

ALEMAARI

Experience new Horizons

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To the explorers

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SUMA

DDLJ 2023 - Experience Europe

DAY 1

1st May 2023

Finally, our first abroad trip started. Our visa was delivered on 16/03/2023. While collecting visa, Sahana had a fall from 8 ft and got injured. Because the dog chased her although others were present.

She had an ankle injury, arm and knee were bruised badly. Everything was planned systematically but this fall upset everyone at home.

How to start the trip which was scheduled on 01/05/2023. Sahana's visa finally arrived on 08/04/2023. We then booked the tickets to Bangalore.

On 01/05/2023 got up at 4:30 am, boarded the flight at 7:40 am. The layover period spent, waiting at the luggage gates to check in at 4:50 pm.

The waiting continued from 10.00am to 4.00pm till the security check in gate opened at 4.15pm.

Now writing this piece watching the people moving with their baggage's arriving from various flights. Some in groups, family, alone with kids. Young, middle age, old age people with wheelchair assistance. Most of them busy with their mobile phones.

Wait is on... until the Emirates check in starts at 4:30 pm.

Another four hours to go. Had bread jam, chips. Yet to have some food. Another 24 hours to reach Cologne.

After 6 hours long wait near luggage pick up gate, had coffee(refreshing) at Cafe Coffee Day. Had some snacks and started moving towards security check in at Emirates.

First few to avail boarding pass. After security check and immigration completed in half an hour.

Reached gate no. 39 to wait for departure to Dubai-> Frankfurt. It was raining outside, watching planes at Bay, drenching in rain.

Many flights took off looking outside the window.

It was raining outside. The flight to Dubai took off at 8:50 pm from Bangalore.

Reached Dubai at 12:30 am. There were no seats to sit as Sahana was in pain because of her ankle injury.

When i searched for gate as most of the passengers said they are going to Manchester, later our departure to Frankfurt was gate no 17.

When i searched for gate number they said it is no.17, and sat there for a while. Most of the passengers said they are going to Manchester, there was confusion as,there were no announcement, searched for connecting flights to Frankfurt. One of the information desk person guided us to

go to gate no 14 for boarding connecting flight to Frankfurt.

Waiting for the next flight continued...

Brushed teeth and washed face at 2:40 pm, because we were supposed to reach Frankfurt at 9 am GMT.

The flight landed at 8:30 am. Collected our luggage at counter no 56 and went outside where my son Sachin was waiting with video recording on as we were searching for him.

To reach the destination it took 36 hours...

From airport took shuttle bus to reach tube station(U bahn). The Frankfurt train station was huge and clean with fibre cover outside(arch).

It was 10 degrees outside chilling weather. The transition from 40 degrees to 10 degree Celsius, shivering at the train station.

We took train to Cologne ICE(Inter-City Express) with 270-280 km speed. One-hour journey to Cologne.

Then took a train to Bonn, 45 minutes journey.

From their bus ride to Bad Honnef and 10 minutes walk to reach house no 65.

Adventure trip with luggage and backyard pack finally concluded after reaching home at 1:15 pm gmt.

While in Frankfurt train station had some burger hence after taking bath slept for two hours.

Called anna and spoke with amma and Sunil.

First step in abroad, away from motherland. Night had rajma(red beans) chawal.

Sachin and Sahana prepared chicken, with spices to marinate for Biryani for next days lunch.

DAY 2 :

03/05/2023

Akki rotti with egg curry - breakfast. Biryani - lunch. Evening took a stroll in nearby park maintained so neatly.

From 5 am to night 9:50 pm sunlight -throughout the day. Along the way there were 100 years old houses, old mansions converted to physics centre.

The area is surrounded by hills. Felt like residing in a hill station nice picture like view from window. All houses look alike from outside when observed - the interior is different.

The street is filled many shops, cloth, shoes, hotel and bars. Shops are closed at 6 pm.

Did window shopping while walking to reach park.

Spent 1 hour in park with small pond surrounded by trees and pathway swans were swimming and strolling freely inside the park, with many types of birds around.

DAY 3:

04/05/2023

Breakfast - Maggi. Lunch - Tomato rice.

Planning to visit Rhein river this evening. Started from home at 6 pm.

Took a bus 51B to Rhine river park.

A small island, park surrounded by river. Ferries, cargo ships transport coal and other goods on the river from Switzerland to the Netherlands rotterdam port.

"Insel grafenwerth" meaning Grafenwerth island, a big park with lawn tennis courts , swimming pool, kids playing area.

The walking path is around two kms long with old trees. It is summer lot of greenery and flowers have bloomed.

Bus is available for every half an hour to reach the park.

Had crispy french fries at the park. Enjoyed nature walk after a very long time.

DAY 5:

05/05/2023

Visited University of Bonn. Campus is wonderful. Rhein river flows near the campus. There are parks, marketplace, library and old administration block.

A perfect atmosphere for a knowledge seeker. The university is into pure research and focused on deep learning of the domain you choose.

The main building is an old palace converted into a University. They have not altered the outer look which makes it ethnic.

Had chicken doner nearby turkish hotel euphrates imbiss. Tasty spicy grilled chicken with rotis ordered.

But remaining rotis brought back to home.

Had dinner. Our one-day trip to switzerland was to begin on the same night.

Uniflucht bus departure to zurich, Switzerland was at 12 am.

Left home from Bad Honnef at 10 am. Reached Koln airport, terminal 2 the pickup point at 11:30 pm.

Bus departed to Zurich at 12.00am.

DAY 6 :

06/05/2023

Morning reached Rhine falls at 8 am. 45 minutes spent near the falls. Left to Lucerne lake, spent one hour at the lake.

It is big lake surrounded by many buildings old and new.

Mountains covered with snow were visible from far away distance. Walked on old chapel bridge made from wooden, part of it was damaged due to fire accident. The wooden panels are painted with artists of that era and are maintained.

The view of the old buildings around the lake is beautiful.

Reached Zurich at 2 pm. Visited ETH, the top university in the world. On one of the buildings

there were sketches of famous scientists, mathematicians and nobel award winners like Albert Einstien.

The main building of the campus is very big with large dome.

From the campus hopped on to polybahn-the train travels in slope up and down.

From ETH reached the lake,walked around the small lake at city central.

There was an Old church nearby which was closed. But looked from outside the

architechure is different for each church, there was a small model of the church made of stone.

Ate Swiss cheese fondue the popular dish of Zurich. "Burger, finger chips" common food available where ever you go in Europe.

Left Zurich at 11:30 pm and reached Cologne at 6:30 am. Took train back to Bad Honnef. Reached home at 8 am.

DAY 7:

7/05/2023

Everyone were exhausted. Took bath and rested for a while. Prepared chicken tikka and curd rice. Along with chapathi.

Evening packed clothes for next destination. Berlin, Italy and Venice.

DAY 8:

8/05/2023

Left home at 10 am. The train from Cologne was at 11:30 am. As it was Sankashti, prepared chapati and cabbage palya.

Boarded the train to Berlin, but the seats were not reserved. Somehow got seats.

Got down at Carrefield, had some food(burger) and took one more train. Reached Berlin at 6:33 pm.

Hotel was reserved, slept and took rest. Tomorrow planning to visit few places.

Preparation for poster presentation is going on. Registration by person tomorrow morning need to be done.

DAY 9:

9/05/2023

Morning had breakfast at nearby bakery. Took underground train U-5 to Bundesstag (Parliament building of Germany).

After security check, the guide or information provider regarding the building addresses the people in group at visitors gallery inside the Parliament.

From gallery, we can view the dome inside- a huge steel structure with mirrors reflecting the sunlight.

Later with help of audio guide we reached the top of the dome.

The view from the top of dome is very good. All the old buildings, whole city can be viewed from the top.

Such as Victory statue, TV tower and hotel in the middle of tower can be viewed.

Later visited the Brandenburg Tor. It is structure similar to our India Gate at Delhi and Gateway of India at Mumbai.

DAY 10:

10/05/2023

Morning - preparation for poster was still on. Left hotel at 12 pm. Reached 14th IAA Symposium SSEO. Poster session was at 4:40 pm.

Completed at 6:30 pm. Many companies involved in space technology exhibited their products like small satellites, sensors for radiations in space in the symposium. Presenting a poster among established players was a proud moment.

A baby step towards a long way to reach the space from our end. Interacted with the people and learnt that space technology has advanced so much in all these years. Next symposium will be in another two years.

We need to put a lot of effort to materialise our idea which we presented.

The flight from Berlin to Rome was at 6:15 am.

DAY 11:

Woke up at 3 am, took bath, left hotel at 4 am. Train from hotel to Berlin airport 4:24 delayed by 15 min.

Because of delay in train reached at 5.25am. The check in for one baggage completed.

By the time we were denied for security check in and missed the flight. Initially had arguments, but were supposed to reach ROME at any cost. Further checked the availability of trains to reach Rome.

Boarded then train ICE 505 from Berlin to Munich at 8.30 pm. Arrived at 1.10pm to Munich. From Munich to Bologna caught the ECE train immediately scheduled at 1.40pm. As we moved towards Bologna the view from the window was beautiful, old towns, river and mountains.

The landscape, the valley and wine yard along with processing units were visible. The train arrived at Innsbruck,

border city between Germany and Italy and our journey continued to Bologna. As the city passed, that is when we saw slowly snow covered mountains visible from the window, long tunnels, bridges so high.

When we saw snow covered mountains after realising we are crossing Alps forgot about the flight missed.

Our purpose to see snow was fulfilled. Nature at its level best. Franzenfeste.

Reached Bologna at 8:30 pm. Took train from 9:10 pm immediately to reach Rome.

The dream destination for everyone(all) around the world.

Europe was at its greatness in art, culture and building the nation during the Renaissance period.

The art and culture at its epitome because of Raffael and Michelangelo.

DAY12 :

12/05/2023

Part 1

When we left in the morning to reach Sistine Chapel at museum it was 9 am.

On the way we saw so many buildings built with such a finesse and designs. The architecture, sculptures, monuments, castles, kings palace.

The circles were decorated with marble fountains. In order to go through in detail we may need 15 days just to see the buildings and art.

The scheduled entry to Sistine Chapel museum was at 8.15am. By the time we reached the museum it was almost 9.00am because of the traffic.

The guided tour which for which we have already paid was almost cancelled as we were behind the schedule.

When we showed our tickets to the security and then to information desk they said guided tour cancelled because the group has already left.

Asked us to see the museum with the floor plan and audio guide. With that we that started our journey inside the wonder world of art, culture and great display of renaissance period.

Egyptian Mummy's and the articles of that period is displayed in section.

The utensils of mud, metal of those period are arranged neatly.

The collection from all over the world from various parts are displayed in different section and floors.

The paintings of Raphael are in three to four sections. It mesmerizes and take us to the world of colours. The life of the common people, the struggle are painted in such way that there is no words to express it. It is like moving to another world and analysing each painting needs some prerequisites which we do not have.

He came to Rome when he was 28 years and commissioned to paint the Sistine Chapel and other main churches during that period.

As an art lover this was the dream come true moment of my life.

It was worth seeing these places to understand that sky is the limit for human

imagination and creation. His father was also an artist, hence his childhood spent in playing with colours.

Raphael died when he was 37 years old because of a mysterious disease. The greatest works he painted and art craft in these short period of nine years.

Part 2

We entered the chamber of Sistine chapel at the last floor. When you enter the holy central room, you will never believe whether you are on earth or a divine world.

The central ceiling is painted by Micheal Angelo and other paintings on side walls are by Raphael. They were the peers of art of that period and together created magical world of paintings, articles and sculptors.

The central ceiling is decorated with nine scenes from the book of Genesis which tells us how the world is created by God.

The hands of God and man, creation of Adam are the best known paintings. Earlier i have seen these images in post cards and computer.

The experience, the heart melts with feeling that i am fortunate to be present their to view them physically by bear eyes and is out of the world.

The security asks us to move to centre of the chamber to look up and see all the paintings slowly.

The neck starts aching if you watch for a while and imagine the hard work, commitment to paint the ceiling by laying on their back for so long for many years to complete this.

Part 3

Later in the afternoon had pizza in the hotel inside the museum. The next important place to visit was St. Peter's Basilica next to the Chapel. Walked around the wall adjacent for about one kilometer entered the open space from where people watch the address of the Pope. The entire open space is in half circle shape with columns and at the centre the Basilica situated on a high platform.

There was long queue, waited for one hour to enter the Basilica. When you step in you stop blinking, because you are entering inside a marvelous world of art, sculptors made in marble, bronze and other materials.

The large paintings decorated with designed frames. This world of art is created by best known artists of that time. Not to forget the hard work and effort by the labours to build this gigantic monument.

St.Peter's tomb is placed at the centre of the basilica. The prayer chamber is closed chamber, you can sit and pray also watch the artistry in gold coated metal.

Inside, the central dome is such a huge structure decorated with painted glass work, which are so magnificent and beautiful.

After seeing the St. Peter's Basilica, you will not have the interest of seeing any other basilica. This is what i felt, spent three hours inside the basilica, did not feel like going out.

The knee was painning too much because we walked around the museum and basilica.

While leaving looked back again and again to fill the mind with the images to remember for life and left heavy heart.

It took so many years of hard work and pain to reach here for us. Imagine the pain, hardwork, perseverance and commitment of the artists and workers to build these monuments for so many years.

All the great works of art, architecture we do not have time to see and understand the design pattern which are scientifically perfect till date.

Managing and preserving these for so many years requires great effort.

DAY 13

13/05/2023

We booked the train tickets to Venice from Rome at 2.30 pm. Two most important places we were supposed to cover before reaching the train station.

Morning had breakfast and started our journey to Pantheon. The entry inside the Pantheon was only if we had registered before. It started raining, the security

asked us to scan the QR code to register our entry. The huge columns when you see, you will never believe these were built by human beings.

When you enter inside, the large dome inside with circular opening inside, you can see with our mouth open in astonishment which is unbelievable it is built back in 300 BC.

Builder-Trajan, Hadrian. The diameter and height oculus of the dome is same 43 metres(142 ft). It is built 2000 years back. Earlier temple commission by

Marcus Agrippa during the reign of Augustus(27 BC to 14 BC).

Former Roman temple since 609 AD a church where Raphael the great artist's tomb is laid after his death as per his will who came to Rome when he was 28

and died at the age of 37. Completing his greatest paintings during these 9 years in Sistine Chapel. Pantheon and St Peter's Basilica and other monuments in Rome.

Next visit was to Colosseum the gigantic stadium built in Rome era. Because of the shortage of the time, were unable to visit inside. The half of the Colosseum is damaged, but the gigantic structure have enabled thousands of people inside to watch fight between gladiators. The entertainment for the people by making the slaves to fight with animals like lion and tiger, or the great warriors of that time till death of the opponent.

The train to Venice from Rome was at 2.30 pm. Reached Venice at 8.30 pm. The hotel reserved at Chioggia was one-hour journey from central station of Venice.

Boarded the bus and reached hotel at 9.30 pm. Had Italian pizza (margherita and one with tuna) at a nearby pizzeria. The hotel where we stayed had ambience, fountain, swimming pool and relaxing area. Spent some time till late night and slept.

DAY 14

14/05/2023

Next day the check-out time was 12 pm. Had breakfast, packed the bags, left the luggage in the hotel and went to beach. As from late night till morning it was

raining, the temperature was around 10 degree Celsius. We ventured out in severe cold with umbrellas open. Reached the beach as it was raining slowly stayed for a while.

Came back and had Italian special ice cream gelato with pista, chocolate and other flavor scoop. The taste was totally different. We enjoyed pizza and gelato in rome also.

They make it purely veg, do not mix with non veg ingredients.

The food you have to survive in Europe is burger,pizza, veg roll, chicken roll and other bakery items.

At home, you can prepare Indian food, but while travelling, visiting places there is no choice other than the above.

The flight back to Cologne from Venice was at 10.30. Need to reach airport by 8 pm.

From Chiaggio to reach central venice boarded the bus at 3:30 pm. Reached the central station at 4:30 pm. The bus to airport from bus station scheduled at 6:25 pm.

Moved to a nearby park, on the way there were canals, boats, motorboats sailing over the backwater.

There were two places, i.e. St Maria Church and a museum. I and Sahana followed the Google map directions went to see the church and the museum by walking through the small gallies over the bridge. Saw the museum in 600m. Shortage of time

did not allow to go inside.

There was portrait of Monalisa hanging in opposite wall. Took a selfie with it and walked towards the church.

The church was very old and built in bricks and the tower was very high. Went inside, there were many sculptures, paintings maintained and managed so neatly.

We rushed back to catch the bus to airport. Reached the airport and flew back to Cologne. Arrived at 12 am to Cologne, the train to BadHonnef was at 3:30 am.

Hence sometime in terminal and reached the train station at 2:45. The one hour we spent in severe cold at station was unbearable with gloves, caps and jackets on.

This is the situation in summer, will not be able to imagine when the temperature reaches -4 degree celsius and less in Germany.

Reached home at 5 am. Took bath and slept whole day we spent in between taking break for lunch(food).

DAY 15

15/5/2023

The rest day after a week-long trip.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sachin Suma Sahana Suresh

Shetty's exploration