Cane Will Travel

By Debbie Ables · August 23, 2025

A gift cruise, a rhinestone cane, and the tiny white button that saved the whole trip.

Taking months off to care for my “Bestie” in Georgia after heart surgery, I was gifted with an all-expense-paid cruise to Italy, Greece, and Istanbul the following June. I had no choice but to accept; she had already paid for it in full. She stated, “At our age, it might be the last big trip we could take.” She had a point.

Upon that information, I decided to get in better shape. I worked hard in water aerobics to walk longer distances, climb more stairs, and gain better upper-body strength. A week before our trip, I got overzealous and pulled a muscle in my right thigh. I could barely walk, but determined to do my best, I went to the drug store and bought a “Blinged Out” cane with rhinestones all over it. If I was going to look like an old lady, I was going to do it in style. It turned out to be a great idea, only it was short, and I spent the entire trip bent over like the letter C. Grey hair and walking with a cane, I found that Europeans value the elderly. They take care of their Nanas and Poppies out of respect and are treated with kindness.

After a wonderful 10-day trip visiting outdoor cafes, historic sites, up and down stairs while navigating stone-laid sidewalks, my back was starting to give me fits. After a long day of multiple stops at various international airports, carrying two suitcases and a big shoulder bag, I was spent when she said, “Why didn’t you raise that cane to your height?” I looked at her, questioning what she meant, as she grabbed it, then pushed a tiny white button, raising it 6 inches. I was standing straight for the first time in 10 days! I just stared at her not moving until we both started laughing so hard we were crying. People all around us could not figure out what was going on, which made us laugh harder.

Now we had to find a hotel with shuttle service from the airport and back the next morning, which added to our ever-evolving day, but we have a memory that will last a

lifetime. It was all worth every frustrating minute.