



Eastern European Escape



I recently returned from a wonderful 10 day train trip through Eastern Europe. I had not been there for at least 15 year and I was surprised at the many changes.

My husband and I flew to Prague and immediately set out exploring the city. Prague is known for being a city in which much of the architecture survived the wars and ravages of history. A walking tour is a great way to get the lay of the city and learn the fascinating history from a local. Our guide Patrice showed us some of the hidden gems like the best place to see the famous Black Light Theater and the open air market. The following day was spent visiting the Jewish Quarter. We found the cemetery a touching, yet fascinating piece of history. My advice for Prague is bring great walking shoes for the many cobblestone streets!

Our next stop was Salzburg. The 5 hour train ride went by quickly since the scenery of picturesque Czech Towns was relaxing along with the steady rhythm of the train. We arrived and immediately enjoyed a stroll through the old town and the Getreidegasse famous for its old wrought-iron signs. The architecture in old Salzburg still looks much as it did in Mozart’s day. I especially enjoyed touring Mozart’s birthplace (Geburtshaus) and St. Peter’s Church. The next day we toured Salzburg Castle where the view from the top is definitely worth the climb (however there is the option of the tram for the traveler with weak knees).

One of the highlights of our trip was renting a car in Salzburg and driving to some of the surrounding small towns. Our favorite was Hallstatt which is a feast for the eyes with its towering mountings, crystal blue lake with white swans and traditional Austrian architecture. Bring the camera; it is one of the most picturesque towns I have ever seen!

We next visited Vienna and loved our visit to St. Stephen’s Cathedral, one of the most incredible, gothic cathedrals in Europe. We also enjoyed seeing a string quartet perform there that evening.

The last stop for our journey was Budapest. It was our first visit to this fascinating town and we were impressed by the people and what they have lived through historically. Budapest is located on the beautiful Danube and the churches and bridges are an amazing sight. The highlight of our visit to Budapest was taking a plunge in the famous Hungarian Baths. This popular hangout for locals was a great place to meet and talk with people who love to converse about their history and their glorious city.

Our trip to Eastern Europe was one we won’t forget! I highly recommend visiting this wonderful part of the world.

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