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Sparking my way across Europe before Christmas – the ultimate test of motivation

Tuesday, December 23, 2014

Yesterday I posted a summary of the sites we visited during our 11 days on the Danube. There was an additional 2+ days of travel to deal with also. Flying during the holidays is a test of patience in itself.

Many articles and blogs address strategies to avoid weight gain during this season. After 5 years of maintenance, I've got that down, at least when I'm at home surrounded by familiar food.

When my destination is the Christmas Markets of Europe, I need a different plan.

I knew that I would eat all the local foods, just resolve not to stuff myself.

I wanted to drink the local beer and wine too. Since I only drink water at home, there would be extra calories to burn.

One booth after another called to us to try them.

We ate gingerbread



DH liked the filled pastries

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We both liked these that I remembered from my childhood. The sign advertised “ako babicka robila” (like grandma made) – and it WAS.



Honey wine was an alternative to gluh wine.



Fortunately, river cruising doesn't offer the 24/7 food orgy of ocean cruising. The meals were wonderful, but the portions reasonable – even the desserts which I always ate.

Two evenings when I didn't care for the meat option I chose vegetarian. They were so good that I can understand why people go that route. I'm allergic to fish.

When at restaurants, we ate the local food.



There were always plenty of vegetables. I probably didn't need the side order of potato pancakes, but I remember them from my childhood too and I never get them at home.

Some people say they lose weight on vacation because of all the walking. That's never been my experience probably because I'm so active at home that the speed of site-seeing walks never burns enough calories for me. I decided to wear my SPAT (spark activity tracker) during these walks to check the distance.

I've written many times that my problem has always been food, not exercise.

I resolved to run every morning before breakfast – just a few miles, I didn't want to miss breakfast. I tracked those miles separately.

Sometimes I wore my running clothes during the walking tour and then ran back to the ship. DH took this photo as the buses were returning.



There was one unique opportunity for additional exercise. We joined this cruise-mate and his wife for "Geocaching." These are items hidden all over the world that you track down through posted clues and record when you've found one. Quite an interesting hobby.



I've stated that I want to sample the local food wherever we go.

There was one exception. Note the 2nd option on this menu. Since I don't speak a word of Hungarian, I'm glad I was informed in English.



Finally, the summary.

According to my SPAT, I walked 70 miles.

According to my watch, I ran 31 miles.

According to my scale this morning, I'm 1.5 pounds heavier than when I left.

No big deal. I consider that success.

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SPINNINGJW

You did great! Someday, I would love to travel to Europe.
2361 days ago



PHEBESS

I think trying the local foods is definitely part of travel! So only gaining 1.5 lbs for that length of trip, pre-holidays and in winter, is great!!!!

Have a wonderful Christmas now that you're home!
2362 days ago



WALLAHALLA

I'd gladly gain 1.5 lbs for an experience like yours! Do tell us more!
2362 days ago



WATERMELLEN

That is success BIG time, no question about it: you did terrific AND you had a lot of temptations.

I could have passed up on the rooster dangly bits also . . .
2362 days ago



DOVESEYES

What a wonderful blog thanks
2362 days ago



TERI-RIFIC

Awesome in every way.
2362 days ago



TRAVELGRRL

It was a success! We did a Christmas Market river cruise last year on the Rhine. I agree with you, the ship portions are reasonable. DH and I also did a lot of extra walking (but no running).

You did an admirable job enjoying yourself while maintaining motivation and balance! A success on every level, congratulations.



And thank you for the photos!
2362 days ago




MARYJEANSL

Very impressive indeed! Good for you - and I'm glad you were able to enjoy the local foods on your travels.
2362 days ago



ALICIA363

 and yummy! Thanks for the virtual tour!
2362 days ago



GINIEMIE

Sounds as if you did great. Now I count on at least 5 pounds when I go overseas. Before Erik's accident it was actually closer to two unless I was only with the elderly, because I did walk a lot more over there than I do here. I'm with you on the second item of the menu-something to NOT try. I love seeing your pictures and hearing about wonderful foods that the ladies at my church used to

make.





2362 days ago



1STBUCKETITEM

A wonderful trip! Thank you for sharing some of the sites, tastes and fun. You had a plan and you successfully made a "deal" with yourself. Good for you!

Have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year!  

2362 days ago



PHOENIX1949



2362 days ago



DR1939



2362 days ago



NEWMOMOVER40

That is truly inspiring! Especially running while on vacation in Europe. I brought my sneakers along when we went, but only managed to get one run in, in 20 days. Mostly because I didn't want to take away from our family sightseeing time, and I figured I'd get enough exercise walking around. But my back was a mess by the time we got back, and I do think it's because I didn't run almost the whole time, so I wasn't engaging in my normal level of fitness. You did a fantastic job of being in charge of your food and having fun at the same time. And you ate REAL food, you didn't rely on bringing manufactured protein bars or anything.

2362 days ago



KRISZTA11

You did great for yourself!



The odd stew must be a rarity even here, I have never tried it ;)
2362 days ago



IFDEEVARUNS2

Not a stew I would have enjoyed, LOL.
Congrats on the success - 1.5 lbs is a success, believe me.
2362 days ago



NELLJONES

Sounds wonderful!
2362 days ago



GARDENCHRIS

good for you! You enjoyed yourself!





2362 days ago



SWEDE_SU

well done - a 1.5 pound weight gain on a trip like that is definitely a success! love the pictures. you have a very good approach to travel. definitely would have skipped that last menu choice, even if i weren't vegan!

2362 days ago



APRILRUSSELL3

That is success! I love the pictures. (All the reposts was spark's way of telling me I should read this blog. I'm glad I did!) I'm glad you had a good vacation and it didn't hurt your efforts!!

2362 days ago



ELRIDDICK

Thanks for sharing
2362 days ago



MISCHAKEO

A one and a half pound gain is excellent for that wonderful vacation. I think you did a great job of truly enjoying the specialty foods and drinks yet continuing to exercise. You are indeed a successful maintainer. I loved your pictures..especially the gingerbread stall. I would have skipped the last meals also.



2362 days ago



CD4114015

Wow! I am loving these travel blogs and all the pics! The food looks SO luscious! And Good job on the running!

I always heard of geocaching but had no idea what it was....thanks for sharing that. Sounds great!

Thanks for all the pictures...looking forward to more!

Gaye

2362 days ago



BBEAGAN

wonderful success!
2362 days ago



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