

Post



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# Hey! Your country's in the way! - August 28, 2023

Updated: Aug 30, 2023

## ***SUMMARY***

Not much to say about today other than that we spent most of it in the beautiful Kiel Canal watching the verdant fields go by. - Karen

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## ***DETAIL***

I sleep great until I don't, around 4:30 a.m. At 5:00 I get up and dressed (enough). I gather all my essentials (iPhone, computer, room key) and head out. My objective is to not wake Miss Karen. Today's a special day and there's a benefit to being up early, so I don't mind.

Normally a day on the ship is either a day "in port" or "at sea". Today we're going through the Kiel Canal, halfway between the two. We'll be close to shore, the whole day, but never docked/moored/anchored. And we won't be getting off. We'll be moving pretty much the whole day.

To get from the Baltic Sea to the North Sea you can go around Denmark, which is a long way, or you can go through the Kiel Canal, which is what we're doing. The long way is at least 285 miles. This Kiel Canal cuts that down to 61 miles. Quite the savings.

You've been able to do this since 1895, but in a wider boat, such as ours, only more recently, like 1918. We call it the Kiel Canal, after the city at its eastern terminus, Kiel. The Germans call it the Nord-Ostsee-Kanal, and some used to refer to it as the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Kanal.

It's now 5:26 a.m. and we're headed for the entrance to one of the four side-by-side locks. There are also locks at the far end of the canal. In terms of Length/Beam/Draft, the canal can accommodate 771 ft x 107 ft x 31 ft. We're only 592 ft x 84 ft x 20 ft, so we're good to go. We fill most our lock, so we're the only boat in here. In the adjacent lock there are five or six boats. This is one of the world's most frequented artificial waterways with 90 vessels a day. Pretty good for something I've never heard of.

It seems that the lock isn't adjusting for too much change in water height, just a few feet.

An hour or two later Karen reaches out to know my location and 'can I bring her coffee?'. We link up, clean up and go to breakfast. Throughout the morning we're doing stuff (exercising, eating, working on the blog) all the while keeping an eye on the canal.

On either side are dual paths (for a set of car/truck tires?) but there are no vehicles other than the periodic bicycle. It's perfect for biking: flat, well paved, very few intersections and great views. Most of what we see is very pastoral: hillsides with cattle quietly grazing on the green grass. Or horse, or sheep. There are crops and the occasional house or farm building. There's a bit of industry but mostly it's trees.

From time to time we go under a bridge for some major highway or railroad. The canal is wide. There are always windmills to be seen, lazily turning.

Most of the day we have bright blue sky and sunshine. It's not windy. At lunchtime we head back to the back patio, a bit of outside seating for the 'serve-yourself' buffet. We're under a roof, but we're outside. There are more brave souls in the direct sunlight. After a while storm clouds roll in and soon the rain chases away even the uncovered diners.

At one point during the day we get a sealed envelope beside our door with our cabin number on it. Most exciting, I must say! We open it and it's a confirmation for an upcoming cruise and a small chocolate bar. Also in there are some notes: a full credit card number, the expiration date, CVV code and a signature. Sadly it's not ours or for us. It's not our credit card number. Whoops. With all this, we 'trick' our cabin steward to "remind us" the cabin number of our "friends" (named so-and-so). After some notes back and forth, we eventually get this back to them.

There's a 'free cruise' bingo, in which if you get Bingo you get a free cruise. You have to pay for your bingo card (?\$50) and your odds aren't very good. There's lots of people in attendance. We skip it this trip.

We reach the other end of the canal around 3 p.m. There are a lot more people watching the ship drift into this lock than there were at 5 a.m. We hear facts about the canal, including that there were a couple of tunnels we went over on our cruise down the canal. This is for major roads. We also learn that ten years ago two of the locks (at the other end of the canal) failed, temporarily cutting down on the traffic. They was a lot of finger pointing and accusations of lax maintenance.

There's a big observation platform on the far side of all of the locks. This is for locals and visitors who want to watch the ships come and go. It is quite full of spectators. Apparently a ship as large as ours doesn't go through every day. Through the lock we're actually not in the North Sea (not yet) but rather in the Elbe River (via which we can make our way up into the North Sea).

We signed up for another cruise, next year. This will be an "Intensive Norway" cruise, around seventeen days. We've heard that in 2025 Norway will start to limit cruise traffic and so we need to see it while we still can. By signing up while still onboard we get a variety of benefits, some of which are good and some of which are 'sleeves out of our vest' sorts of things. Oh, well. We can always cancel or change later on.

We eat dinner in the Prime-C steakhouse. We split a 5 ounce Steak Dianne. They're sad that each of us doesn't want many courses and a huge steak.

Music in the Cabaret Lounge is very well attended. It's the Piano-Cello duo we enjoyed a couple of days ago. They do Elton John's Rocket Man, David Bowie's Space Oddity (Major Tom), Queen's Nothing Really Matters, Roxanne by the Police, Thunder Stuck by AC/DC, Unchained Melody, and others.

Now it's bed time. Tomorrow, late (6 p.m.), we should arrive in Amsterdam.

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## Photos



Around 5:30 a.m. very slowly entering the lock



Sometime later Karen's awake and is being plied with coffee while pastoral beauty glides by incessantly



Breakfast in the sun. Breakfast and a show.



We can see how Denmark's a bit in the way, and why someone might not want to "go around"



Snapped pictures all day. So pretty.



And that beauty drew crowds up in the "Living Room" to catch the show.



Out the side window it's mostly shades of blue and green



Gliding under a bridge we get to confirm the crew made the necessary adjustments to allow the ship to get underneath in one piece



Some guests take advantage of the sunshine and forced 'on board' time to hang out by the pool



Others (us) eat desserts we probably shouldn't



In the water we see families



And on the bike trails we see couples

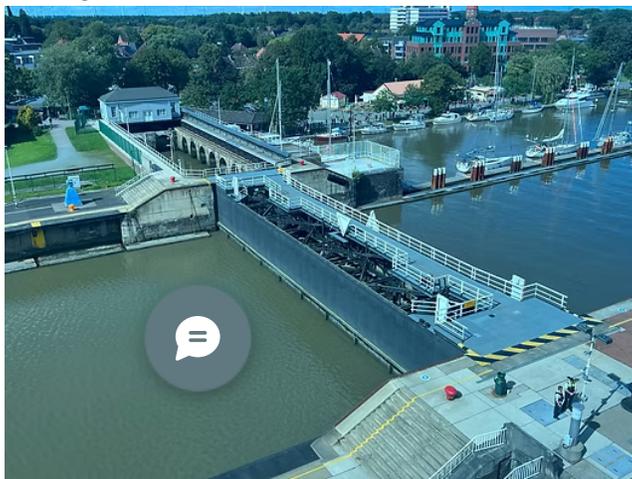


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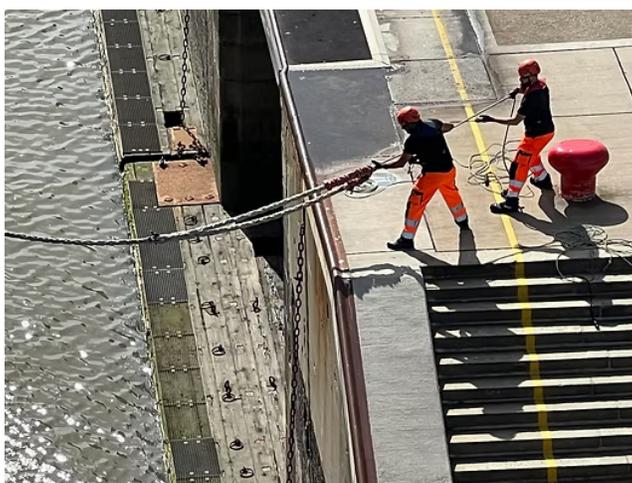




Eventually we get to the lock at the other end of the canal. The Elbe River is in the background.



The impressive lock gate (it slides to the side)



Longshoremen (?) securing the boat for the water that will be let in (or is it out?)



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