

Post



Scott Farnsworth

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Scolded by ducks - September 23, 2023

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SUMMARY

We left Kranska Gora fairly early and in the rain. Our drive to Lake Bled was beautiful but would have been more so if the low clouds weren't obscuring the massive peaks above us. It was still raining when we got to Lake Bled but some of us chose to do the 6 km. hike around the lake anyway. We were rewarded for our efforts with blue sky and sunshine half way around. The perfect backdrop for the highly photogenic castle-on-the-hill and church-on-the-island. Arrived in the charming, walkable city of Ljubljana and went on a Foodie Tour, eating excellent food and drinking excellent wine! - Karen

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DETAIL

Of late, each day we wake we look outside hopefully, looking for something other than clouds and rain. Once again, we're disappointed. Breakfast didn't disappoint. It was served in the main building, in the basement. The hallways were narrow (for the various guests making trips from the table to the buffet) and the ceilings weren't very tall, but the food was good. Always an adventure.

We pack up and check out fairly quickly. We have a big day ahead of us: Lake Bled, return the rental cars, check into our hotel in Ljubliana, and go on a foodie tour. The drive to Lake Bled was pretty quick and uneventful. We weren't that far away. After we find parking close to the lake we have to decide if we're getting out of the car. It continues to rain fairly heavily. Nancy opts to stay in the car and sleep. Mike and Liz opt to head off and find a dry museum. The rest of us, Karen, Ron and I start to do the walk around the lake. There are lots of ducks out, seeming making fun of us for complaining about the rain.

Today is Saturday, which may explain all of the people out on the lake in single hull sculls (aka sculls, aka 1X). There are floating markers showing the lanes and some announcer telling us or them something we don't understand. We're not sure how far we're going to go around the lake, so we look up the distance. It's about 6 km or a little less than four miles around, so we agree to go for it. Warmed by the exercise we want to doff some layers, but the rain keeps us bundled up, for now. The further we walk around the less rain we have and eventually it's sunny and warm.

We pass Tito's country place and after doing the entire lake we run into Nancy who had had a great nap. We stop for some fancy tea and eventually meet back up with Mike and Liz. Their museum was closed today.

The drive to the airport is similarly short and quick. We find the rental car return location and park the car. Noting the fuel and milage we all schlep our luggage inside. No one's there so we drop the key through a slot, as directed. Nancy had pre-arranged a cost-effective ride into town and soon we're on our way. We're dropped at the door to our hotel. It's very downtown, just a two minute walk to everything worth seeing. Someone asks if breakfast is included... "Dundov?... yes... Atkinson?... yes... Farnsworth?... no... but we'll give it to you anyway." Nice!

We drop our bags, splash water on our faces, and head out to our 4pm rendezvous for a foodie tour of Ljubliana. We meet Meta (pronounced Mee-tah) along the river at the agreed address. She tells us about why Slovenian food is unique and special and good. We'll be the judge of that. The entire country's population is just over two million, less than just the city of Houston. And Ljubliana, where we are, is the biggest city here, and it's just over a quarter of a million people.

Our first stop is a wine bar owned by a French man and his Slovenian wife. We have great wine and cheese and sausage. The pig the sausage is made from is native to Slovenia. When Tito and the communists took over and tried to run everything centrally, they determined these local pigs were inferior... less meat out for grain in, so they weren't allowed. The farmers knew what they had so they hid them. Once, when the inspector came by, suspecting they were housing an illegal pig, the farmer carried the pig and the two of them hid in the bathtub, the farmer trying to keep the pig quiet.

One of the wines is from the local Blaufränkisch grape. Very tasty. Can we get Slovenian wine in the states? A bit, we're told. They don't make a lot and there's lots of competition, so they pretty much just sell and consume it here. It's good and cheap, two important characteristics in a wine.

We hear how these street became pedestrian only. The local officials knew it'd be good for tourism and people's general well being. Some people were unhappy that they now had to walk... so... they have these electric minibuses. You want to go somewhere? You call and they'll silently pick you up and drive you there, free. Nice system.

We see and hear about the cobbler's bridge that mostly was butchers. They'd trim the meat and toss the scraps into the river, which became a tad fetid and gross. If a baker was caught skimping on the weight of a loaf of bread there was a cage they were put into and lowered into the putrid water as punishment. Needless to say they had very honest bakers.

At Altroke we have more yummy wine (Čok winery). Any letter with that little V on the top is like you add an H, so č is ch, š is sh, and ž is like in Zsa Zsa Gabor. With the wine we have pig cheek with polenta, pasta with truffles, and beans and tomatoes. All delicious.

We try some Potica which is a layered spiral of thin dough and filling, formed into a ring and cooked in a waggling ceramic bunt pan. Traditionally it's a big pan, these pans are tiny and the dessert is for a single person. We'll be enjoying that later.

We go to a tapas bar for more wine and food. It's an orange colored wine and we have scrumptious fried cheese. The menu has bear salami, but we don't have any of that. Apparently the woods are too good to the bears and there has to be a sizable organized culling each year. We're on team bear.

Our last savory taste is at a casual place and we're outside around tall tables on stools. It's Jota, which we've already had and loved. It's served with a can of beer, which reminds us that we like the beer here. For dessert we go to a gelato place. The owner studied to be a lawyer but decided she preferred making gelato. It was really good and we ate it all, despite being very stuffed.

We roll ourselves back home and climb into bed, promising ourselves we'll eat less in the future, knowing we're just kidding.

Photos



Wake and look outside. Blue sky and sunny?? No. That's OK.



Fun, interesting breakfast



The ducks mocking us for complaining about the rain



Scullers ignoring the rain as well



We take off our hats just long enough for a picture before we're too wet



A girl with a "Rain Never Stop" poncho.
We're on Team Sunshine.



It eventually cleared and we got a nice view of the island in the sun



And the castle on the hill from a distance



And a bit closer up



We saw Tito's summer place.



Finally we're in Ljubiana. Our room.



Walking to the foodie tour



Meta ("Meetah") our pint-sized foodie tour guide



First stop, wine, bread, meats, cheese.
Yum!



The three bridges



Off to our next eating stop



Beef cheeks on polenta. So tasty.



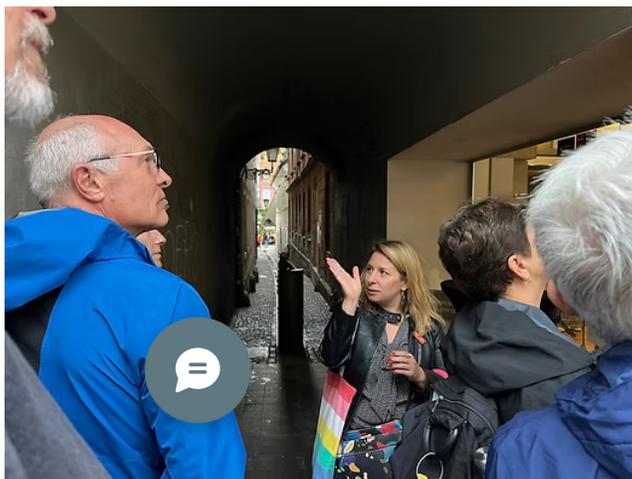
FARNSNIENTE



We ate every here.



The dragon is the animal of the city. We didn't eat here but we did see a lots of Dragon This and Dragon That.



Meta teaching us how to pronounce things in Slovenian, making the accent marks with her hands



Pope John Paul II looking down on us



Potica, individual serving size. As tasty as they are swirly.



Not enough hands. My potica resting on my gelato.



Time for bed. One last look at the beautiful buildings of Ljubljana.

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