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Christmas Markets on the Danube – The short version

Monday, December 22, 2014

This is the 3rd year in a row that DH decided we should cruise a European river before Christmas.

We began in Prague which isn't ON the Danube but a great place to start.

The market between the Cathedral and the Astronomical Clock draws a huge crowd.



Traditional music is played on a rotating schedule



One night we raised our glasses to the memory of an old friend, now deceased, who introduced us to this restaurant in 2008. Here's to you, Vladimir!

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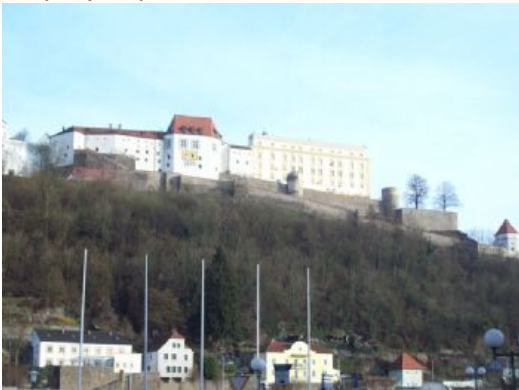
Next we were bused to Regensburg, Germany stopping at the Pilsner Brewery for lunch. Regensburg also has its main Christmas market in the shadow of the cathedral



DH collects the mugs from each city we visit. Of course, the local glueh wine and strudel are part of the experience.



Every major city on the Danube has a fortress. This is Passau, Germany



And their Christmas Market in the cathedral square.



Next was a bus excursion to Salzburg, Austria
Stopping at the Moon Sea (lake) along the way for our first view of the Alps



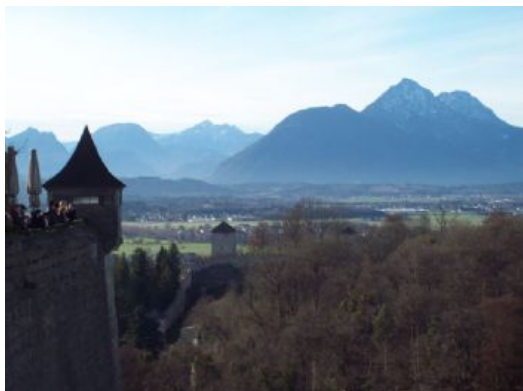
The Salzburg fortress dominates the landscape. On this, our 3rd visit to the city, we finally made it all the way up there.



Looking down on the city from the fortress



And the mountains on the other side



Of course there's a Christmas Market up here.



Linz, Austria was a fun place at night when out with friends.
I think we had too much glueh wine already.



Melk, Austria doesn't have a Christmas Market, but the ancient Abbey is a MUST to visit.



Back on the Danube we sailed through the beautiful Wachau Valley
There are many castles



And picturesque towns



Finally we arrived in Vienna, Austria, the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for 600 years of Hapsburg rule.

This is Schoenbrunn Palace, their "summer place."

After a tour, there was another Christmas Market to explore and another mug of glueh wine.



In the city center of Vienna every main square had its own Christmas Market.

We began at St. Stephan's Cathedral.



And further along



The State Opera House is magnificent inside and out.



It looks like we attended an opera, but no. I just snapped this picture from behind the technician screening the previous night's performance.



When we were there, the stage looked like this preparing for the evening's performance.



This is the Hapsburg's winter palace and another Christmas Market



Another day, another country – our favorite city - Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia
This castle was the capital of the Empire when Vienna was besieged and Budapest fell to the Turks.



From the castle on a clear day you can see Hungary and Austria as well as Slovakia.



The Medieval City Gate



We love Bratislava and ALL the vendors understood and were surprised when I spoke Slovak. Studying the language is part of my search for roots and heritage.



There were continuous traditional performances of groups from all the around the country.



We stayed here late into the night



Budapest, Hungary, our final stop has imposing architecture.
This is their Parliament viewed from the "Fishermen's Bastion" which is the picture below.



Budapest was our final Christmas Market before flying home. It had its own unique charm and of course we bought another mug.



In central Europe people don't put up their own Christmas tree until Christmas Eve. By that tradition I have a few days yet to get ready for our own celebration. I better get started.

If you've read this far, thank you. You're probably wondering what the LONG version would look like. I post that on my website. That takes awhile longer.

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**MARYJEANSL**

Your pictures brought back some good memories of my travels in Europe way back in 1983, when I was a mere child (ahem, ahem!) So many beautiful places! I would have gone crazy spending too much money in the Christmas markets. Good thing I was there in the summer. What a lovely way to prepare for Christmas!
2362 days ago

**GARDENCHRIS**

what fun you must have had..... I have been to a few of them in my visits back to Germany visiting relatives.
2362 days ago

**SWEDE_SU**

wonderful - thank you for sharing your trip! plenty of time to get that christmas tree up, that's the swedish tradition too:-)
2362 days ago

**MISCHAKEO**

What lovely pictures. I like the castles and was reminded of our trip to Salzburg. You take great photos and now I want to take that cruise. Thanks for sharing.
2362 days ago

**PHEBESS**

Gorgeous photos, and what a wonderful lead-up to Christmas! (And I notice you sporting that scarf like a fashionista!)
2363 days ago

**CD13202979**

Amazing photos. Thanks for sharing!
2363 days ago

**TERI-RIFIC**

Love the pictures. That strudel looks fantastic. I'm glad I didn't have to deal with it.
2363 days ago

**GINIEMIE**

Love it, makes my hungry to go back to Hungary, Austria and Belgium. You are truly blessed.



2363 days ago

**WALLAHALLA**

Gorgeous pics! This sounds like a trip I would love to take! I have never even heard of European river cruises. How did you learn about it. Is it a vacation package, or did you set everything up yourselves? I have s-o-o-o many questions!!!
2363 days ago

**DOVESEYES**

How wonderful thanks for the opportunity to share it.
2363 days ago

**ONEKIDSMOM**

I was just watching the old Sound of Music on TV last night ... and here you were cruising in country just as lovely! Merry Christmas to all!
2363 days ago

**DR1939**

Wonderful trip. Loved revisiting some of my favorite cities. We saw Annabella at the Vienna Opera. An exquisite experience.
2363 days ago

**PHOENIX1949**

Awesome. Thank you for the mini, virtual vacation.
2363 days ago

**BOOKAPHILE**

What a great trip! I love all the castles. DH and I have thought that would be a lovely place to vacation... Maybe someday.
Thanks for sharing the photos!
2363 days ago





HOLLYM48

WOW, what an awesome trip! THanks so much for sharing all of that beauty with us. THat was a great trip by the looks of it!
2363 days ago



KRISZTA11

Wow, it was a wonderful visit!
I'm glad you had a great time here, in Budapest.



2363 days ago



SUBMOM2

How wonderful that you and your husband could make this trip! Thanks for sharing the beautiful photos and a bit of history!!
2363 days ago



ALICIA214

One of my dreams is to do the Danube river cruise .Thank you for giving me an insight.
2363 days ago



BBEAGAN

wow! spectacular! thank you.
2363 days ago



EVIE4NOW

What an awesome place to visit. The pictures are wonderful. Thanks for sharing your trip with us. Merry Christmas to you and yours.
2363 days ago



CD4114015

This was a beautiful trip! Thank you for sharing all the lovely pictures! You guys make a great couple!

And, I truly enjoyed this blog...it wasn't LONG ENOUGH!
2363 days ago



Comment edited on: 12/22/2014 11:40:57 AM



TUTUNAN

Delightful! Thanks for sharing your trip with us.
2363 days ago



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