

Dear Friends in search of an Adventure,

In December of 2007 my husband and I joined the Christmas Tour of the Bavarian towns and Castles led by Astrid Baur. It was a wonderful experience. Although it is impossible to see everything in a few days our tour was packed with all the best sights and food. Every day included at least two major sites and dinner was always an adventure. It was much easier to feel like the members of the group were old friends than I had anticipated and only a few hours after arriving in Hopfen the Landhaus Kossel felt like home with the most beautiful view of the Alps and the pretty lake nearby.

Before we left on our tour several people questioned our good sense touring Germany at Christmas time when it would be cold and snowing. I now tell them it was the perfect time of the year to be there. We saw the same places without the huge crowds and although some shops were closed we were able to find plenty to do. The real bonus was the beauty of everything frosted in white or wearing a little cap of snow. Weather did not diminish our trip; in fact I think it added to the adventure. The driver of our bus was extremely competent and it was wonderful to sit back and enjoy the view of the countryside, the awesome view of the mountains, and the many clear lakes. We found Germany to be a beautiful “think green” country where every vista was a pleasure to behold.

If this will be your first trip overseas I would offer these travel suggestions. Pack your suitcase for the trip and then put half of it back in the closet. Down size your bag and slip in an extra collapsible carry on to pack purchases in for the trip home. If possible only have one carry on going over. Plan on layered dressing for comfort at all temperatures and be sure you take some very comfortable winter weather boots or hiking shoes for the tour. And above all, listen to Astrid. If she says you will need better shoes or a warmer coat then put them on ... after all, she has done this a few times before. I sincerely hope that someday we will be able to return to Germany to join Astrid on another tour.

And one last parting comment: When I went back to work I was sharing my adventure with a friend who recently returned from a summer visit to Germany. He was impressed with all we had seen and done in a few days, frequently commenting, “We never got to do any of that kind of stuff”. This trip fulfilled a fantasy from childhood and gave me memories for a lifetime. Thank you Astrid.

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