient and obey. But the great thing is that we are on the road for at least two hours every day and if we are successful in learning, we never run out of treats. Yay!

Don't be surprised if at some point you get to read the name "Wurschtel"! and don't even try to talk the creator out of it! No one has managed to do that either for "Knuffi" and "Wuschel"! In these matters she is an individualist and very peculiar. But she finally got her name with "Wu..." Anyway, I will do her the favor soon, but "Lucky" is and will remain my birth name. After all, I've been carrying it around with me for eight years now, even though it hasn't brought me any "luck" until today. Wurschtel contains at least something edible - which again fits perfectly to my appetite.

I know that I am extremely photogenic, especially when I hold my head to the side a bit playfully. I am quite happy

with my new wife Knuffi and I handle her like King Drosselbart in a German fairy tale. Somehow, I'll get rid of the rest of her nonsense with time, and we'll surely become good pals. After all, I can learn lot from her, because I didn't learn much etiquette at the home or with the other short-term owners. Apparently, you should not jump at people - no matter how happy you are - or just jump on tables and benches, so I will have to restrain my temperament a little. I have one thing in common with my new girlfriend: I hate thunderstorms just like her and look for the furthest corner in the WoMo to hide.

You're Lucky, the lucky one!

Your *Wurschtel*, the greedy

## **Familiarization**

Hello, my dear MoWuKnuffel fans!

I just must tell you about my new adventures because I am so incredibly proud of my successes. Unfortunately, I can't send you any pictures of our last WoMo tour because my mistress had her hands full all the time trying to slow down Knuffi and me in our thirst for adventure while we were walking. We both have become a full team now, but the "Grande Dame" does not want to play with me yet. However, the race to win is already going quite well, especially when the goal is the feeding bowl.

My new girlfriend is a real water rat. Where she discovers a puddle, she puts her distinctive little belly in it and then shakes herself so hard that I can consider myself showered. I prefer to keep a more reserved attitude: at most I dip my right paw and then a small sip from the bottle. That's enough! The paws can then be cleaned in bed!

On Monday I could run around without a leash for the first time. Guys, that was a feeling! Out of gratitude I always went back very quickly when my mistress called me by name. A treat would maybe pop out of her trouser pocket. I have already learned to react to both names. It has turned out that I am always the "sausage (Wurstchen)" when I have done something great; with "Lucky" my learning success is a little more modest or leaves something to be desired. A very sneaky method! She must have learned it in school. Since our last trip I am used to the motorhome - short: WoMo as a second home. That means, after an initial Indian dance of about five minutes and a few sharp looks from my boss, I calmly lie down on the floor and enjoy the gentle

rocking. No more natural flower drops are necessary to calm me down, like the first time.

From time to time, I also look for a nice viewpoint on my own seat. But that is not exempt from danger, because if my mistress takes a curve too fast, it hits me on the snout, and I land on the carpet despite my seat belt. Everything must be learned!

So that she really doesn't forget me, I stretch my curly head (without curls!) between the two front seats from time to time to demand attention. She has already understood this well and I love her hands between my ears. Oh, here comes love! If she still praises me for my good behavior, the world is absolutely fine for me, and I retire to my regular seat for the next quarter of an hour. Until the next sharp turn!

## **Changes**

Dear Lucky or Wurschtel Fans!

Now I have totally changed my outfit. My mistress imagined that she had to fit me with a summer suit, not off the rack, but tailor-made. However, this time I had to agree with her, because the light fur is more comfortable in the heat than the nice hairstyle.

Gosh! You cannot imagine the drama until I was ready, thank God this procedure only takes place every four months. A fidgeter was a sleepyhead compared to me! But the two ladies at the hairdresser had me well under control. Then I was bathed as well! Everyone knows that we from the pointed family have an extreme allergy to every drop of water. In the end I survived the hot desert wind and landed on the dissecting table again but this time dry behind my ears. A pedicure would not have been necessary anymore, I found myself irresistible enough with my big and attentive

ears. One can recognize again that I am a teachable dog. The glasses designed around my nose and up to my ears now show a clear advantage!

I wonder if I will ever learn to overcome my anxiety and keep my mouth shut. Mistress still has a lot of work to do. At times she seems to be quite annoyed. Sorry! But I try to compensate for this with many flatteries and trusting looks in the evening. Then her troubles melt like wax, and I can continue to hope for goodies.

## **Parenting Attempts**

Somehow, I must have gotten on my wife's nerves with my protective instinct the last days. Sorry! I always mean well with my defensive attacks. After all, I am the only gentleman in the house and must protect my ladies from possible dangers. It gets to the point where my vocal chords even react if a bike falls over somewhere in Moscow or an attacker coughs three kilometers away. And soon I have Knuffi at my side to help me! My mistress grabbed the phone and started talking about school and "difficult to educate". Hopefully, she did not mean me. But nobody had told me before how I should behave correctly, and so far, I have thought it all out and taught myself - apparently not always completely correct.

Before I started school, I hoped to get a school bag with delicious contents, just like the two-legged pupils. But unfortunately, I only got a four-meter-long leash, which sometimes jerked unpleasantly when I wanted to go too far. Again and again, I had to run after my mistress, because as soon as I wanted to go my own way, she turned around and I did the same.

If all this turning around becomes too colorful for me, I will have to get into the habit of walking closer to her. Let's see

who has the bigger head and the longer breath. After all I belong to the family of the top... see widow Bolte, a caricature of Wilhelm Busch. I'm afraid I can't keep this up for long, because after only 10 minutes my willpower decreases enormously. Knuffi doesn't do it perfectly yet, but she does it very well. Maybe I should imitate her from time to time!

Somehow, on this first evening I understood a little bit that not all four-legged friends are enemies and not all two-legged friends have to be yelped at. At the end of the show, I was quite peaceful and could even flirt with the teacher's big dog without fear. Now I let myself be surprised by the coming school days. On Saturday, the whole pack always goes for a walk and then relaxes together in a beer garden! That will be exciting! Later, I'm even supposed to go to the zoo, the city center or a wholesale market hall. At the moment I can't imagine that: so many legs at eye level. Just thinking about it gives me anxiety neuroses and a strange scratching in my throat. Come school, come manners or even better: come time, come advice!

## **Learning achievements**

Where do I even start? Maybe with my experiences at school? With my learning progress? Okay! Then I can tell you first that I hardly enjoy barking at the fence anymore. I don't even get very upset if a car turns into our street somewhere or a two-legged visitor appears nearby. If I don't want to or can't listen to my boss, suddenly a stupid noisy sock comes flying from somewhere and prevents me from continuing my hectic warnings. Then I rather look for refuge with my protector. There are at least comforting cuddles there. In the meantime, I still hear the simple sound of these UFOs more than enough!



From time to time, I already manage our walks on the leash well. Unfortunately, the many smells around and my active mates in the classroom distract me enormously from concentrating on my mom. It's like in the human school: You have to collect the single letters with a lot of effort to be able to read really great stories (about Wurschtel for example!) later on. Damn exhausting and sometimes a bit frustrating!

For my efforts I got a great leather leash, which sometimes snaps a bit loudly when I want to go my own way again. The best way to do this is to turn around and go back to the group. This constant concentration on the bipeds is incredibly stressful, I tell you! After one lesson I am knocked out and sleep on my bench in the WoMo. Knuffi has it easier. She has known Monika for seven years now and knows how the hare run (or the deer jumps and the mouse scurries!). She consoles me and motivates me not to give up. Well, hopefully! Anyway, I usually have this stress three times a week. Maybe I'll be glad when the holidays come soon!

Our walks on Saturday are great. We're out with the whole pack. In the meantime, I've even learned to move between all the classmates without smelling a potential enemy in each one of them.

Friends! This will probably be the last letter from cold and foggy Bavaria. We are going "on tour". No idea where Spain is! I'm already glad if I get to know my village and its surroundings. What is a sea? I know only puddles and pools! How do you bark in Spanish? I never travelled much when I was a foster child. But Monika is tired of the cold weather and wants to be warm in winter. I can understand that. In the middle of November, we are supposed to set off - if her heart is OK and the doctors in Munich give her the green light. But that shouldn't be a problem, because if you

practice American line dancing every Sunday, do water gymnastics, take part in swimming for the elderly, join a "Heart Gymnastics Group", visit a fitness studio (listless) and spend more than an hour with us every day, you can't be in such bad shape! That's why I can say: *"Hasta la vista! Adiós! Mucha suerte!"*

## MONTH OF NOVEMBER





## Arrival



## On the Road again Wurschtel's 1<sup>st</sup> letter

At last! With some pulling and choking our mistress had managed to get us all in the camper at lunchtime. But she did not look particularly happy. That was probably because our broken rear light had not been delivered in time. (Two weeks waiting time! - What does that mean?) It took her too long, also because of the (albeit expected) snow. The car mechanic had to cover the broken part with a temporary adhesive and plaster it foolproof. It doesn't look too bad now and might even last until we get home! Otherwise, we will try to have the broken light fixed in France. After all, that is the home country of our rolling dog kennel *Rápido*.

What? Why? Didn't I tell you that just before we left last Thursday, some idiot buzzed us in the back? (Editor's note: Here the writer is mistaken! The mishap happened when the driver backed into reverse.)

The whole trip was terribly foggy, and a lot of trucks were heading towards **Karlsruhe**. Mistress drove extremely carefully and observed all speed limits. We were not allowed to attract the attention of the security guards with our slightly higher than allowed total volume. We wanted to arrive at least to the country of our European neighbors. I think they are not that fussy in France and certainly not in Spain! I made myself comfortable on my back seat and took a first nap with a little rocking motion.

As usual Knuffi got the passenger seat as an alleged co-pilot. I couldn't understand that with my little dog's brain, because she wasn't capable of reading maps or operating the radio. Anyway, she claimed the right of the "first-born". I would also like to enjoy the better view. She sleeps most of the time anyway.

Mistress had chosen a cheap camping site in **Offenburg** at a camping dealer. Completely free, even with electricity. That could only be right for us, because in the evening it got bitterly cold, and we had the small heating stove in continuous operation. We had to be economical with our gas. Our supply had to last six months, so it was only tapped in emergencies. The light was quickly turned off, because our boss had been busy since six o'clock in the morning with preparing the apartment and driving.

From now on the holidays could begin: our Spanish adventure could start. I'm already very excited! My first long trip abroad! See you tomorrow!



## **Wurschtel's 2<sup>nd</sup> letter**

After a cool night with a red nose and woolen socks (No! - Not for me!) we all woke up early - despite soft electric heating! It wasn't far to go for a walk and the morning toilet in the industrial estate. But together with Knuffi I found a spot where I could put my brand.

After a hearty breakfast, we drove along narrow roads and free motorways past **Mühlhausen** to the neighboring country France. In **Belfort** we had to stay on the motorway, because the country road was only allowed up to 3,5 t. As

already mentioned: We had a slightly overweight cargo! This was not tragic in terms of costs, because we were soon allowed to leave the highway and stroll through the beautiful *Vosges* mountains to **Baumesles-Dames**.

There, a nice parking place for us WoMos was arranged with a lot of green at the harbor and financially it was within the limits (8,00 € with electricity and full disposal). **Baumes** is a nice old small town in the valley of the little river *Doub*, with some old walls, but a little shady due to the high rocks around. As we were already there in the early afternoon, we made ourselves comfortable and finally went for a longer walk. I noticed that there are also interesting molehills in France.



## Summary

### Wurschtel's 3<sup>rd</sup> letter

Hi, friends! We made a giant leap in time and distance! We greet you now from the surroundings of **Perpignan, Latourbas Elne**, already near the Spanish border. Here we have found a cheap pitch for ten euros, which even has Wi-Fi and electricity. You couldn't grumble! Besides, after a long stretch on the road we needed culture again. So now I can tell you a little bit more because our laptop was about to run out of battery. On the way we had always stayed in places for free, but without electricity.

Great performance: In the past days we cycled almost 1,450 kilometers (not biking like B&R! – Monikas cycling friends), only paid 8,00 € once for the parking fee and 4,30 € for the motorway fee. Everything else was for free, thanks to the book guide from *Reisemobil* and a great navigation system. Of course, it was more time consuming to drive the French national roads with their roundabouts and thus we barely managed more than two hundred kilometers per day. Also, some places were very narrow, especially these small contemplative wine villages at the *Rhône*.

Mistress hardly ever got started before nine in the morning, even if she crawled out of her feathers at seven o'clock. At four in the afternoon, it was almost dark again during this time of year!

The many roundabouts and road thresholds were annoying. At times I got quite lightheaded from all the carousels and hop-hop! But now I have developed a good



technique to grab on to my seat and no longer touch the floor in front of me with my nose. In case of need, I even fly onto the carpet!

Once we had to climb up to 1,200 meters and down again to get from **St. Etienne** to **Lyon**. That was not planned. But we were lucky with the weather because otherwise snow chains would have been recommended.

There is not much to report about our approach. You are more interested in Spain. Of course, I'll write in more detail there.

Today my mistress had a cleaning day, because after a good week there were "Hempels" (dustballs) under the bed - as we say in German!

It's a good thing that we had a new stove, because according to the weather forecast it would get noticeably cooler in the next few days. Our old heater had given up in **Tournon**. But the thermometer would not go below zero degrees, as predicted in Germany.

It is possible that we would stay a little longer here because our mistress wanted to try to get a new rear light. If this needs more time, we could pass the time by the sea and come back to this nice place for sleeping. Therefore, it is quite possible that you will hear from us again from this corner of France.

Monika has asked me to give special greetings to three people: Hilde's thick socks have already been "arctic-tested" and have provided many a warm foot, and Ruth's delicious onion sausage has helped us get over some hungry moments. Of course, Mrs. Ulrich's wooden guardian angel has done his job - never stayed away on such a long journey! But we did not want to overload him with tons of requests.

Mistress especially enjoyed being on the road again. She probably needs these daily little adrenaline rushes for her well-being on the trip into the unknown. Well, she should have them! Then at least she will sleep well! Knuffi and I were satisfied with her permanent presence, and we were happy every day to be able to work as a Bavarian triumvirate!

But now I must become a little annoying to make it clear that my stomach has a certain agonizing emptiness. *Adieu*, friends!

Your Wurschtel and travel mates.

## Intermission (1) from mistress Monika:

Dear Wurschtel-fan-community!

Today, I am going to speak for myself, because Wurschtel probably did not really understand the events of the day!

Today's attempt to replace the broken rear light failed twice. The workshop *Rápido* in **Perpignan** only had a free date again in mid-January (!) and the replacement workshop promised me a delivery date of up to ten days! No, thanks! I did not want to wait that long. I intended to finally reach a warmer climate! Friends had written to me from Seville and told me it was about twenty degrees there.

This morning there was thick snow on the border mountains and in the lowlands, it had poured over the night. I preferred to risk the trip to Spain. From now on the distances were relatively short and the stays were pleasantly long. We had the worst behind us.

I decided without further ado not to drive to the previous campsite - also because **Latour bas Elne** had damn narrow streets and I had kissed a traffic sign on the way - but to get going towards Spain. However, because of the weather conditions and my frayed nerves (looking for a mechanic!) I cut out the winding *Corniche de Côte de Vermeille* (with two stars in the guide) and chugged the sixty-five kilometers to the next destination on the country road through the interior of the country.

Finding the designated parking space on the Spanish side (Information in *Reisemobilatlas*) was an adventure in itself. Until **Fortià** my GPS guided me without any problems. But then I had to follow the description in the atlas, because I had to go over dirt roads.

In the description it didn't sound very exciting: "... about 0.2 km after the end of the village (which one?) turn left into the dirt road *Camí de Siurana* (road sign of course not there and gravel road with potholes - so my gut feeling sent me to the right!), about one kilometer to a small settlement of houses, first road left to the end, there right, first driveway left (...which I had overlooked of course and almost ended up in an olive grove!)".

At some point I saw a younger gentleman in the rear-view mirror waving his arms and giving me signs. Therefore, I drove the dirt road slowly rocking backwards and swung into the gate entrance. We had landed at the (very friendly) end of the world, in an absolutely natural environment, in a landscape protection area of Catalonia... and we were the only guests.

Why not drive more civilized roads? So, the reader will ask himself. Amazingly simple: between Barcelona and Perpignan there is nowhere cheap to stop and stay overnight at this time of the year! Of course, several campsites were open, but we wanted to save money for the time being. Not even Fini's (Bavarian girlfriend) farewell present "España discovery" (for those who are not initiated: pitches for one night on selected wineries) gave us anything useful!

At the beginning of November, the campsites were closed and there were only a few places with pitches in Spain. This was my only chance... and this site should have been closed as well because the municipality of **Fortià** - for whatever reason-did not promote this kind of business anymore. Whether due to the nationality of the operators (English and German) or the conservative attitude of the Catalans, the owner only opened the place for "friends"! That's just the way it was! My two companions could explore the whole

terrain without a leash. That was as exciting for them as finding our sleeping place was for me.

Outside the wind is whistling now -19.04 pm - and the WoMo sways like a ship of the desert despite our protective wall. I am dog-tired and will soon crawl in my bed. By the way, Wurschtel had his first experience with the sea today. But he will report that himself!



## **Bathing pleasures Wurschtel's 4th letter**

Hello, hello, friends, here I am again!

Well! That salty puddle of water in **Angeles-Sur-Mer** yesterday was something else! I had never imagined such a huge lake in my life. How could I have imagined that I would do such a thing as a Swabian-Bavarian child from Höchstädt/Danube? I was deeply impressed and approached the event very carefully and suspiciously. Oops!



Something sloshed over! It was better to go back, if possible, laying prone and on all fours! My boss called it bulge, ripple, wave, or something similar. In my ears it all sounded the same. At the second try I dared to be a bit too brave, and I got unexpectedly wet paws! This time the retreat came with a quick turn! No, thanks! I hate water in my fur, and then I hate cold water...

I preferred to sniff the fine sand beach. There were many new smells and aromas for me to discover. Unlike me, Knuffi wet her neat little belly in the waves and shook with delight