

Post



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White Night in the Troll Fjord - July 20, 2024

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SUMMARY

We dock in Svolvær, in Nordland County, Norway. We're taking an RIB ride through the Lofoten archipelago to the famous Trollfjord. It's cloudy but by the time we've watched the sea eagles grabbing fish out of the water in full flight and reached the fjord, we get a pretty good view. It's spectacular, "some of the most dramatic scenery that Norway has to offer"! Back in town we stop for 'elevenses' at a bakery and visit the World War II museum. The evening event is Azamara's White Night celebration where guests are asked to wear white and a huge buffet is set up poolside. We've sailed up the **narrow** passage to the Trollfjord and

are parked in the middle of it for the event. The sky has cleared so now we can see the massive mountains that rise beyond the fjord walls. Wowza! The crew “parade of nations” follows then dancing on the deck. - Karen

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DETAIL

We wake again at 6am. The sun came up four or five hours ago, so we’re thankful we have eye-masks and thick curtains. Peeling back the curtains we find that we’re already anchored and the orange and white tender craft are bobbing down below, ready to take passengers into Svolvær. This city is known for the towering mountains all around. For now we’ll have to take their word for it, as low clouds obscure anything above 1,000 feet.

Ashore we follow our guide, Toby (“Tobias”) to our excursion take-off point. It’s their office where they keep waterproof cold weather gear for us crazies who will be going out on a RIB, a “Rigid Inflatable Boat”. We doff our coats and climb into the Michelin Man-sized protective coveralls. No gloves but we do get goggles. Waddling out, we get our first view of the RIB. It has two columns of straddle-able seating with two “hang on for dear life” handles for each.

Being chivalrous, we let everyone else go first. Our views won't be the best, but then again, everyone else will act as a great wind screen. The seat is tall so it's comical to watch us try to hoist our old legs over the 'saddle'.

We slowly motor out of the harbor, as required. Soon Toby opens up the twin big motors. Along the way we pass a sizable Cod processing plant. The smell is overwhelming but brief. We think when they're actually drying the Cod outside, and processing it, the order must be really something.

With the motors at full power we skim across the calm water and are thankful for our outfits and coveralls. Around a big corner we get views of more mountain ranges both right and left. We slow not far from an island. Toby points out a few "sea eagles" as we hear a plop in the water. A big piece of fish has dropped from the sky. It was Toby and he's feeding the eagles. An eagle takes flight, lines up, comes in low, and snatches the fish from the water. Toby's tossed a few fish pieces, but the birds prefer to try to steal another eagle's catch than go and pick up their own.

We hear about how the king of Norway, back in the day, knew that bears, wolves and other wild creatures kill people, so he gave a prize to everyone who could prove a kill, really of anything, including these eagles. The result was that there are reindeer, wolverines, and some birds, but most other native wildlife was wiped off the face of Norway. Some, like the Sea Eagle, are back in big numbers. For other animals still around, the government now protects them, giving out a limited number of hunting permits.

Our ride is two hours, and we cover quite a distance. The clouds lift and there's stunning beauty in every direction. We cruise down the Troll Fjord and admire waterfalls and migrating birds. Later we pass Norwegians in their waterfront cabins. We witness one man diving into the 60 degree water. After more high speed boating, and eagle feeding, we return to shore and our civilian outfits.

Karen and I enjoy 'elevenses' (coffee and pastry) at a local bakery. Most patrons are Norwegian and it's fun to see their interactions and hear their speech. Next stop: the World War II museum. It's amazing and is packed as full as it can be with artifacts. There are uniforms from various countries (US, UK, Norwegian, German, ...), for all kinds of weather, purpose, and rank. There's medical supplies, communications gear, weapons, propaganda, and more. It's fascinating. We do find condoms but not with swastikas. We're glad we have seen this, it should never be forgotten, but one worries if keeping things from the Third Reich may encourage the wrong people.

Back on ship we relax, exercise, work on the blog and prepare for White Night. The name of this event, which happens on every Azamara Cruise, is puzzling/disturbing to some, but it's a tradition. Everyone is supposed to dress all in white (or light colored) clothes. The party venue varies by cruise, but this one will be around the pool. They've set up tables with white table cloths, lots of decorations, a band, food, and plenty of beverage. It's a big deal and very festive.

The ship departs Svolvær and the captain threads the needle to get the vessel down the Troll Fjord. The channel seems not that much wider than the ship itself. At the end of the fjord they turn the ship around, anchor, and the party continues. The band plays and there's lots of dancing.

At one point we show our appreciation for the crew. They parade around the walking track and down to the pool deck. In the past it's been (pretty much) all of the crew (waiters, chefs, cabin stewards, maintenance, etc.). There'd be one flag per country and everyone from that country would march in behind their flag. This time it's one flag and one crew member. This makes for a more manageable group size and helps eliminate competition for which country has the most crew.

Ultimately full, overly served, and done dancing, the band plays one final song and we stagger off to our cabins. The ship is again underway against the backdrop of the majestic mountains. With the middle of the night sunset, the 'magic hour' here lasts many hours.

Photos



It's morning and it's grey and overcast. We're hoping that it burns off. Svolvær with this weather isn't the prettiest city in Norway. Just sayin'.



Ashore and ready for our excursion. They gave (er, loaned) us these sharp looking outfits. We're stylin!



Karen's feeling good about not having her hair wind-blown. One winter ski cap is all it takes.



As we RIB (Rigid Inflatable Boat) around, the clouds fade and the mountains all around appear (like the island of Dr. Moreau, here).



Lots of just fast boating. It's exhilarating.



And then we slow and see how the locals live (or lived, in this case). This is an abandoned house. There's no dock or road to this house. It's abandoned. Looks nice enough to us.



This is Troll Fjord, where our larger boat will be cruising later today. We're not sure it'll fit!



Toby kept throwing fish and the sea eagles kept 'taking the bait' as it were. We were all trying to catch the perfect picture. I never did but an octagenarian did, and was nice enough to share with me.



Back at the shop, having doffed our stylish duds, we noticed these attractive dried sea creature hanging around. Hi, guys!



So much military stuff at the WW II museum. It was a bit creepy with all the manequins.



White Night! Drinks out, and drinks in.
Go easy there, big guy.



Scott and [redacted], being as white as our
packed outfits will allow. Some people
had pillow cases over their non-white
clothes. We heard some do wear the
white bathrobes.



There was a Conga Line. Thankfully the song ended just as the line was snaking our way.



We all approved of doing White Night in the Troll Fjord. It was spectacular and unique!

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