

Post



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Nemo. Found. - September 22, 2023

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SUMMARY

After another over-the-top breakfast at our hotel we piled back into our cars in a downpour. We drove through the spectacular Julian Alps (lots of hairpin turns!). The views were somewhat obscured by rain and low clouds but we're great nonetheless. First stop was Kobarid where we saw the Napoleon Bridge but not the Cheese or WW1 museums. Lunch watching the rain from a covered terrace in Bovec. The original plan had been to drive the Soca Gorge and Vrsic Pass but our drivers' nerves were a little frazzled from our earlier adventure so we opted for the quicker, less turn-y road through Italy to Kranjska Gora, Slovenia's premier ski area. - Karen

DETAIL

When we wake we see rain out the window. It's so green and beautiful around here, we guess it's inevitable. But we're driving a fair bit of the day, so we're not thrilled. Maybe it'll clear by the afternoon, despite what the smartphone weather man says.

At breakfast at the hotel we again enjoy the coffee, food, and local delicacies. Out the window, despite the rain, we see the lawn being mowed... by a robot. It's a Roomba-type device made by Husqvarna. We gather it's blind, just getting around by feel. It goes from one side of the grass to the other, feels the border, and makes a seemingly random turn. We're living in the future.

As she serves us coffee, our young waitress inquires as to our plans for the day. We tell her we're driving to Kranjska Gora. "Oh you should take the train!" she replies. We hadn't given this woman an IQ test but we were having our doubts. "But we have a car, it's a rental, we have to take it..." She tells us that yes, like a ferry boat you can just drive your car onto the train, sit in your car, and get to your destination. Like a drive-in movie. All the comforts of your car, with all the spectacular views, without all that pesky driving! We promise her (and ourselves) that we'll look into it for a future trip.

Packed and paid, we load up the car. It's definitely raining as we head out. We're headed higher up into the alps, up to one of the major ski areas in Slovenia. Along the way we'll see beautiful vistas and gorges with rushing rivers, weather permitting.

We're in the mountains so the roads are narrow and windy. We get behind a tractor from hell. Like the Husqvarna, it's mowing the brush on the sides of the road, but doing so using a long articulated arm with a huge mower at the end. Kind of like Edward Scissorhands, but on steroids. All we know is that it'll likely be a while before we can get around this guy.

Finally past the mower, we snake left and right, doing a lot of hair-pin turns. The views are spectacular and truth be told the wispy clouds add to the drama. We see a big group of ? kindergarteners with their teachers apparently out for a field trip, or maybe going from the classroom to the playground. In any case, they're wading on the edge of the same road we're driving on. The little ones all have on bright yellow safety vests. We're not in the US.

Our first stop is in Kobarid at a cheese store. We have coffee to stay awake. Across the street there's a museum which explains the process of making cheese in this particular part of the world. We're not interested in how the sausage is made, and ditto for the cheese. We do buy some cheese, however. In the store there's self-serve milk dispensers, in two varieties. There's bulk wine, in many different flavors. (Not self-serve, please.) They have a small Mexican food section of the store. We stay strong.

The guide book we're looking at suggests the five top cheese from this region and Karen tries to get a small sample of each big enough for our group of six. It'll go good our local wine before dinner (or maybe as dinner). The lady behind the counter double checks to ensure she understands Karen... we want five kilos of cheese. Noooo.

Out of the shop we leave the cars where they are and head down to the Bridge of Napoleon. We're not sure why he has a bridge here, but it's fairly attractive. It spans a short distance over a deep canyon with a swiftly flowing river. There are iron rungs leading down the side of the bridge which we could (we guess) climb down if we want to take a closer look. We all shudder and pass.

We're not the only ones checking out Mr. Nepleon's bridge. A couple maybe in their 50s has rain slickers on and day packs. We learn they're from the US and are hiking the Julian Alps, where we are. They're doing five days, from hotel to hotel. Someone arranged all that for them, they just have to walk between each night's hotel. Sound like fun other than the rain they've had the whole time. They do say the views have been spectacular.

Back in the cars we drive the quarter mile to the World War I museum. Not finding any good parking, and cursing at the rain that's become a deluge, we continue on. Next stop: lunch.

In Bovec we park and step out into the incessant rain. Sigh. In Trip Advisor we pick a promising sounding place for lunch, but it's closed. The backup place we end up at is open and out of the rain. The reviews suggest those are some of it's better qualities. The roof is made of a sturdy translucent tarp that lets the light through, which is nice. Below that, just over our heads, are a ton of grape vines, with grapes. Wild birds, maybe sparrows, are hanging out on the grape vines, watching for opportunities to swoop in and clean up some bread crumbs. We're nervous about having animals who poop at random above our heads and our food.

We don't have a reservation and so are split between two tables. We joke that there's an adults table and a kids table, but in truth they're both kid's tables. The food, and beer, are both quite good. I have Jota for a second time. We'll be making that at home! Liz and Mike split the breaded fish. Recipe? Take a fish, bread it, and fry it.

Continuing our drive we realizing we're going to Italy! Well, for a few kilometers anyway. This is all EU so going between countries basically means zooming past a toll-booth looking structure that used to house immigration people. We find we're also just a short drive from Austria. Should we make a short detour so we can add that to our list? Nah. Too much driving already today.

As we approach Kranjska Gora we see lots of ski hills with chairlifts. Outside our building is a gondola, but it's just one car and it's for show. There's the chair, from a chair lift, in the reception where we're staying. We chose this place as we can get a single unit that has three bedrooms, three bathrooms, and a kitchen.

The building where we'll be sleeping is three stories tall, with a basement. Each floor, including the basement, is either a bedroom/bathroom or the communal kitchen/living room. Our building has three such units. Anyone saying these were luxury would be lying. They're accommodation if you want a warm place to spend the night, brush your teeth, eat, and prepare for a day of skiing.

Our dinner is wine (of course) and cheese we bought today, and leftovers from previous picnics. It's good. As we eat the door opens and a man pokes his head in. "Is this the reception?" We point him in the right direction, wish him good luck, and lock the door. Time for bed. Big day tomorrow: Lake Bled and Ljubljana.

Photos



Over breakfast we watched the hotel's robot lawnmower in action



We're told about their trains that you can just drive onto, sit in your car, and watch the Julian Alps roll by. Looks like fun!



Driving we see lots of green, and small villages, and mountains (and clouds)



And tunnels. Some quite short.



And kindergarden field trips... walking on the road!



As much as we didn't like the rain, we're sure there were others who liked it even less.



Time to buy cheese



Nacho cheese? No! Not that kind of cheese.



There was self-serve milk



Bulk wine, with five or six "NOT SELF SERVICE!" signs. There have to be some good stories there.



The Bridge of Napoleon



Karen and her protection



What she's trying to protect herself from (birds overhead)



The kid's table, and further back, the other kid's table.



Liz and their fried fish. We're thinking this could be an alternate ending for Finding Nemo.





A river we passed walking to the grocery.
Glacial runoff or getting rid of excess
dairy production?



Our room on the top floor. No one slept
in that third bed, with their nose pressed
against the window.



The walls were very thick. Lots of insulation.



Yummy dinner of fresh cheese and old left-overs. And wine.

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