

# Day 01 - 05/16/2025

Saturday, April 12, 2025 9:38 AM

Flight on 05/15/2025 to Munich, Germany landing on 05/16/2025.

Got up early, getting something to eat and finishing up final packing. Lynn is supposed to be here at 8:00 am to take us to the airport.

Lynn actually arrived about 7:30 am so we left for the airport around 7:45 am. Traffic was light and we arrived at the airport to find that everything as far as United goes, was pretty light as well. We breezed through check in and breezed through TSA without a hitch. We were able to keep everything inside the backpacks but we did have to take off our shoes. Anyway, it all went pretty fast and we found ourselves with about 2 hours to kill before our flight to SFO.

Then United got slow. We boarded on time and taxied out on the runway. Then, we stopped and pulled off onto a parking runway. Turns out SFO had a backup and requested that our inbound plane wait for awhile. So, that's what we did. Just sat there.

We ended up leaving late but still had plenty of time at SFO. We disembarked and had to walk about 10 minutes to get to our gate for the flight from SFO to Munich. We actually boarded without too much trouble although the agents had their problems. They were trying to use the new technology that recognizes faces and it just wasn't working. Then their computers froze and that really messed things up.

Then, once we boarded and taxied out a ways they realized that the catering company had not delivered enough food for everybody. So, we taxied back to the gate to have them load the proper amount of food. And, of course, they had to reload the fuel they had used up already. So, we actually ended up leaving over 2 hours late. We are now in the air and have made up about an hours worth of time, but we are still hours away from Munich.

Friday May 16, 2025 - Monday May 19, 2025.

Eden Hotel Wolff - Munich, Germany (Checkin)

Arnulfstrasse 4, 80335 Munich +49 89 551150

[www.eden-hotel-wolff.de](http://www.eden-hotel-wolff.de)

Expedia itinerary: 72917801911614

Superior Double or Twin Room

The Lufthansa airport bus will take you directly to the airport without stopping in 45 minutes.

Does not include breakfast.

Total \$627.18 (PAID)

## THINGS TO DO:

Nymphenburg Palace

Marienplatz Square

Neues Rathaus (New Town Hall)

Frauenkirche (cathedral)

Viktualienmarkt (food market)

Hofbräuhaus  
English Garden  
BMW Museum  
Beer gardens are everywhere  
Café Dallmayr  
Augustiner Klosterwirt

Finally made it to Munich about 11:10 am and by the time we taxied to the gate where we stopped, it was more like 11:30 am on Friday, 05/16/2025. We breezed through customs after having picked up our checked bags. We then had to figure out how to get to the central train station in Munich. Janet figured that out, bought the tickets and we were on our way. About 45 minutes later we got off at the central train station and our hotel, Eden Wolf, was just across the street.

We checked in, the room was ready, and we settled in for awhile.

No free breakfast, but we did get two free drinks at the bar for being with Expedia. The two drinks were actually just a glass of wine or beer. Still, it was nice to just relax.

We then went out to find a beer garden that Andrea and Mike had discovered which was a short walk away. The place was called Augustine-Keller. I had the pork knuckle but it wasn't as good as the one we had on an earlier trip to Europe. This one was deep fried and wasn't very tender. Janet just had the pork and it was much better. They both came with a potato dumpling and sauerkraut.

We were both pretty exhausted so we went back to our room and went to bed after trying to stay up. But it was only around 6:00 pm.

# Day 02 - 05/17/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:08 PM

## Eden Hotel Wolff – Munich

We both woke up around 12:30 am and did some reading. It was Saturday, May 17, 2025. We laughed that we always seem to go to Europe when soccer season is in full swing. We had a very quiet room but you could still hear the very early morning chants for the favorite soccer team. Plus there was this couple of locals, probably homeless with mental issues, that ended up screaming and yelling at each other around midnight. I think they were the same two we had seen early on the steps of some old building yelling and screaming at each other.

We tried to go back to sleep again, but no such luck. We took our showers and waited until about 6:00 am before we went down to get some coffee and a pastry. The hotel does not have any coffee in the rooms and no complimentary coffee at the lobby. We were told there was a bakery downstairs in our building.

Communication being what it is, it turns out you go downstairs the next building over, which is actually part of the central train station. Oh well. So that's where we went to get our coffee and pastries. It was called Rischart. Just a small version of their other stores we found later when we went downtown. Took them back up to our room and will wait awhile before we head out for the day. Although we are still pretty tired and we may come back to go prone.

We made our way to the area where most of the places are that we wanted to visit. Turns out that almost all of the places that we wanted to see were well within walking distance of our hotel. We were pretty early, probably closer to 8:00 or 9:00 am, so a lot of the places were either closed or just opening up. Some of the places we just wanted to locate where they were so we could come back later. Places like the Hofbrauhaus and Augustiner Klosterwirt, where we would probably come later for early dinner. Other places we visited were:

Marienplatz Square  
Frauenkirche (cathedral)  
Viktualienmarkt (food market)  
Café Dallmayr.

We stopped into the Cafe Dallmayr and got a late breakfast. Janet had the white sausages and I had yogurt with granola and fruit. Earlier, we were getting cold so we stopped into a place for coffees. There were other places that had pastries, like the place we got our pastry this morning at Rischart's, so we checked them out for tomorrow, but they opened too late for when we would be ready for coffee and pastry. So we will probably stick with Rischart where we got pastry and coffee this morning.

We found the clock tower (Glockenspiel) that had moving characters and waited for the movement at 11:00 am. As usual, it was kind of disappointing. But for the time it was built I'm sure it was quite the deal then.

We have now rested and gone prone for awhile back at the hotel. We will head back down to this morning's places of interest by 3:00 pm. Get an early dinner, etc.

We went to the famous beer hall of Hofbrauhaus. The place was super crowded but lived up to its name. Plenty of beer, mainly men patrons. Our food was not anything special. Janet got the beef goulash and I got a roasted chicken. The chicken was OK but the goulash was just so-so.

We walked around some more by the Glockenspiel square. They had been setting up for some major event all day and were still doing so. Not sure what it was going to be but they had built quite the sound system and stage. We (I) needed some dessert and Janet wanted more wine so we ended up back at Rischart. It was quite crowded but I guess the weekend crowds had settled in.

After that we walked back to our hotel to get ready for bed.

# Day 03 - 05/18/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:09 PM

## Eden Hotel Wolff – Munich

Sunday, May 18 2025. We went to bed around 8:30 pm last night, which was quite normal. Except, that around midnight the same couple started arguing and yelling again as they had the night before. I think they have some mental issues but they raise quite the ruckus. There seems to be other neighbors that get involved and make a lot of noise too. Anyway, didn't get as much sleep as I had hoped as a result.

Got out of bed and had our showers around 5:30 am. Went to get some pastry and coffee at Rischart's. Our plan is to get to Nymphenburg Palace today. Have to decide whether it will be by train or tram.

The best advice was to take the tram, which we were to get tickets by going downstairs where Rischart's is. The problem was trying to figure out how the ticket machine worked. A nice lady helped us out but she also had trouble, since, as she said, the machines were fairly new and she was trying to figure them out herself. Anyway, we successfully got our tram tickets and headed upstairs to where the tram would stop and we would board. I guess the whole ticket thing is just an honor system almost. Going to Nymphenburg and coming back to where we started, we had no one check for tickets.

Nymphenburg Palace was actually very nicely done, but the most important part was the gardens. The gardens made up a vast area of the palace that is open freely to the public. There were all kinds of plants and flowers, although hydrangeas were probably dominant. The gardens is a huge area of the Palace and we didn't get to see all the gardens but what we did see was very impressive.

We returned to the entrance where there was a small café we had purchased coffees at earlier. Janet got a sandwich and some concoction of a drink and we waited for our return tram to our hotel. Once again, no one checked our tickets.

We are now back at the room resting up for the rest of the day.

We decided to walk down to where there was a restaurant that Janet had wanted to eat at. There were actually two, so, we chose the second one which Heather had recommended. It was called Der Pschorr. We could also finally see what they were building yesterday. Turns out, the German soccer (Football) team had won the championship so they had shown the game live and were celebrating their victory. The team was Bayern and was from Munich. Anyway, we had some sausages, beer and wine. We then went back to the hotel after having weaved our way through the crowd of Bayern fans.

Around 5:30 pm we walked a short distance down from our hotel and had dinner. I had the roast pork with potato dumplings and fresh sauerkraut. Janet had their goulash soup. They were both good but not that special.

The owner of the restaurant, Wirtshaus Rechthaler, seemed to be very strict and very much in charge. He was not very tolerant at all and very easily dismissed any customer who did not follow the rules. The two times we witnessed this were with four guys who

had just gotten off the train and had their backpacks. And, a couple who came in the back way and just sat down at a table they wanted instead of going through the front door and being assigned a table. It didn't seem to warrant being asked to leave but that's what they did. They followed the owner up to the front, were told to wait and then they left.

Tomorrow we check out and head to Salzburg by train, somewhere around 12:30 pm.

# Day 04 - 05/19/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025

12:09 PM

## Eden Hotel Wolff - Munich, Germany (Checkout)

Monday, 05/19/2025. Woke up from our last night in Munich. Seemed to be a much better night. The third night seems to be the trick getting over the jet lag, as long as there isn't other noise to keep you up. The couple who were yelling and screaming the first two nights disappeared last night so that was much better.

We did our usual trip down to the lower level for coffee and pastry. We were diverted a little because they were cleaning the stairs so we had to take a different set of stairs down. Well that just threw us for a loop. It's like a whole underground city down there. There were multiple places of the same store. We chose a different Rischart's but it was offering the same stuff. Once we made it back above ground we had to reset where we were in order to find our hotel. We also checked for train tickets but they were differently priced than last night for the same time and place. We will try again later.

### COMMENTS: 5 out of 10

#### Location

Munich was a big city. There are plenty of places to have a beer or two but the food is only average. The beer only goes so far though. Actually, there was better beer in Salzburg as we found out later.

#### Room

Good size. Bathroom was good, although there was quite high step into the tub to take a shower.

#### Breakfast

There was no free breakfast. Had to go out and find coffee and pastry.

#### Hotel

The hotel was fairly modern. Nice size rooms and nice size lobby. Didn't really use the lobby though. The hotel had a barroom, which is where we had our free drinks. Free drinks because we booked with Expedia. Otherwise, breakfast would have been 27 EU each. There was no coffee in the lobby or the room. We were told to either purchase coffee from the bar or downstairs (which was actually the underground part of the metro system). The hotel did have an elevator.

### TRAIN

Munich to Salzburg. 9:55 am.

We took the train out of Munich around 9:55 am and arrived in Salzburg around 12:00 pm. Then, it was about a 20 minute walk to the hotel after having asked a few people if we were going in the right direction. We couldn't check in yet but Andrea and Mike just happened to walk in so we talked with them until our room was ready.

### TOUR

Tour: My Way® Alpine Europe in 12 Days.

Start Date: Monday, May 19, 2025 in Salzburg

End Date: Friday, May 30, 2025 in Chamonix

We'll rendezvous at our hotel at 5 p.m. for a group get-together.

Monday May 19, 2025 - Wednesday May 21, 2025 (Day 1, 2).

#### HOTEL

Hofwirt Salzburg - Hotel Hofwirt (Day 1) - Salzburg, Austria (Checkin)

Schallmooser Hauptstrasse 1 A 5020 Salzburg <https://www.hofwirt-salzburg.at>

#### THINGS TO DO:

Hohensalzburg Fortress

Hagenauer House (Mozart's Birthplace)

Mirabell Palace & Garden

Hellbrunn Palace & Trick Fountains

DomQuartier Salzburg

Salzburg Cathedral

Altstadt (Old Town)

Getreidegasse (Salzburg's most famous shopping street)

St. Peter's Abbey (Cemetery)

Just looking around the place, there is a nice outdoor area for just sitting and relaxing. The breakfast area is large and at least the signage indicates there should be plenty of variety. Everything looks good. They also have coffee that is available pretty much any time. It comes from a machine but makes whatever you want.

Janet and I went off on our own to get some lunch. We, randomly, chose the very same Greek type place we ate at last time we were in Salzburg. The place was called Zum Ossi Spezialit. Pretty much just Italian food.

We then returned to our room and went prone until our 5:00 pm Rick Steve's meeting. It was mainly a meet and greet (with the tour manager or guide) and the other tour participants. We got to meet the other tour members. There are 26 people (making up 13 couples), one single and the tour manager and the bus driver whom we didn't meet until we got on the bus.

After that the four of us went out together to have some dinner (Gabler Brau). It was good, but Janet still wasn't happy with her goulash. I had the original Weiner Schnitzel that was probably veal.

Returning to our room, we were ready for bed.



# Day 05 - 05/20/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:10 PM

## Hotel Hofwirt - Salzburg

Tuesday, May 20, 2025 All Day in Salzburg, Austria (Day 2).

Tuesday, 05/2025.

We both didn't sleep well last night, since about 2:30 am on we were awake. Janet finally got up around 5:00 am and went downstairs for some coffee. She was the first down there but Andrea and then Mike showed up. When I got out of bed, took my shower and headed downstairs, Janet was coming up, followed by Andrea. I went down, said good morning to Mike and got my own coffee. It was kind of hot inside so I took my iPad and coffee and went outside. Later, I met up with Janet and met Andrea and Mike for our breakfast.

It was a good spread of food, although there was a definite lack of fruit and things such as bacon or sausages. Everything else was definitely plentiful and good.

After breakfast, the four of us headed down by the river to Mirabel Palace and Garden. Janet and Andrea posed for their Sound of Music pictures and then we went our separate ways. Janet and I walked down to the river and crossed over to get to the funicular that takes you up to the fortress (Hohensalzburg Fortress). We took the funicular to the top and got some pretty good views of Salzburg.

After that we returned to our Hotel to go prone for a while until we meet up with Andrea and Mike at 2:00 pm for our Salzburg Knockerl photos.

A little before 2:00 pm we met up with Andrea and Mike to go get a Salzburg Knockerl. We went to the same place Janet and I had gone to back in 2016 (Sacher Hotel). Turns out Mike didn't like anything about it and didn't eat his portion. So we decided that we would treat. Janet, I and Andrea ate it all up, Mike was pleasant about it but didn't eat any of it. Oh well.

After that we split up with Andrea and Mike heading off to an afternoon music venue. Janet and I walked across the river to the restaurant that Janet had thought had the best goulash back in 2016. It was called Barenwirt and was pretty much off the beaten path. Turns out that Janet thought the goulash was still the best. I had deep fried chicken strips on a bed of lettuce and potato salad. It was more like eating fish and chips. It came with a tartar sauce that you could dip the chicken strips into. We were both very happy with our choices.

We then walked back to our hotel. Janet bought a bottle of wine for herself and I just relaxed in our room.

Early to bed tonight as tomorrow we travel by bus to our next destination, Castelrotto.

# Day 06 - 05/21/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:11 PM

## Hotel Hofwirt - Salzburg, Austria (Checkout)

Wednesday, 05/21/2025.

Slept pretty well last night but had to get up around 1:00 am to pee. Of course, that woke Janet up and she was up for quite a while. Still got up around 5:30 am though, took a shower and went downstairs to get some coffee and sit outdoors. Breakfast isn't until 7:00 am so I have about a half hour now. Today, this morning at 8:30 am we leave for Castelrotto. Supposed to be at the bus by 8:15 am.

COMMENTS: 9 out of 10

### Location

We have been to Salzburg before so some of the things we did were repeats. Good location, just outside the walk way through the old part of town and down towards the Salz river.

### Room

Good size. Bathroom was good, although there was quite high step into the tub to take a shower.

### Breakfast

They had a free breakfast which had a good variety of items. The coffee was available downstairs but not in the room. There was a nice sitting area outside.

### Hotel

The hotel was fairly modern. Nice size rooms and a nice size lobby that included free hot drinks (including coffees). There was an outside area that was nicely done. When the weather was good, the outside was good for relaxing or having down time. There was an elevator.

Wednesday, May 21, 2025 – Friday, May 23, 2025 in Castelrotto (Day 3, 4, 5)

Hotel Cavallino D'Oro Castelrotto, Italy (Checkin)

Piazza Kraus

Castelrotto

Phone: 011 39 0471 706337 / Fax: 011 39 0471 707172

info@cavallino.it

<http://www.cavallino.it>

Wednesday, May 21, 2025 near the South Tirol area. Dolomites Drive to Italy (Day 3)

## THINGS TO DO:

Kafl (Hilltop fortress)

Restaurant Saalstuben, Restaurant Liftstüberl, Restaurant Cafe Bachler

The parish church

There are loads of trails around here as well as some beautiful churches.

Compatsch on Seiser Alm to hike

Prösels Castle

## San Valentino church

The bus ride to Castelrotto was a long one. Took most of the day. It was raining most of the way, although it did stop as we made it to Innsbrook. We do have a brief stop along about two hours into the bus ride. Good for bathroom breaks but also a required break by the bus driver. Very nice scenery but being on the bus made it difficult to take pictures. We stayed there in Innsbrook for lunch, longer than usual, so that allowed us time we didn't think we had. Once we started up in the Alps again though, it started raining again and is continuing to do so, as we sit in our room in Castelrotto.

So long story short, we had a full day of riding on the bus. The country side is beautiful but the long bus ride and the rain made it kind of difficult to enjoy anything outside.

Also, we are on the top floor and the only window that opens is in the ceiling to the roof. We can get it to automatically open, but it only stays open for 5 or 10 minutes and then closes automatically. We called, but they have no more rooms. So, I will just jam it to stay open. Don't know if that will work.

We went downstairs for a free drink provided by "Uncle Rick" and had a good time talking with the Steve's Team. Then Andrea, Mike, Janet and I went to a local Italian place for salad and pizza. Good but not memorable.

Now we have returned to our room to see if we can prevent the window from automatically closing. Meanwhile, the owner came by with a fan thinking that would satisfy our problem. No thanks. And, of course, we could not get the device to jam. It's just too strong.

Decided, to go to bed.

# Day 07 - 05/22/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025

12:12 PM

Thursday, May 22, 2025 near the South Tirol area. All Day in the Alpe di Siusi (Day 4)

Woke up early, around 4:00 am but didn't get up to take a shower until around 5:30 am. Went downstairs but there is no free coffee until 7:30 am when the breakfast starts. Fortunately, for me, someone brought me a cup of coffee before 7:30 am. Guess she felt sorry for me.

Anyway, the breakfast had a good variety of things to eat. Unfortunately, it has been steadily raining since about 5:00 am. Andrea, Mike and Janet decided take a bus to a place where hiking trails begin. Just to look around and take in any scenery.

I stayed back and walked around Castelrotto but it was very wet and rainy. I'm now waiting for the troops to get back. Don't know how any of the pictures will turn out. I hear from one of our tour team that they are on their way back. Too wet for them too.

The above is what we did in the morning. In the afternoon, we all decided to go to Bolzano to visit the museum where the Ice Man (Otzi) is located. It was a fascinating museum completely devoted to the discovery of Otzi. Before the museum we had nice lunch at a good Italian/German restaurant.

After returning home (It was down pouring by the way most of the time we were in Bolzano), we hung around the hotel and talked with others on the tour. Had a glass of wine and a good time before we called it a night and went upstairs to bed.

# Day 08 - 05/23/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:13 PM

## Hotel Cavallino D'Oro Castelrotto, Italy (Checkout)

We were a little rushed this morning. The rain had pretty much stopped, we had to have our breakfast at 7:30 am and be at the bus by 8:30 am. Had enough time though to take a nice walk and get some more (non-raining) pictures.

## COMMENTS: 4 out of 10

### Location

Right in the center of town. Castelrotto was nice but the rain put quite a damper on the visit. There were a lot of nice places to walk and take in the scenery, but the weather prevented that from happening.

### Room

Small size. Bathroom was small. Our room was quite small with an overhead window that did not provide proper ventilation.

### Breakfast

They had a free breakfast which had a good variety of items. The coffee was available downstairs, but not before breakfast and not in the room. Remember though that this is all part of the Rick Steves tour and every stop was supposed to include a free breakfast. That all started with Salzburg.

### Hotel

The hotel was average, but a lot of that was biased by the weather and the bad experience with the room. There was a nice lobby area for sitting and socializing (or waiting for the door to open for our breakfast). The lobby area included an Honor Bar where you paid for whatever you took when you left. The room we had was small, but there seemed to be plenty of space in the lobby for socializing. We are noticing that a small room usually means a larger lobby or sitting area. This building is the second of two, which meant that there was no staff or reception during the day. If you needed help, you had to communicate with the staff at the main hotel. Kind of a pain. There was an elevator.

Friday, May 23, 2025 – Sunday, May 25, 2025 (Day 5,6,7)

Altstadthotel Zum Hechten Fussen, Germany (Checkin)

Ritterstrasse 6

Fussen

Phone: 011 49 8362 91 600 / Fax: 011 49 8362 91 6099

info@hotel-hechten.com

<http://www.hotel-hechten.com>

Friday, May 23, 2025 in or near Füssen. To the Zugspitze and Bavaria (Day 5)

## THINGS TO DO:

Old Town (Altstadt von Fuessen)

Hohes Schloss (High Castle)

Museum der Stadt Fussen

Basilika St. Mang  
Lech Fall  
Neuschwanstein Castle and Hohenschwangau Castle  
Hopfensee Lake  
Tegelberg Cable Car  
Alpsee Lake  
Linderhof Palace

We took our bus most of the day to get to Fussen. We had our usual stop for a break around 2 hours into the trip. We were supposed to have a stop at the tallest mountain in Germany, the Zugspitze, but the cable cars for the trip up to the top were not operational yet. So, instead we stopped at Burruine Ehrenberg castle. There are actually 3 or 4 main things to do there. The museum and the zip line, of which we did not do. But we did visit the Ehrenberg castle, which included two funicular rides and a walk across the suspension bridge.

The suspension bridge is very high off the canyon and very long, spanning the length of the canyon. A bit on the scary side. Andrea actually turned back but the rest of us gradually made our way across. Then, of course, we had to return the same way. One person who was really frightened of heights, etc. actually forced herself to go. Quite the accomplishment.

Overall, a good day, but a little too long on the bus. On the other hand, how else would we have gotten here?

We have now arrived in Fussen, arranged for our room and are awaiting the dinner planned at the restaurant of the hotel. Their card machine broke so they are only accepting euros. We should be covered but we will see if their advertised special meal really is that good. The dinner is not scheduled until 7:00 pm, which is late for us. Will try not to eat too much so we can hopefully sleep. The room we have looks pretty nice. We will find out the breakfast tomorrow.

The dinner was very good. Janet and I got there early, of course. We got a couple of drinks and were sat in the room where the dinner was scheduled. Andrea and Mike then joined us and everyone else kind of showed up on time. I think there were around 24 of us. We were all at different tables mostly, so the team-ness kind of vanished for awhile. We had ordered from Castelrotto so we already knew what we were going to have. Still, with that many of us at one time, it was very good and timely.

After dinner we retired to our room and got ready for bed.

# Day 09 - 05/24/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:13 PM

Saturday, May 24, 2025 in or near Füssen. Bikes, Hikes and Castles (Day 6)

We actually slept in pretty good. It is always tough getting used to new beds, bathrooms and showers. Especially, the showers. Breakfast is scheduled for 7:00 am.

Breakfast also very good. Plenty of variety. On our way to the castles by bus. We went to Neuschwanstein Castle and Hohenschwangau Castle. It was more of a hike up to Neuschwanstein Castle then expected but it is worth the climb. We didn't go inside but from the outside you get some pretty spectacular pictures. The Hohenschwangau Castle was just across the way at the bottom of the trail but it wasn't as tantalizing after having climbed up the hill to the original castle.

We ended up sitting by a lake and then making our way back to the bus stop. Andrea and Mike went for lunch after we made it back to Fussen but Janet and I continued to the trail. We went to the Lech Falls but it was a bust. The water wasn't high enough to go over all the falls so it was pretty tranquil.

We then walked back into town to get something for lunch. We ended up with a good Greek salad. I had some salad and an Aperol Spritz and Janet had some salad and a glass of wine. It should hold us over until dinner. There was a wedding taking place across the street above a museum so we were able to catch the arrival of the bride and groom and their exit from the ceremony.

We are now going prone at our hotel room.

# Day 10 - 05/25/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:14 PM

Altstadthotel Zum Hechten Fussen, Germany (Checkout)

Had another good breakfast before we left. It has reverted back to rainy weather again. Good traveling weather I guess.

We are making our usual break on the road. On our way now to Lucerne (Luzern) for our lunch break. We have brought some food on the bus from this morning, knowing that Lucerne is going to be expensive.

The one thing we continue to notice is the number of trucks on the roads. There are hundreds of trucks, one after another. Mainly in the larger cities but elsewhere too. I guess traffic is traffic.

Lucerne is just as beautiful as ever, even though there has been substantial building and more people since the last time we were here. We went back to where our old hotel (Magic Hotel) was, checked out where we had breakfast and revisited the Lion monument. We sat down on a bench to eat some food and were asked by some Asian ladies to move because they wanted that bench to take selfies from. Janet said no and that was that. Two minutes after we left though, the same two women rushed to occupy the bench as theirs.

We then had to slowly make our way back to get back on the bus. From that point we all headed towards Lauterbrunnen.

COMMENTS: 6 out of 10

Location

Fussen had a lot offer as far as going to the castles, etc. Not much of a town, but still worth walking around.

Room

Larger room than Castelrotto but nothing special. We just figure that the whole process of who gets what room is totally random. Our room had a balcony but the rain kept us from really using it. Plus, it just faced another parking lot.

Breakfast

They had a free breakfast which had a good variety of items. The coffee was available downstairs, but not before breakfast and not in the room.

Hotel

The hotel was average, although better than Castelrotto. We had a larger room, but there was nowhere downstairs for socializing. There was a nice restaurant downstairs where we had our dinner. We had to enter from the back of the hotel, simply because the reception area was not large enough. There was an elevator.

Sunday, May 25, 2025 – Wednesday, May 28, 2025 (Day 7,8,9,10)

Hotel Staubbach Lauterbrunnen, Switzerland (Checkin)

Im Rohr



Lauterbrunnen  
Phone: 011 41 33 855 5454 / Fax: 011 41 33 855 5484  
hotel@staubbach.com  
<http://www.staubbach.ch>

Sunday, May 25, 2025 in the Lauterbrunnen Valley. On to the Best of Switzerland (Day 7)

THINGS TO DO:

- Staubbach Falls
- Trummelbach Falls
- Schilthorn
- Cable Car to Mürren or Wengen
- Schilthorn (Piz Gloria)
- Männlichen
- Grindelwald

We drove through the Alps, passing Interlaken briefly and finally ended up at our hotel. It's a pretty rustic hotel, not fancy at all. A little too rustic for my tastes, but the views are incredible. Plenty of waterfalls, although it is still raining quite a bit.

We tried a small place for something to eat for dinner. Average at best. Probably won't eat there again.

Our tour manager, Axel, prepared some special drink (Prosecco, mint and elderberry juice) for everybody as a treat. We stayed up a little to chat with some other tour members. There seems to be a lot of flies. Very bothersome.

Going to bed now.

# Day 11 - 05/26/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:14 PM

Monday, May 26, 2025 in the Lauterbrunnen Valley. All Day to Explore the Swiss Alps (Day 8)

Breakfast was good but, even though they said coffee would be available before breakfast, it was not. The weather is pretty rainy and wet. You have to find any window you can and hurry up to do what you want to do.

We pretty much walked everywhere we could. Got to see some pretty good waterfalls. But we got pretty wet in walking from place to place. Went up to Staubbach Falls and Trummelbach Falls. Took a cable car (The steepest in Europe supposedly) up to Murren. Walked through Murren, took the train across the top to another cable car that took us back down to Lauterbrunnen.

There doesn't seem to be any good places to eat. Not just that things are more expensive in Switzerland. This place has a lot of scenery but also a lot of rain and not much in the way of good places to eat. Still a lot of flies in the hotel and other places that may have drinks or food. Not sure where they all come from. Is it the cows, the lack of screens on the windows?

We went to the COOP grocery store and bought a premade salad for dinner. Brought it back to the hotel to eat with Andrea and Mike. Turns out there is no dressing so eating the salad was a little dry.

We talked for a bit, finished our salad and then headed for our room. Got things ready for the next day as far as clothes go and then got ready for bed.

Not sure what we are doing tomorrow. Janet wants to take the train up the other side of the valley where there is another small village like Murren.

# Day 12 - 05/27/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:15 PM

Tuesday, May 27, 2025 in the Lauterbrunnen Valley. Another Day of Swiss Adventures (Day 9)

Had a good breakfast in the breakfast room. This room has particularly good views of the sides of the valley and the main waterfall.

We decided to take it easy today, but still sightsee as much as we could. So we started around 10:00 am instead of 9:00 am. Ha ha. We took the train up the other side of the valley. We rode the train part way up the other side towards Wengen. Andrea, Mike and us decided to take one of the easy trails, which was paved part of the way and a little muddy the rest. It was kind of cloudy this morning but after hiking a while the sun started breaking through. Excellent views overlooking Lauterbrunnen and the valley. We met another couple from our tour and they went with us. We got up so far and then we turned around and came back.

Don't know what happened to the other couple, but the four of us tried to find a restaurant for lunch. Either they were too expensive or they were not open. So, we went to the local COOP grocery store and got some sandwiches.

Then, we took the train back down to Lauterbrunnen and back to the hotel. Janet and Andrea left to scope out some shop that they ended up not finding. We are now having our wine.

Around 5:00 pm we went on the prowl for something to eat for dinner. We found a small place on the main road that had gyros and other wraps, so we got one each. We only ate about half and then wrapped them up to maybe eat for lunch tomorrow on the bus. We stored them in the refrigerator with our name on them.

We then walked along the river and came back to the hotel where we socialized with Rachel and Frank. During that time the sky cleared and we could see the sunlight on the mountain. After taking more pictures we decided to call it a night and went up to our room.

# Day 13 - 05/28/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:15 PM

## Hotel Staubbach Lauterbrunnen, Switzerland (Checkout)

Wednesday, 05/28/2025.

This is our final breakfast here in Lauterbrunnen. We got ourselves ready to check out and then headed to breakfast. The day started out pretty clear then got worse as the morning went on. We took a final walk down by the stream and then met outside by the bus to load up and leave, having retrieved our leftovers from the refrigerator.

We left about 9:00 am, headed toward Interlaken but took the turn to Chamonix instead.

Beautiful drive to Chamonix, although we did run into some traffic which caused us to be delayed by about a half hour or so. The last 45 minutes or so is winding our way up and through the Alps toward Chamonix.

We found our hotel once we got to Chamonix, unloaded our things and said good bye to Frankie and the bus. He was leaving us in Chamonix and heading home to Belgium.

## COMMENTS: 7 out of 10

### Location

Lauterbrunnen is very beautiful with lots of waterfalls. Reminds us a lot of Yosemite. Unfortunately, the weather is quite wet and cloudy most of the time which made it harder to enjoy. Even so, probably my favorite stop.

### Room

Small room. Bathroom was just toilet and shower. The sink was actually in the room with the bed. It did have a balcony though. Good views.

### Breakfast

They had a free breakfast which had a good variety of items. The coffee was available downstairs, but not before breakfast and not in the room.

### Hotel

The hotel was not up to expectations. Old, rustic, etc. Small rooms, but a larger lobby and sitting area. There were multiple rooms, one with a piano that Mike actually played (uncharacteristic of him). Off the reception area was a room for eating store-bought meals and storing your own food and drinks. Nice touch, but reflective of the high price of meals here in Switzerland since they are not part of the EU. The lobby area and rooms seemed to be havens for flies. The breakfast area is large with great views. There was an elevator.

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 – Friday, May 30, 2025 (Day 10,11,12)

Hotel Plan B Chamonix, France (Checkin)

196, avenue de Courmayeur

Chamonix-Mont-Blanc

Phone: 011 33 048 530 0160

contact@planb-chamonix.com

<https://www.planb-chamonix.com/en/>

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 in Chamonix (Day 10).

THINGS TO DO:

- Aiguille du Midi
- Mer de Glace
- Tramway du Mont-Blanc
- Brevent Cable Car
- The Grand Balcon Nord
- Grand Balcon Sud
- Historic center
- Chamonix Saturday market
- Alpine coaster

It's raining here in Chamonix. Thought it would be. We made it to the hotel but the rooms weren't ready yet so they had us store our luggage and come back in about an hour (3:00 pm). Axel took us all on a short tour of the town, still raining, pointing out the places of interest and restaurants etc.

We stopped in at one of the restaurants he said was good and had a beer and wine. Turns out Rachel, Frank and Melissa were there. Rachel had ordered French onion soup and it looked really good so Janet got some. It was pretty good, thick with broth, bread and cheese.

By the time we were done, our room was ready so we went back to check in. Our room is nice size, modern and a decently large bathroom and shower.

Breakfast is from 6:30 am to 10:00 am and there is coffee in the room. So far, so good.

Since it is raining outside, we decided to just stay in and check out the hotel. Janet got a glass of wine and we sat in a room where some young guys were playing pool. Later, Janet talked with the young lady at the front desk and arranged for the tickets to get us to Brig on Friday.

I came up to the room to read and Janet stayed for awhile down with Rachel, Frank and Melissa. Janet came upstairs to our room and we got ready for bed after a bit.

# Day 14 - 05/29/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:16 PM

Thursday, May 29, 2025 in Chamonix.  
Aiguille du Midi Dreamin' (Day 11)  
PlanB - Living Chamonix

There will be a tour-ending happy hour in the lounge starting at 5:30 pm.

Woke up around 5:00 am this morning to a brightening day. The mountain tops are exposed on our side and the sun is starting to reach them as well. Janet has already gone downstairs and outside to get better pictures but the view from our room is just gorgeous. She also came back with coffee and chocolate croissants since they were getting ready for the breakfast.

The breakfast had plenty of variety and a little pastry that we are used to. Didn't really get that in Lauterbrunnen. All they had there was bread and donut holes that had a little jam inside. All said, there was plenty to chose from and real coffee, cappuccino espressos, etc from the machine.

We went out to tour the town. While we were doing so, we thought we would take a chance on the mountain. So we waited in line and were almost there when they closed down for that day. Meaning, that there were no more tickets for that day. This activity is very crowded and taking reservations only. So we gave up.

Instead we opted for finding a good pastry shop. We did. We spent some time eating our desserts and just watching people. If you can't do something like go up the mountain, you might as well get desserts and watch people.

We bought some more Pellegrino water for our train ride tomorrow. We probably could have got mountain reservations for tomorrow, but we are leaving early by train to Brig.

We came back to the room to wait for dinner with Andrea and a Mike before the happy hour at 5:30 pm.

# Day 15 - 05/30/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:16 PM

Friday, May 30, 2025 in Chamonix, France (Checkout)  
TOUR OVER AFTER BREAKFAST (Day 12)

## HOLLY'S BIRTHDAY

COMMENTS: 10 out of 10

### Location

The weather cooperated tremendously and the sun was a welcome sight for the Alps. Nice town with plenty of walking opportunities and eating/shopping options.

### Room

The room was a welcome sight. Plenty of room and the windows opened up to a beautiful view of the Alps.

### Breakfast

Plenty of variety, good coffee and good food.

### Hotel

Hotel was nice, modern and in a good location. More modern than what we experienced since Salzburg. Rooms were large and the lobby area was large, including a bar area. Reception people were very helpful. There was an elevator.

## TRAIN

Friday, May 30, 2025  
Chamonix, France - Brig, Switzerland

Woke up at the usual 5:30 am time, took our showers and went down for our last Steve's Alps tour breakfast. Said goodbye to whoever was left, particularly Rachel, Frank and Melissa. Andrea and Mike also bid their farewells.

We are now upstairs waiting for our time to get to the train station.

Janet was able to get the help of the person at the front desk of Hotel Plan B. That person also gave us two free tickets to where we switch to another train. From there, we are on our own to Brig.

We had a nice train ride. Had to switch trains a few times but still it was fairly easy. The first stretch (through Chamonix) we were checked for our hotel passes but the rest of the trip nobody bothered to check anybody.

## HOTEL

Friday, May 30, 2025 - Saturday, May 31, 2025

Hotel De Londres - Brig, Switzerland (Checkin)  
Bahnhofstrasse 17, Brig, 3900 Switzerland Expedia itinerary:

72919320260240

Deluxe Twin Room, Balcony, Mountain View (DBL TB)  
Includes breakfast. (Yes)

(PAID: \$273.76)

The code is:

Hi Janet

You booked a room with us for friday, thank you very much.

Let us know if you have any special requests.

Just in case we are not here:

The code for our entrance door is 1965 and the bell button.

You would then also find your room key on the 1st floor in a red envelope on the kitchen island.

Our emergency number is +41 79 719 19 44.

See you soon, Monika

We got here early so we stored our luggage for awhile. The owner or manager gave us a welcome glass of wine while we waited. Brig is more of a town than we had imagined. The room is kind of small as well as the bathroom, although it is certainly adequate. We do get a free breakfast though.

We walked around a bit but didn't notice any restaurant that stood out. So, we are probably just going to each have a salad from the COOP. Things are a lot more expensive in Switzerland.

We think we have directions on getting to Varenna tomorrow. Looks like we are going to have to take the train into Milan and then take another train to Varenna. We were hoping to get to Como and take a ferry to Varenna but that was too much to accomplish.

Ever since this morning I'm feeling like a cold is coming on. So I'm just taking it easy this afternoon. Janet spent the afternoon relaxing on the terrace while I rested in bed. Janet had purchased a couple of salads from CCOP so she ate hers on the terrace and I had mine later up in our room.

Going to bed a little later than usual.



# Day 16 - 05/31/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:17 PM

Hotel De Londres - Brig, Switzerland (Checkout)  
Saturday, May 31, 2025.

Didn't sleep real well last night. Couldn't keep the doors open because of noise and the cooler went off in the middle of the night. So the sleeping environment wasn't good, plus I was not feeling that well anyway.

The bathroom, being as small as it is, made it very difficult to take a shower without getting everything outside the shower sopping wet. We haven't quite figured out why they can't design a shower that doesn't leak. Even the nice walk-in showers that you occasionally see have the leakage problem.

Breakfast the next day was good. Good variety but there was the noticeable absence of anything sweet as far as pastry. Plenty of breads and even a croissant, but even that was more of a roll.

COMMENTS: 7 out of 10

## Location

Good location. Not too far from the train station and centrally located in town. Still some views of the Alps but they are disappearing gradually. It is noticeably warmer here, having to strip off layers that we needed for Chamonix.

## Room

The room is small with a small bathroom and, especially, the shower. Good we are only spending one night.

## Breakfast

Plenty of variety, but mainly breads for pastry.

## Hotel

The hotel is clean and neat. Code to get in, but a deck area for eating outside on the terrace and an inside area for indoors if that is what you want. Different rooms for different things. Looks like kind of a British establishment, somewhat. Pub on the main floor and an English flare up above. One problem with the downstairs activities is that the noise keeps you from opening your doors for air during the night. There was an elevator.

## TRAIN

Saturday, May 31, 2025

## Brig, Switzerland - Milan, Italy

The train ride to Milan was about 2 1/2 hours. We had assigned seats so that helped. Not that many people.

## Milan, Italy - Varenna, Italy

The train ride to Varenna was a nightmare. There were people standing and sitting

in the aisles. It was 10 minutes late and even later to Varenna. We should have known that was a bad sign. The train was packed, Varenna was like a zoo and the hotel was very difficult to find. Up and down and up and down and up and down. Is coming to Lake Como worth it? Well, you certainly should not come on a weekend. Particularly if it is good weather. In my mind, it's not worth it.

## HOTEL

Saturday, May 31, 2025 - Wednesday, June 4, 2025

Albergo Milano - Varenna, Italy (Checkin)

Via XX Settembre, 35, Varenna 23829 Lecco Italy Telephone: +390341830298

E-mail: [reservations@varenna.net](mailto:reservations@varenna.net)

Includes breakfast. (Yes)

(PAID: \$1,072.46.00)

We probably finally got to the hotel about 2:45 pm. They are very strict about anything earlier than 3:00 pm so had to store our luggage and try to find something to eat and/or drink. This place (Lake Como and Varenna) is very crowded. Probably because it is a Saturday. We tried three or four different restaurants on the water and they all had line after line of people. It have never had to wait this long for a table. And the food is only average. But it is on the water.

We finally concluded our lunch of pizza, a beer and a peach Bellini. After waiting for probably over an hour. I was beat so Janet waited in line and I rested on the steps. Turns out we would have many more steps to climb to get to our room.

We went back to the hotel where the receptionist confirmed our stay and said we were to follow her to our room. Out the door, up over 50 steps, then into a room with more steps and then, finally up more steps to finally get to our room. No elevator, no help from staff. Nothing.

It is a nice big room with a large bathroom and decent sized shower. However, the room is not the problem. It's getting to the room.

## TO THE FRONT DOOR

30 steps

## FROM THE FRONT DOOR

54 Steps and 3 small landings and 4th landing is the room. Then, there are another 3 steps out to the deck that overlooks the lake.

## STAIRS:

14 steps

11 steps

13 steps

1 step

15 steps (into room)

3 steps (to deck)

I rested up, did some laundry (It's very warm here so things should dry fairly quickly) and Janet went out to scope the lay of the land.

I stayed in the room while Janet explored some. Then we just went prone until bedtime.

# Day 17 - 06/01/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:18 PM

Albergo Milano – Varenna

Sunday, June 1, 2025.

Woke up a later then usual, about 6:00 am. Had to get up in the middle of the night to turn the air back on, as it was getting too stuffy. Still not feeling 100%. I think yesterday's workout was not helpful.

This morning things are quieter. The lake is still just a lake but at least the hoards of people are gone. Don't know if they will return today. The lake still has quite the haze about it. Not sure if the pollution is coming from Milan or what. According to the weather app, the air quality doesn't get much better than Good. That's what it is now, but as the day goes on it gets to Poor. We shall see how the day goes. It is supposed to rain Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. We leave Wednesday for Milan.

My impressions of Lake Como and particularly Varenna is that is where the rich and famous wannabes come in order to act like the rich and famous. The clothes they wear, the poses they assume and the selfies they take are way beyond the normal. The selfies Asians take is one thing. But here, particularly it's the women, they take on that persona of presumed wealth.

We went for a hike to Castello Di Vezio. All up hill, rocky trail, all up hill, higher and higher finally we got there and they are charging to go in. If you have seen one castle you have seen them all, so we didn't go. Back down the trail we went, being very careful now as the well worn rocks on the path were quite slippery. Nice to finally make it back down safely and resting in our room.

It's not long though and Janet wants to go out again. I'm staying put but she will venture out somewhere along the stairs and paths of Varenna.

It is now 12:00 pm and the air quality is Moderate. The tourists have mostly all flocked in. It doesn't seem to be as busy as yesterday but still not quite what was expected for Varenna. It is supposed to be less touristy than Bellagio. Can't imagine what is going on in Bellagio. Especially, yesterday.

It's now 1:30 pm and the air quality is Poor. Worse than yesterday at this time. Although, yesterday ended up being Poor anyway.

Had our first gelato of the trip from a shop that does homemade gelato. Didn't have to walk too far from where we are staying. Thought we should have something before dinner.

Janet made a reservation for dinner at one of the less populated restaurants for 6:30 pm. Hopefully, the crowds will be gone by then and we can make it to Osteria Quattro Pass.

Dinner was good. Janet had the raviolis and I had the lasagne. The lasagna was ok but it was different from what I am used to. It could have been a corner piece. It was kind of dry, almost as if it was from the day before. Janet said hers was very good. The pasta

appears to be homemade as it is very thin. We had some kind of berry/mousse dessert. Nice and creamy.

After dinner we walked down by the lake, went up to our room and watched the lake and then decided to call it a day.

# Day 18 - 06/02/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:18 PM

Albergo Milano – Varenna  
Monday, June 2, 2025.

Woke up around 5:00 am to thunder and lightning. By 5:30 am it was raining pretty good. The lake still has its really hazy look, so I guess the rain doesn't wash anything away. Right now, about 7:15 am it is fairly calm. Not raining but still cloudy and threatening.

Things are pretty quiet out there. Today is supposed to be an Italian holiday. Something about when the Republic was established. Don't know if that will mean more tourists coming in or what. I think the weather is what draws most people from Milan. If it's good, it's an easy train ride up here.

We went to breakfast. Everything was pretty wet on the terrace so we had to eat inside by the door. Pretty much what was there for food yesterday, selection wise.

We then visited the Villa Monastero which has the beautiful gardens overlooking the lake. Apparently, it used to be a monastery but has been built upon and the museum added. It was lightly raining.

We made it back to the room, brushed our teeth and Janet headed out. The housekeeping came while she was gone and did light maintenance of the room. Janet was able to get back before she was done. Once housekeeping finished it became quite windy, a lot of thunder and quite a bit of hard rain. We stayed put inside until the weather broke. I stayed inside but Janet had to get out, so off she went. Janet found a good restaurant for around 5:30 pm or 6:00 pm.

It is now 12:30 pm and the air quality is Moderate, even though it has been raining. So, the air quality is a little better than this time yesterday.

It is now 5:00 pm and the air quality is Poor. About the same as yesterday, even with all the rain. It has been raining off and on all day.

Went out to eat at the newest restaurant Janet found, La Scarpetta. It wasn't as good as the one the night before. Janet had the lasagna and I had the fettuccine. They both were good but could have been better and hotter. The lasagna seemed as if it was made layer by layer at that moment. It wasn't baked but the pasta was very light. The fettuccine was also good with light and freshly made pasta, but it could have had more Parmesan, maybe some garlic and could have been hotter. All in all, it was good but could have been better. Both lacked a clear flavor. We had the Tiramisu for dessert. Janet read that it was supposed to be really good. Once again, it lacked a clear flavor. Could have had more coffee, maybe espresso. Oh well.

We tried to go for a short walk afterwards but it started to rain and all the downward stairs seemed to be getting more slippery. I returned to our room and was joined shortly by Janet and we settled in to get ready for bed.

# Day 19 - 06/03/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:19 PM

Albergo Milano - Varenna  
Tuesday, June 3, 2025.

Woke up about 5:30 am and started milling around. Janet stayed in bed a little longer after having not slept well. I think she is starting to get what I had.

It is continuing to rain this morning. The forecast does not look good, although we can see some blue sky outside. We will go to breakfast and then see what the ferry situation looks like.

Breakfast was good, but more people this morning when they opened at 8:00 am. They do not really replenish their items well, so getting there early is the only way you get the variety. I thought I would wait on the Muesli, but by the time I got there there was only one small helping left. I noticed when we left that it had not been replenished. Since it was raining we had to sit inside again.

Air quality is Fair at 9:30 am.

We had quite the boat tour this morning thru early afternoon. We got down to the ferry and headed for two primary destinations: Villa Carlotta (which is located in Taormina) and Bellagio. First stop, Villa Carlotta, is just down from Menaggio, which involved crossing over from Varenna. Villa Carlotta is a botanical garden and museum. There is plenty to see and walk, of course a lot of up and down. The museum is pretty scant but has some good views if you go upstairs. There are way too many plants and flowers to see but you have some from just about every earthly zone all planted in one place.

The other place we stopped was across the lake to the town of Bellagio. This is THE place for all the tourists on Lake Como. Even on the calmest of days, this place is hopping with tourists who want to spend (waste) their money. We did stop at a place for lunch which was crowded, but had good lasagna and penne pasta with red sauce. It was called Café Vecchio Borge. Right across the way was a gelato place that happened to have a fig variety that I picked up on after lunch. Janet is going to wait and have her gelato back in Varenna. That will be our dinner.

The weather turned out to be a perfect day for what we did. We had partly sunny skies and warm temperatures. Even though the forecast had been storm warnings. Typical!

We returned to Varenna and immediately made our way back to our room where we went prone for awhile to recover. When I say gelato by the way, we are talking ice cream and not necessarily real gelato as we normally think of it.

For 5:00 pm the air quality is actually Fair, but you can tell that the air quality is getting worse as the day goes on. The lake this morning had pretty clear skies but now it is getting hazy again since the rain has stopped.

We left our room in search of gelato for Janet. The place we had in mind was closed so we had to choose one of the other places nearer the lake. We sat for awhile outside so Janet could finish her gelato. The weather turned and we thought we were going to be

in for a real storm, kind of like this morning. We had the thunder and some lightning and wind but no real rain. We headed back up to our room expecting to be drenched at any minute. But nothing really happened. In fact, the sun started to come back out.

Anyway, we are kind of resting in our room, planing for tomorrow and waiting for bed time.



# Day 20 - 06/04/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:19 PM

## Albergo Milano - Varenna, Italy (Checkout)

Wednesday, June 4, 2025

Woke up about the same time this morning, around 5:00 am. Getting ourselves ready for a travel day to Milan. First things first, our last breakfast in Varenna.

Weather is supposed to be stormy, but looks good outside. Air quality is Good at 7:00 am.

COMMENTS: 5 out of 10 (Mainly because of the stairs, steps and crowds)

### Location

The location of the hotel is very good. We are on the top floor of another building run by Albergo Milano, called Casa Rossa. Hotel is centrally located but it is hard to find and difficult to navigate.

### Room

The room is very nice and large. There is also a small refrigerator and kitchen. The stairs make it hard to appreciate, but it is a nice room and bathroom. There is in-room coffee, which helps since the free breakfast doesn't start until 8:00 am.

### Breakfast

Plenty of food available, plenty of coffee, but we did notice that there were no eggs of any kind offered. (We found the hard boiled eggs later in a basket up on a shelf). Probably the best Muesli I have had on the trip. It had quite a bit of real fresh fruit and nuts. They tend not to refresh much though.

### Hotel

Right on the water, great views of the lake. The hotel is hard to find, lots of steps, up and down, up and down a lot of stairs. Casa Rossa is actually a different building from the main Albergo Milano. You have to leave Casa Rossa and go to Albergo Milano for the breakfast. Not really an issue, but it did mean more stairs. There is no elevator.

## TRAIN

Wednesday, June 4, 2025

Varenna, Italy - Milan, Italy

The train ride to Milan was a lot better than the train ride from Milan to Varenna. Less people and it seems like less stops. Once we got off the train, we headed for the local ticket machines that act to get us to our hotel. Turns out they weren't working very well and so we used a credit card to get us through the turnstile. Went down what we thought was the right tunnel but had to turn around and go a different way. Finally, got to the place we were supposed to be in. I think it had plenty of people heading our way, but was fairly easy.

Once we stopped at the street Janet's notes indicated, we came off the train and looked around. Following the exit signs, you need to scan out of the terminal. We had not

received tickets so we had to use our credit card again to get us out of the station. As it turned out, since we used Janet's card for both of us, it only charged us for Janet.

## HOTEL

Wednesday, June 4, 2025 - Friday, June 6, 2025

B and G Boutique Milan, Italy (Checkin)

via santa cecilia 6, Milan, Città Metropolitana di Milano, 20122 Italy

Does not include breakfast.

(PAID: \$481.62) There will be a local sales tax added.

Getting to the hotel was about a 15 minute walk from the Metro. Janet had screenshot the streets and directions so it went pretty smoothly. From there it went downhill.

We found the actual street door but had to fumble with the keypad to get in. Next, Janet went upstairs and (got lucky) found the cleaning woman who was cleaning the two rooms that are B and G Boutique. She let us in but had to call the owner over to find out which unit was ours. He came over after awhile and informed us that the air conditioner had broken and there would be no air conditioning. He had bought some unit that blew cooler air via cold water, but that really wasn't doing the job. In any event, the room wouldn't be ready for awhile, so we dropped our suitcases off and went for a stroll.

We went to the Duomo, which really isn't a Duomo the way you usually think of it. You know, with a large dome. Instead, it look's a lot more like something Gaudi would have made. We will see more tomorrow. We ended up having lunch inside what is considered the mall. It was called Motta. Not too bad for a touristy place.

I had what they called their Gourmet Hamburger, a beer and Janet had a mushroom pizza (which she said was kind of bland) and a glass of wine. After the bill was paid we received a small portion of biscotti. We (I) will probably save that for breakfast.

Plenty of people and obviously the same kind of "selfy" tourists we found in Varenna. Many, many high end, high price places offering their goods. And many, many high end, high priced people to buy all the expensive stuff.

From there we found the cathedral that holds the bones and skulls of thousands of people who had died in the 13th century. The Church built itself on top of this cemetery. At the time, there were only a small number of bones. But over time it became the thing to do to donate the bones of your loved ones to the church. Then the church had too many and started stacking them up inside.

Then, we kind of got lost but eventually found our way back to the hotel. The room was ready, the windows were shut, the little air cooler was running, but it was still very stuffy in the room. It's going to be a long night.

# Day 21 - 06/05/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:20 PM

B and G Boutique - Milan  
Thursday June 5, 2025.

Woke up, if you can wake up after having such a night of non-sleeping, around 5:45 am. I had gotten up way earlier to turn off the so-called air conditioner and close the curtains to make it darker. The air-conditioner is noisy and worthless and there is a street lamp just outside our balcony window.

While the place "looks" like a nice, contemporary place, there are things that simply do not work or require something else. (a correction about this all later). The little lamps on either side of the bed do not work. The in-room coffee maker does not plug in, thus does not work. If you hold it in, it works. But there does not seem to be a way for it to just stay in and work. It pops back out. The outlet for the hair dryer in the bathroom works the same way. And, of course we were told this, the air conditioner does not work. The street is noisy.

Other than that, things are fairly typical. We have to find something to eat this morning before we go to the Duomo.

Milan Cathedral 9:00 AM  
BIGLIETTERIA DUOMO DI MILANO

We made it to the Duomo for our 9:30 am reservation. There are different reservations, but ours is for taking the stairs to the top of the Duomo, in order to walk the roof. It is around 256 steps up the inside staircase in order for you to reach the very top of the roof. Quite a view from the rooftop, although there was also quite a bit of construction and renovation going on. Great pictures. Then, of course, you have to go back down all those stairs. Some reservations allow you to use the elevators.

The tickets included everything inside the church as well. Just huge inside. Finally, our tickets included going down under the church to see the archaeology of the building.

Janet thought our tickets included The Last Supper in another building located far from the Duomo. After walking quite a ways to get to that building, it turns out she was mistaken. We walked back to our hotel. Need to go prone.

The owner came by so we asked him about our issues. Turns out the outlet issue is a safety issue for children. You have to push the plug in and then push a little harder, for it to stick. The lamps by the side of the bed do work, but you have to have them turned on and then you just tap the base to get the desired brightness. Nice to now know!!!

We talked to the owner about places to eat dinner and he recommended a couple of his favorites. We also got a bit more information on getting to the airport tomorrow.

We went out to eat at Rosso Brera which was his final recommendation. Another walk, this time up the street we had not been to. It was towards another place Janet wanted to see anyway. The Castle. So we ate there. Supposedly more traditional Italian food than

pizza. It's true. They didn't have pizza but the food was probably like most other restaurants in the area.

After dinner we walked a little further, another 15 or so minutes, to the castle. It's quite the structure and seems to be another place locals and tourists go besides going to the Duomo.

By the time we got back my legs couldn't go anymore. We had to go prone for awhile. But for me, I was in for the night. For Janet, she still needed to get out for awhile. So she went on a little shopping trip. Thanks to her we have had yogurt and a roll or something in the mornings here. Then, we head out to a local bakery to get something sweet.

# Day 22 - 06/06/2025

Sunday, April 13, 2025 12:22 PM

B and G Boutique - Milan, Italy (Checkout)  
Friday June 6, 2025.

Today we head out to the train station and then on to the Milan airport. Our last day of the trip. Me personally, I am ready to head home. I know for Janet she would prefer to just keep going. We tend to start and end in big cities, in this case Munich and Milan. Nice to see and plenty to see. But for me, way too much congestion and noise.

COMMENTS: 5 out of 10

## Location

Good location. Close to the center of town and the Duomo. Unfortunately, being downtown also means a lot more noise and congestion. Way too many people, way too much traffic.

## Room

The room is nice and large and the bathroom is modernized with a large shower. This is the first place this whole trip that did not use the two comforter solution. Everything worked (except the air conditioning), but a little education would have been helpful. Apparently, there are some building codes for outlets that have to be dealt with. Nice to have the window doors, but can't really use them with all the noise.

There was coffee available in the room and a little better coffee in a kitchen that was shared between the two units.

## Breakfast

There was no breakfast included.

## Hotel

The hotel is really just a local B&B. You have to have a key or code to get in the downstairs door. Then a couple more locked doors before you finally get to your room up some stairs of course (although there is an elevator). The air conditioner was broken and, although the owner said they have told all of their following booked guests that information so that they could re-book, chances are they have already committed themselves to this place as part of their vacation and can't re-book. With the noise and heat, having air conditioning is a big deal.

FLIGHT BACK TO SACRAMENTO Fri, Jun 06, 2025

United still has us booked for our flights on time. I have checked in using the app but we will still need to check our bags.

We left for the train or metro about 10:30 am. We weren't sure how much time we needed so we took the safe route. Getting on the metro was pretty easy. From there we got off on a stop that had a faster train to the Milano Airport Terminal 1. Once we got to Terminal 1 the fun began. We had to wait a few minutes to get to the United check in

desks. They were not letting anyone past a point unless you could prove you had a flight on United. The United app turned out to be a must.

Once we got to where we could check our bags we had to go to a different area to go through TSA. Then to another area where they checked your passport. Then to the gate where we waited to board. Funny process, but that's the way it is.

Anyway, we are now in the air heading to Chicago. We will be required to get our bags from this flight and put them on another belt that will take them to Sacramento. The bags are already marked. It has something to do with doing customs in Chicago, I think.

We are definitely have to reassess our flying for future travel. Flying into Chicago for international is not worth the hassle. The airport itself is way over crowded which translates to delays in the stacking of planes coming into the airport. The other thing is you are dropped at the international terminal (4 or 5), then you have to go through customs after securing your checked baggage and manually transporting somewhere else in order for it to make it to its final destination. Then you have to go to terminal 1 (via metro), go through TSA again and then gain access to the gate. Time consuming and a lot of manual effort. The information is right on the ticket attached to the baggage. Should be transparent. And going through TSA again? Wow.

Anyway, once we boarded our plane, with many people delayed by the way, then we had to wait even longer for any other passengers late to the gate. Then, we sat on the tarmac for even longer waiting for our position in line to take off. Too crowded and not enough organization. The flight itself was non-eventful, except that we were stuck in middle seats for over 4 hours on an old United 747.

We arrived finally in Sacramento after 11:00 pm, found our luggage (which had made it through to Sacramento fine) and then were picked up by Heather and the girls outside the arrivals door. She was definitely a welcome sight. After making it back to place, we loaded our car and drove home to fall into bed after 1:00 am.

Nice to be home. Nice to be in our own bed.