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Rick Steves was right - Check out those less traveled places.

Monday, June 17, 2013

If you've seen his documentaries on the Travel Channel, one segment is titled "Surprising Bulgaria" and I agree. I was quite surprised – pleasantly so.



I began my travel blog entries (June 9th) by highlighting our 46th Anniversary which just happened to fall while we were docked in Bulgaria. This was one country I knew nothing about nor did I ever expect to visit there. Yet here we were on a cruise to the Black Sea and Bulgaria was on the way.

We traveled the beautiful countryside.



Ancient castles and fortifications reflect the history of the region.

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We visited a “fortified house” which documented the reality of life when citizens had to defend themselves again invaders.



This family lived very well, at least in times of peace.



The local people were very welcoming to us as we toured their country. In fact, many of them waved to us as we drove by. Could they really be that glad to see us? Then the guide pointed out that we had rented the official bus of the local soccer team which had their logo painted on the side.



I wonder if anyone got a good look through the windows. We certainly weren't new recruits. LOL

Once back at the ship, we were greeted by a band playing American music, including the “Stars and Stripes Forever.” They definitely want to encourage tourism. Our cruise line was one of the few that go all the way to the Black Sea and visit Bulgaria.



After my experience yesterday, I was glad to be able to run on land again until I met some not so friendly locals – 3 loose dogs that seemed to know I didn’t belong there. They began to bark and stood across the path as if defending their territory. I walked away backwards very slowly. Fortunately, in the other direction from the ship I only met fishermen.

Later I learned that when the Communists moved people from the countryside into apartment houses in the cities (buildings described as “Stalin Gothic”), their dogs followed them, but weren’t allowed in the apartments. They ran loose and these are their descendants. Wow, there’s history everywhere.

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.
(Robert Frost – “The Road Not Taken)

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PICKIE98

I have seen every single Rick Steves show. Your pics look like his!!!!!!
2915 days ago



CD13629552

Ha! A couple of the pictures reminded me of a movie I saw when I was a child - Chitty Chitty Bang Bang! And now I will have songs from it stuck in my head for the rest of the night!

Cute that they thought you were a soccer team. But then you really did get the treatment you deserved when you received that welcome back aboard!

Do you carry pepper spray for the dogs? I hesitate to use it (because of suing owners) but it's better than being torn limb from limb so I carry it when I go out alone. Then again, maybe customs would be a problem.
2918 days ago



MERRYMARY42

great pictures again, Thanks
2918 days ago



ONEKIDSMOM

Glad there was another way to go... getting between a dog and what it wants to protect is NOT a good thing! Once again gorgeous photos.

Spark on!
2918 days ago





CD13545024
again, enjoyed the trip.
2918 days ago



LINDAKAY228
Loved the pics.! Glad you're having a great time and got to run on land again, in spite of the dogs.
2919 days ago



NWFL59
Glad your having a memorable time on your trp. Thanks for sharing.
2919 days ago



CELIAMINER
Sorry about those dogs, but the soccer bus incident is funny! I do like Rick Steves. The most important lesson I learned from him was accompanied by video of an older, overweight woman dragging a large suitcase with tiny wheels over cobblestones. The message: There are those who pack light and those who wish they had. It reinforced my dad's message from childhood: Don't pack so much that you can't manage your own suitcase. Of course, packing for a cruise is a totally different animal!
2919 days ago



HELEN_BRU
Wonderful documentary and pics. You sound like you really enjoyed yourselves.
2919 days ago



WILSONWR
Sounds like you took away some really great memories from this trip (although I'm sure you would just as soon forget about the dogs...). Your trip sounds like a whole lot more interesting than the cruise we did to Cozumel! Glad you had such a good time!
2919 days ago



COCK-ROBIN
Thanks for showing these beautiful pictures!
2919 days ago



BOILHAM
Excellent. A word of caution: In my experience, the less frequency with which the road is travelled, the more wit and survival instincts one should possess.
2919 days ago



DR1939
Travel does help one to understand history. The impact of the plagues on the feudal system was one that really struck me. Also flying over Hungary and seeing how the farmers lived in villages and farmed strips of land outside the village helped to understand how collective farms made sense for these areas. We've not visited Bulgaria, but have it on our list. I have a friend who did a Fulbright Teaching Year there and loved it.
2919 days ago



CD10259955
Enjoy the experience, it sounds wonderful!
2919 days ago



FITFOODIE806
How beautiful. When traveling, DH and I joke, "Well, Rick Steves says..." We love him!
2919 days ago



MJREIMERS
What beautiful pictures and a great opportunity to travel! It sounds like you are having fun. What a great memory of running in Bulgaria! I bet you could experience the landscape a lot more when "doing your thing."



I look forward to more pictures and hearing about your travels.
2919 days ago





BARB4HEALTH
THANK YOU!
for sharing.
2919 days ago





GINIEMIE

Beautiful pictures. I like watching Rick Steve's he does have some good plans.
It's sad about the dogs.
They probably did know it was a tour bus, and were being friendly. The soccer team insignia didn't

hurt.  



2919 days ago



GLUECIPHER



2919 days ago



ELRIDDICK

Thanks for sharing
2919 days ago



DMEYER4

beautiful pictures thanks for sharing
2919 days ago

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