

## **TRIP REPORT- 5 WEEK RV THROUGH PARTS OF GERMANY, AUSTRIA AND CZECH REPUBLIC**

### **ABOUT THE REPORT-**

I have written this report to assist others should they wish to attempt a similar trip. I have included times in the report which may seem a bit irrelevant or too much detail, but I have included them to give someone an idea of just how long things take. This is not intended as a relaxing holiday for us as we like to keep on the move and pack as much in as we can. We tend to get up early (I like to get in and out of the showers before others even wake up) and get on the road early. Others may like to spend more time in camp, or sleep in and get a later start, but would obviously not get as much done in a day. We also like to arrive at campsites by mid to late afternoon, this is especially important for stellplatz where the number of sites or electricity connections may be limited.

Where possible I will include bus numbers and times, transport costs, etc. as this may assist in scheduling a day's activities.

### **TRIP OVERVIEW-**

We have previously spent 5 weeks touring Germany (with the inclusion of Prague) and another 5 weeks touring Switzerland and the Dolomites. This time we chose the German Alps, Austria, Western Czech Republic (Bohemia) and Saxon Switzerland. We travelled 2,726Km and spent approximately 280Euros on fuel and 730Euros on campsites and stellplatz (parking for RV with electricity). We rarely used the motorways, preferring to see more of the countryside (and cute towns) at a slower pace.

We flew into Munich and spent the first night at the Novotel Munich Airport (excellent value for money 64.08Euros excl breakfast) and caught the Postbus the next day to Regensburg; also excellent value at 11Euros pp. As it was Sunday we could not pick up the RV until the next day so had to stay a night at the Ibis Regensburg City (great location close to the main train station and good value at 59Euros excl breakfast).

I spend about six months glued to the internet researching the trip before we go. I chose this route as we love alpine scenery, cute little alpine/Bavarian towns and hiking when we can. We also love living in the RV. We self-cater and enjoy 'bunkering down' each night to a lovely home cooked healthy meal. If you want a report about local cuisine with suggestions on where and what to eat, this review is not for you.

We picked up the RV on 22 August and returned it on 26 September 2016. The weather was mostly fantastic. Very hot to start with; a little too hot for hiking. Milder, fabulous sunny days on the most part for the rest of the trip, with only two or three days of enough rain to spoil sightseeing. Basically a great time of year to avoid the crowds, yet enjoy mild and mostly dry weather.

### **RV RENTAL DETAILS-**

We rented through Mc Rent, Regensburg (via UK and Europe Travel in Australia- excellent agent based in Victoria, Australia). It is worth noting that if you book through an agent outside of Germany and rent for 31 days or more the 19% tax does not apply, making Germany one of the cheapest places in Europe to rent an RV.

Although there are only two of us we opt for a larger vehicle so that we don't feel cramped for the five weeks we are travelling. The first time we chose a Compact Plus but found the bed configuration frustrating and the fridge too small. We now opt for Family Standard which offers better sleeping arrangements and a nice size fridge. One thing we try to avoid is the big 'cab-over' RVs with the very high roof as they can create problems with low bridges and overhanging trees etc. The other thing to be aware of is that what you receive isn't always what you order. It depends on availability on the day. You may be upgraded to a larger vehicle but in Europe that isn't always a good thing.

This was our third RV rental from McRent, the previous two times being out of Munich. The experience with Regensburg was far superior and we will continue to use them in preference to Munich. The advantages being-

Much better customer service (Bianca is great), they take credit card details in case of an accident whereas the Munich office bill 1200Euros to the card, then refund on return, resulting in considerable out of pocket expenses due to currency conversion etc. Regensburg were also much more generous with their kitchen kit, giving six items of each(it was a 6 berth RV) whereas Munich provided only two items despite it being a 6 berth RV.

The Regensburg location is also much easier to access. The Postbus leaves directly from Munich Airport at regular intervals, and the local bus from Regensburg stops right outside the McRent Depot. The Munich office, whilst closer is much more difficult to get to via public transport. (NOTE- this service is no longer offered by Postbus. It would now involve a bus to Freising station and a train to Regensburg, or a private transfer offered by airportliner, which is much more expensive but a great door to door option)

The Munich depot also requires you to return the RV clean on the outside. They provide you with a voucher for the carwash, but it is your time and effort to get it done prior to returning the vehicle which is quite an impost.

## **NOW TO THE ACTUAL TRIP, DAY BY DAY-**

### **Day 1-Regensburg - 21Kms**

We always choose to spend the first night close to the depot in case we have any problems with the RV- it makes it easy to return the next day if necessary- TIP- avoid picking up the RV on a Saturday as if anything is wrong you can't return on Sunday to get it rectified. Also, there is often a surcharge for Saturday. Friday should also be avoided if possible.

As you can't pick up the RV until the afternoon, we always spend what is left of the afternoon stocking up the RV with food, cleaning items etc. (we prefer Lidl and Aldi for this). It also takes some time to unpack so the first night is usually quite a late one, and you are very tired by the time you finally get to bed

**Accommodation 1 night- Azure Camping.** Convenient but expensive, 32.50Euros pn.

I always reserve the first and last night with the RV to ensure we are close to the McRent depot. We chose **Azure Camping** in Regensburg as it is really the only campsite close to the town. It has quite a good location if you want to sightsee as the local bus is available, or a great bike ride into town if you are lucky enough to have bikes (we did our sightseeing before picking up the RV though). As with most inner-city campsites, it is quite expensive and we had to pay 25Euro in advance to reserve the site. The services are clean and adequate but nothing special. The older amenities block is unisex, so men and women have to share the same showers and toilets, which I am not a fan of. The newer block is segregated, so go there instead if you prefer some privacy. They have a separate room for washing dishes and laundry. Also note that the office does not open until 9am so if you want an early getaway make sure you pay the night before departure.

### **Day 2 Regensburg (dep 8:25 am) to Berghausen (arr 2:30pm) 158Km**

We always aim to get an early start, and getting to the showers by 6am you are usually on your own. We arrived in **Landshut** by 10:30am. I had intended to park in the large carpark in town but it was taken up with Oktober fest activities. Aldi came to the rescue allowing us to park for 3Euros. We walked into the old town (very closeby) and walked up to **Berg Trausnitz**. A lovely old castle with a magnificent view over the town.

We then headed straight for **Berghausen** as we wanted to arrive at the stellplatz early to secure a site. We walked from the stellplatz into the old town and then hiked up to the castle. It is the longest castle in the world, and measures 1km in length, with five internal courtyards. It is quite a steep walk, especially on a hot day as there is no cover. Entry to the castle is free, and there is parking at the castle for those who don't enjoy walking as much as we do.

**Accommodation 1 night- Berghausen Stellplatz-** 8Euros per day plus 50c per Kw for electricity. A good level site. No toilets. Great Location

TIP- the machine only takes 50c so have plenty on hand.

### Landshut- Burg Trausnitz



### Burghausen



### Day 3 Berghausen (dep 8am) to Koenigsee (arr 12:30) 113Km

A beautiful drive through the German Alps. Stopped at Weissbach falls just outside of Inzell. The parking spot is difficult to locate, but the falls are just a short walk from the road. We also crossed the road to hike up the other side for a great view.

We continued on to **Ramsau** and intended to park and walk to the iconic church, but given it was still school holidays there were people everywhere and it was impossible to park. We continued on again intending to park at **Wimmbachlamm** and hike the gorge. Again, no luck in trying to secure a park despite there being quite a large carpark there.

We continued on to **Koenigsee** and after checking out a couple of campsites decided to stay at Mullheiten. We hiked to the lake from the campsite. Lake Koenigsee is quite spectacular, but very busy as Europeans just love their lakes.

**Accommodation 3 nights- Camping Muhlleiten-**quite good value at 32.20Euros pn including Guest Card. No reservation, selected site 47. Quite a nice campsite attached to a hotel. The amenities were good but for the number of people at the camp they were insufficient. Reasonably pricey, but with the guest card providing free transport it worked out to be good value.

### Ramsau



### Koenigsee- Mt Jenner



## Day 4- Koenigsee 0Km

Today we opted to give the RV a rest and make the most of the guest card. We caught the 8:05 bus (#841) into **Berchesgarten**. We then caught the 9am bus to **Obersalzburg** (we could have caught the later 841 bus at 8:33). We purchased tickets to the **Eagles Nest** (29.20Euros for two). The road up is so steep and narrow that only one bus at a time can go up, and then come back down. The ride was amazing, with lots of twists and turns, and a very steep drop over the side. Great views though.

We also visited the **Documentation Centre** and the SS bunkers. Very sobering experience but one not to be missed (only 5 Euros for the two of us).

After returning to camp we decided to make the most of a spectacular day and take the **Jennerbahn** to the top of the mountain. The views down to the lake were amazing and there is a nice hike at the top. (35.60Euros for two return, cheaper after 2.30pm otherwise 22 Euros pp)

### Berchesgarten



### Eagles Nest



## Day 5- Koenigsee 0Km

Another early start, caught the 841 bus into **Berchesgarten** at 8:33am and walked through the Old Town. Went to the Visitor Information Centre for directions to the 'cliff walk' which is not easily identifiable. It was a lovely walk hugging the cliff that offered up great views of the town. It also provided a great spot to sit and enjoy a cuppa (one of our many 'brew with a view' stops). We continued back down into town to catch the 846 bus at 10:15 to Wimbachbruecke. Using our guest card for free bus transport as well as reduced entry to **Wimbachklamm** (3Euros for both of us). The gorge was beautiful with lovely waterfalls and a raging river. Upon exiting the gorge we chose to hike further on up to the restaurant. Including stops our hike took 4 hours to complete. The hike reminded us very much of Yosemite due to the fabulous rock formations and lush forest.

**Tip-** make sure you allow sufficient time to queue for the return bus. We arrived at the bus stop at 2:30 for the 3:01 bus. There were so many people waiting we had to push our way onto the bus with many people left at the bus stop, and at later stops the bus just drove straight past people waiting. In hind sight we would have had time to walk back to an earlier stop to ensure we got on the bus.

There is a Lidl right by the bus depot so we used the ½ hour between busses to do some shopping. (we love the bread slicer at Lidl- just choose the loaf you want and then choose the thickness and the slicer does the rest). Rewe is right next door and sell fabulous rotisserie chicken at reasonable prices- great for an easy RV dinner.

Caught the local bus #841 back to the campsite after a great days hiking and sightseeing.

## Berchesgarten Cliff Walk



## Wimbachklamm



## Day 6- Koenigsee (dep 8am) to Golling (arr 1pm)- 41Km

Departed the campsite around 8am and drove through **Burchesgarten** and arrived at our first stop, **Almbachklamm** after shopping at Aldi on the way.

For 2.50Euros each we were treated to a sensational hike through a spectacular gorge. Climbing all the time you pass a spectacular set of waterfalls. It is not a circular hike, so you either go back through the gorge again, or opt for the long hike back over the mountain. Luckily most of the hike is in the shade of the forest as it is quite demanding with lots of steps. Eventually we arrived at a cute little church and the obligatory restaurant near the town of **Ettenberg**. We then hiked back down to the carpark at **Kugelmuehle**. You need your hiking sticks for the downward section as there is quite a bit of scree underfoot. It was quite a thrill though to look back down to where the RV was parked and a great sense of achievement to have climbed so high. The whole hike took around 3 hours.

We had lunch in the RV before heading off again. We stopped to buy our vignette (8Euros for 10 days) before heading into Austria. We actually try to avoid motorways, but we thought that we should get to the stellplatz as early as possible so opted for speed over views. To our surprise there was heavy congestion (it was Saturday afternoon) and the motorway ended up being quite slow.

**Accommodation 2 nights-** We arrived at the **Aqua Salza stellplatz** in **Golling** around 1pm. You park on tarmac on a segregated section of carpark attached to the Spa. Sites are well marked and electricity is easily accessible. At 11.90Euros per night it was good value. You pay at the Spa reception and for an additional fee can utilise their showers.

## Almbachklamm



## Day 7- Golling - Werfen – Golling 34Km

Set off around 7am to ensure an early start in **Werfen**. We parked the RV in the main carpark where the bus leaves for **Eisreisenwelt**. We paid 7Euros to park there but that included the bus fare for both of us up to the cave entry. The first bus departs at 8:22am.

For 24Euros pp you get entry to the Ice Cave and it includes the cost of the cable car. Once through the ticket office there is quite a steep walk up to the first cable car which leaves at 9am. From there it is another 20 minute hike up to the Ice Cave. Despite being a hot day you have to rug up as it is zero degrees inside the cave. Make sure you wear gloves as you need to hang onto the guard rails and they are freezing. No photos or videos are allowed inside and every 4<sup>th</sup> person has to carry an old fashioned torch. It is totally dark inside the caves, as is proven when they blow out the torches.

It is an awesome experience entering the cave. The difference in temperature between the outside and inside of the cave creates a huge gust of wind as the entry door is opened. It literally takes your breath away. You walk two by two with your guide up and down 1400 steps. You enter several different sections of the cave and witness amazing natural ice formations, and pass by glaciers millions of years old. This cave is totally natural and quite a contrast to the commercial man made ice carvings in other ice caves. The whole experience takes around 3 ½ hours.

We chose not to visit **Hohenwerfen**, a magnificent castle atop a hill. We had such fabulous views of this castle on the bus trip to the ice caves, and when driving past that we felt no need to see it up close. We are not so much into castles from the inside as we are enjoying them from a distance where you can take them all in. For those who do want to do visit, there is the option of hiking up or taking the funicular. They also have a daily birds of prey show.

On our drive back to **Golling** we stopped to hike the **Salzchoefen Gorge**. Only a small gorge compared to some we have seen lately but quite natural and very narrow with thundering alpine water flowing between huge cliffs.

The days had been so wonderfully warm that they culminated in a huge storm overnight. Lots of lightning, thunder and rain. Being parked on tarmac was a huge benefit for us...no mud or grass traipsed into the RV.

## Eisreisenwelt



## Day 8- Golling (dep 9am) - Schladming (arr 12pm) - 66Km

Headed off around 9am (have to enjoy a sleep in occasionally). Driving into the Tyrol we were treated to glorious scenery. We stopped off on the way for a spot of shopping at Hofer (Austrian version of Aldi) Penny Markt and KIK for some provision for the RV.

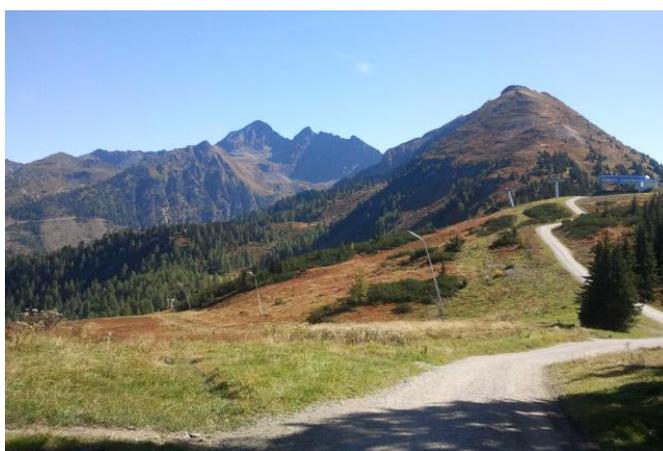
We arrived at **Schladming** around noon. Our accommodation includes the local Guest Card allowing for free rides on all the chair lifts and public transport. After lunch in the van we walked through town to **Planet Planai**. The storm we had witnessed last night had knocked out power to the chair lift so they substituted this with busses up to Planai. As the weather wasn't great we did the short Panoramaweg hike at the top and then joined the huge queue of people to get the bus back down to town.

The rain had settled back in so we just checked out the town and did a bit of shopping.

**Accommodation 2 nights- Hotel Zirngast.** This hotel has a great campsite attached, and whilst quite expensive at 42.50 Euros per night, the inclusion of the guest card made it great value as you have use of the guest card for 3 days, and the saving on Dachstein alone is 72Euros for two. The services here were fabulous. The showers, toilets and washing up facilities were excellent. In hindsight we should have stayed here longer.

**TIP-** If I could revise this day I would have taken a diversion to include **Lichtensteinklamm**, a lovely gorge near **Sankt Johann im Pongau**- I am now including this into our next Austrian trip.

**Planai-**



## **Day 9- Schladming 0Km**

We had prebooked our '**Der Dachstein**' tickets for the morning but thought the weather may be better in the afternoon so we walked to Planet Planai to change the booking. We instead took the short walk to **Talbachklamm**, yet another fantastic gorge. This one is quite different though. It is quite flat with a well paved path that runs beside the river, with lots of little waterfalls flowing into it. Many of these have cute little water-wheels making quite a visual and auditory display. I am sure kids would love it.

After an early lunch back at the van we caught the 12:10 bus up to **Dachstein** (to use the toll road here would have been 14Euros, but the bus is free with the guest card). We were booked for the 1:15 cable car up the mountain. Whilst the rain had gone, the clouds remained and obliterated our view of the valley from the cable car. The clouds however did create quite an atmosphere atop the mountain. Some of the attractions are free with the cable car, such as the suspension bridge and the 'stairs to nowhere'. As everything so far was free with the Guest Card we chose to pay the 10Euros each to visit the ice cave. The caves were quite good but very commercial. Man made and illuminated ice carvings of all different shapes and sizes. After the natural beauty of Eisreisenwelt it was hard to be impressed by them, children however may enjoy them as they are very colourful.

We caught the 2:15 cable car back down the mountain, but had to wait for the 3:10 bus back to town. We decided we had time for one more hike so we caught the 4pm bus to Untertal and caught the chair lift up to **Hochwurzen** and did the panoramaweg. We then caught the lift back down and hiked back along the 'Wilde Wasser' trail through

**Talbachklamm.** The walk was only 40 minutes but quite spectacular. We decided to return that night to see all the waterfalls and water wheels illuminated (another sight the kids would love).

**Der Dachstein**



**Talbachklamm**



**Day 10- Schladming (dep 9am) to Bad Mittendorf (arr 3.30pm) - 67Km**

Wanting to make the most of our guest card we walked back into town after breakfast and caught the first chair lift up to Planai at 9am. As we ascended the mountain we broke out of the clouds to brilliant sunshine and an equally brilliant view.

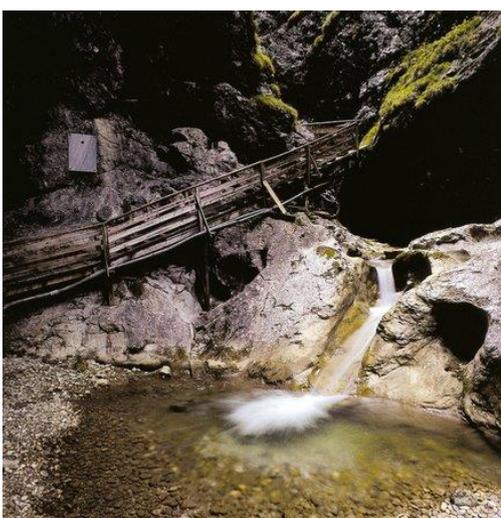
We departed the campsite around 11 headed for **Tautenfels Schloss**. This was not an amazing castle, but was worthy of a stop along the route, and a good time to stop for lunch in the van.

We stopped at **Woerschachklamm**, another bonus with the guest card saving us 9 Euros. The gorge was fabulous with lots of wooden steps, bridges and platforms to negotiate as they criss crossed over the river. We hiked the 'runde' route which included hiking to a castle ruins and back down to the parking lot.

We drove onto the campsite at **Bad Mittendorf**. After dinner we walked into town for a view of a sensational sunset which gave the mountain backdrop a lovely orange glow. Another treat waiting for us was the 'oom-pa-pa' band playing in the rotunda of the local park.

**Accommodation 1 night- Camping Grimmingsicht.** Quite a good campsite at 26.90Euros pn. The owners were very friendly and the location is good being walking distance to Bad Mittendorf. The services were quite old but clean. Power is charged per Kw.

**Woerschachklamm**



**Bad Mittendorf**



## Day 11- Bad Mittendorf (dep 8.30) to St Wolfgang (arr 4pm) - 98Km

Got off to a reasonably early start and headed for **Hallstatt**, a quaint little town perched on the cliffside by a beautiful lake. Parking there is not an easy task so we drive straight to **Obertraun** a little further around the lake. We hired bikes for 20 Euros and rode back along the lake to explore **Hallstatt**. The ride was a little challenging as some of it is uphill and whilst there is a bike path you have to cross a very busy road and travel through a tunnel. It pays off in town though when you can just chain up your bike and explore on foot. We hiked up the hill behind the church for a great view of the town and lake. We found the town beautiful, but overcrowded and over commercialised.

We rode back around the lake and continued past **Obertraun** to the ferry landing opposite **Hallstatt**, just in time for the ferry to dock and pick up passengers providing a good bit of video.

We returned the bikes just in time to reach the RV as the heavens opened. We waited out the rain then headed for **Wolfgangsee**. We camped at a campsite by the lake, assuming we could have a nice walk around the lake, but access is restricted to only the area adjacent to the campsite.

**Accommodation 1 night- Birkenstrand Camping.** Did not like this campsite, paid 26.10 Euros pn. The location of this camp was average. It is right on the lake if you want to go swimming and close to a bus stop but not really within walking distance of anywhere. The owners were less than friendly. The services were modern but too few for the number of sites.

### Halstatt



### Wolfgangsee



## Day 12- St Wolfgang (dep 8am) to Ebensee (arr 11am) - 80Km

Drove around the other side of the lake to **St Wolfgang**. You can get a ferry across but we didn't fancy all the delays involved in waiting for ferries etc. We arrived early to ensure we would get a park and found a gated paid parking that accepted RVs. Unfortunately we did not understand the parking fees when we entered and had to pay the same for less than an hour as we would have for overnight. (lesson learned..always read the parking fees carefully BEFORE entering the gated carpark).

**St Wolfgang** itself was a lovely little town. Much like **Hallstatt** but much less commercialised.

The drive to **Ebensee** was fabulous, very scenic. We arrived at the stellplatz in **Ebensee** before lunch time only to find that they had blocked off most of the stellplatz area with trucks and marquis. There is another stellplatz further around the lake so we drove there but that site does not provide electricity. We drove back to the first stellplatz and managed to park the RV in the only space not taken up with trucks. As it is a Council owned site I walked to the Rathaus to try to find out what was happening with the stellplatz. Just by chance the event organisers were at the Council office paying for the use of the site for the weekend (this was Friday night). I managed to negotiate with them that we could stay overnight on the condition we would be gone by 8am in the morning. When we returned to the stellplatz we gave the event organisers some beer and chocolates and thanked them for letting us stay.

We had our lunch in the RV then caught the train to **Traunkirchen**, took some photos by the lake then continued on into **Gmunden**. From the station we walked down to the lake and across the little bridge to **Schloss Ort**. Quite a stunning sight sitting out in the lake completely surrounded by water.

We could have chosen to take the ferry back, but as you might have gathered by now we are not fans of long slow boat rides. We walked back to the station and caught the train back to **Ebensee**, arriving around 5pm.

**Accommodation 1 night- Ebensee Stellplatz.** A great short term option. We paid 14 Euros. This stellplatz is Council owned, located right on the lake and just across the highway from the train station and main street. As it is adjacent to the park it also has modern, clean public toilets that are open for 7am to 7pm. There is also electricity in the toilets so you could use a hairdryer etc. if you need to. The only inconvenience is that you pay for electricity by the hour rather than by the Kw.

**TIP:** Check with the Council in advance to ensure the stellplatz is available when you intend to stay there.

### St Wolfgang



### Gmunden- Schloss Ort



### Day 13- Ebensee (dep 7.30am) to Freistadt (arr 3pm)- 162Km

We left the stellplatz at 7.30am to ensure we were well out of the way before 8am. We drove to **Lambachsee** along a very scenic road that ran right beside a gorgeous little stream. The road was however very narrow and tight with lots of bends. The road is best not attempted when other traffic is around. It is possible to get a bus to the lake but the timetable is limited. We hiked for over 7Km around the two lakes. We started the hike around 8.30am and got back to the RV about 11am. The views around the lake were stunning and the mountains behind reflected in the lake, acting like a mirror.

We drove back to **Ebensee** and took the road around the lake to **Traunkirchen** and then onto **Gmunden**. We skirted the town as we had visited it yesterday which was just as well as parking is so limited. We had intended to continue further east but the further east we travel the less the countryside and towns are appealing so we decided instead to head north for **Freistadt**, our last Austrian town before we head into the Czech Republic.

We arrived in **Freistadt** mid-afternoon and after setting up camp we headed into the old town. The Altstadt was quite nice, with a town wall with TORs (gateways) and what would have once been a moat.

**Accommodation 1 night- Camping Freistadt.** A quite good campsite attached to a hotel and restaurant, 26Euros pn. The owners were friendly and the restaurant looked popular. The services were basic but clean and the campsite is located next to a little stream with a nice walk into the old town.

## Lamabachsee



## Freistadt



### Day 14- Freistadt (dep 8am) to Cesky Krumlov to Koruna (4.30pm) - 96Km

Headed off around 8am and quite soon after headed across the Czech border. We had not intended buying a Vignette as we do not intend going on any major roads, so it would not really have been a necessity. This soon changes as we were pulled over by the police just on the Czech side of the border. There were about 6 police, none of whom spoke English and we spoke no Czech. We decided that to be safe rather than sorry we would buy a vignette. They for some reason made us return to the Austrian side of the border to purchase our vignette, in Koruna (310 CZK).

Our first stop was to visit a Monastery in **Rozmberk nad Vltavou**. The town is quite cute and hugs the river with a quaint bridge. We had to pay to park (30CZK for 1 hour) whilst we hiked up to the Monastery. The view of the town from that height was lovely.

We continue onto **Vyssi Brod** to visit another Kloster (Monastery). This time parking near town was 25 CZK for 1 hour. We walked around the Kloster, but there wasn't much else to see so we continued on.

Our original itinerary had us using some minor roads but given the state of the roads we changed our route to only use good roads. This decision meant we had to return to near the border and take a better road to **Cesky Krumlov**. It meant doubling back but was worth it to avoid the bad and potentially dangerous roads.

Found a great carpark right in **Cesky Krumlov** for 25 CZK an hour (paid for 4 hours). It was an easy walk up to the castle which is perched high atop a hill overlooking the river and the old town below. It has to be the most stunning town we have ever seen (and we have seen a few!). We did some sightseeing on our own and then took the FREE city tour, which lasts around 2 hours, but of course gave the guide a tip.

We drove onto Koruna to camp for the night- our first taste of Czech camping. Whilst Cesky Krumlov was amazing, as some of the key towns in Czech are, the majority of towns are quite depressing, the majority of people are unwelcoming (quite understandable given their communist occupation history) and the campsites are less than basic, we have decided to chop about 5 days off the Czech part of the trip to instead spend more days in Germany which we enjoy so much more. This will be much more expensive much more enjoyable.

**Accommodation 1 night- Kemp Koruna.** Truly awful camp 380CZK pn. This camp is located right on the river and the Czech people obviously love river activities such as rafting. The camp was full of young people partying into the early hours. I think the yelling stopped around 2am. The services were so bad that I used the toilet when I had to and the showers not at all.

## Rozmberk nad Vltavou

## Ceske Krumlov



### Day 15- Koruna (dep 8am) to Tabor (arr 4pm)- 129Km

We drove to **Ceske Budejovice**, where we had planned to spend a day and night but instead opted to just shop at Tescos and continue on to **Hluboka nad Vltavou**. We found a carpark in the town that normally charged 150CZK for parking but as it is now out of season there was no one collecting parking fees. We walked through the town and up to the castle. The castle is very well restored and quite beautiful, set amongst lovely gardens.

We continue onto **Trebon**. Quite a nice little town. We parked by the lake close to a restaurant, with paid parking, but only 15CZK per hour. After a quick lunch in the RV we walked around the old town. Storm clouds were brewing so we started walking back to the RV but decided that we would continue walking around the lake and onto the park at the end. We just had time to visit the 'round church' and walk back to the RV before the rain started.

We decided to skip **Telc** and **Jindrichuv Hradec** and head straight for **Tabor**. We parked near the pool for free (advised to do so by Tourism). It was a short quite steep walk up a hill into town. We came out in a nice square and walked through the narrow streets of the old town. **Tabor** is quite a nice little town. The rain was threatening again so we headed back to the RV.

**Accommodation 1 night- Autokemp Maly Jordan**. This campsite is alright for one night at 380 CZK pn. It was a convenient location and being off season we were the only ones camped there. This made a very average campsite tolerable. The sites are on tiered grass and luckily we had our pick of sites. We were the only ones using the very basic services so we were given a key to open and lock then again after our use.

## Hluboka nad Vltavou

## Trebon



## Day 16- Tabor (dep 8.30am) to Plana (arr 4pm)- 253Km

Headed off about 8.30am for **Hrad Zvikov**; a castle on the confluence of the **Vlatava** and **Otava Rivers**. This was a very picturesque spot. After parking for 60CZK we had a pleasant walk up to the castle. We walked around the grounds and had great views from many different angles of the river. (remember to bring 5CZK pieces for the toilets)

We continued onto **Pisek**, only about 30 minutes further on. The town was average, but had a nice old bridge over the river.

Altering our itinerary yet again we headed for **Sucice**, which was quite a drive and in hindsight probably not worth it. The PR pictures look great but the reality didn't match it. We drove up to the church on the hill for a view of down to the town, then headed off to our campsite at Plana for the night.

**Accommodation 1 night- Camping Kristina.** For Czech standards this was quite a good campsite for 400 CZK pn. The staff was very young and friendly, offering suggestions for sightseeing on our way back to Germany. The services were quite good (for Czech). Wifi was available for free at reception. The down side- it is a little out of the way and the access road is poor.

### Hrad Zvikov



### Pisek



## Day 17- Plana (dep 7.30am) to Karlovy Vary (Sadov) (arr 4.30pm) - 96Km

Left camp about 7.30am and drove to **Marianske Lazne**, a spa town quite close to the German border. We parked at Kaufland where it is possible to get a tram into town but we chose to walk. We walked a couple of kilometres up to the '**Collonade**', a beautiful iron and glass building with amazing 'dancing' fountains. At 9am the music came on and the fountains danced for around 10 minutes. It was quite a spectacle. This spa town is full of pretty terraced buildings demonstrating the wealth that once existed here. We had an enjoyable walk back to the RV through parkland.

We had morning tea then headed off for the little town of **Locket**. We were unprepared for how fantastic this little town is. The river circles the old town, almost cutting it off as an island. We obviously weren't the only ones who thought this to be a beautiful place as getting a park was impossible. We parked in the only bus parking spot left and quickly viewed the town from the bridge, but felt uneasy so quickly went back to the RV regretting the speed of our visit.

We moved onto **Karlovy Vary**, another spa town, and luckily got a great carpark right in town (70 CZK for 3 hours). We walked the beautiful and lengthy promenade. This street runs alongside the canal right through the town with very gorgeous houses on all sides. We hiked up the hill to a vantage point that gave a great view of the whole town. We got back to the RV about 3.30pm and drove another 8Km to our campsite at **Sadov**.

**Accommodation 2 nights- Autokemp Sasanka.** Again, for Czech standards this camp was not bad at 400 CZK pn. This camp is quite spacious with lots of grass and a few picnic tables. The services are quite good, but not very clean.

They also had a fully equipped laundry and kitchen with a microwave and hotplate for use by guests. Wifi was free at reception.

### Marianske Lazne



### Karlovy Vary



### Day 18- Sadov (dep 8am)- Locket- Sadov (arr 4.30pm) -62Km

Missing **Locket** played on our mind all night so we decided to backtrack, something we rarely do- so as to see Locket properly and arrive early enough to get a park. We left the campsite at 8am and had no worries obtaining a free carpark by the road. We walked into the Old town and across the river to the track that runs all the way around on the bank opposite the town. We were rewarded with views of the town reflecting beautifully on the river.

We continued on to **Svatosske Rocks**. This is quite a hike from the nearest available RV parking in the nearby town of Doubi, but well worth it. The rocks, and fabulous formations tower over the Ohre River and attract hikers and kayakers to the area. There is a neat wooden, sort of suspension bridge, across the river and a lovely restaurant where we couldn't resist having some Czech beer, as it was such a hot day.

Having enjoyed the campsite, and wanting to take advantage of the laundry and kitchen we returned to Autokemo Sasanka for a second night. We arrived back in camp around 4.30 pm.

### Locket



### Svatosske Rocks



### Day 19- Sadov (dep 8.15am) - Sneznik (arr 4.30pm) -155Km

Left the campsite around 8:15am and decided to drive straight through to **Tisa**. The first part of the drive was quite pretty, through forest with the river running along the side of the road. This then turned into a less picturesque industrial landscape with pollution everywhere.

We arrived in **Tisa** around 11.30am and found a paid parking spot (40 CZK) so decided to have lunch before we headed off on our hike of the National Park (entry fee about 1 Euro). The sandstone rock formations are so amazing you just cannot stop taking photographs. The day we were there two young ladies were rock climbing and it was an added bonus watching them abseil back down. There are two routes to take, a long and short route (red and green), we took about 3 hours and did both. To see these amazing rock formations just google '**Tiske Steny**'.

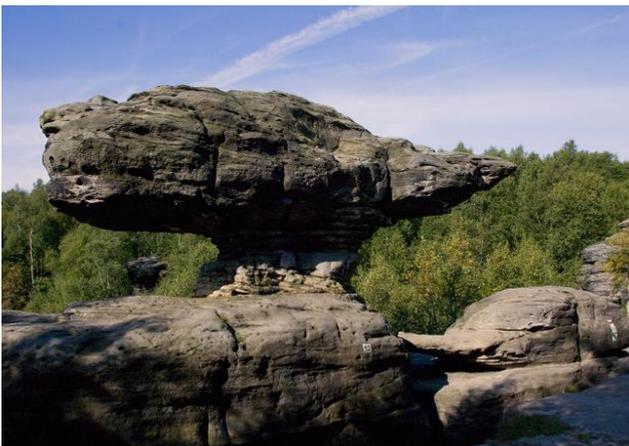
We intended to stay at a campsite for the night, Pod Cisern, but we arrived early and they wouldn't let us in until after 4pm. This gave us a chance to check the site and the services out and having done so we decided to move on. We instead drove to Sneznik to an absolutely brilliant stellplatz.

**Accommodation 1 night- Sneznik Stellplatz.** A gem of a stellplatz by any standards, not just Czech. Around 9 Euros depending on how much electricity you use. This is a high tech facility that is gated and everything works off your entry ticket which you insert into the electricity pillar to record your usage. Each site is separated by a little garden hedge and there is a central large covered picnic area with lots of wooden tables and bench seats. As we were the only ones there we had our pick of places and virtually had the whole picnic pavilion to ourselves.

We did have a hiccup though. The entry gate has a sensor and unless you enter on the 'wrong' side of the entry road, which is where the ticket dispenser is located, the sensor does not detect that you have entered the stellplatz. We thought we were doing the right thing by staying on the correct side of the road, whilst I jumped out and took the ticket. The gate came up and we drove in, but the sensor did not detect us so the system did not record us entering, therefore we could not use the ticket to exit and were stuck in the well fenced and secured stellplatz. After much drama (as almost no-one in Czech speaks English) we managed to contact the owners who drove from a nearby town to assist us. They were a wonderful young couple who had invested in this stellplatz because they love RV travel themselves. They sorted the system out for us and returned later with a beautiful bottle of Czech wine for us to enjoy with dinner. We wish this young couple well and hope that when word gets around about this great site that they will make some money out of their venture...please support it if you can.

### 'Tiske Steny'

### Sneznik Stellplatz



### Day 20- Sneznik (dep 9am) to Mezni Louka (arr 9.30am) -33Km

Today started out very foggy so we decided not to stop in **Decin** and continued on to our camp at **Mezni Louka** in the beautiful Bohemian Switzerland national park. Arriving about 9am we set up camp and waited for the Info Centre to open so we could check in for the night. We had morning tea then headed off on our 8.5 hour hike.

The first section from **Mezni Louka** up to **Pravcicka Brana** is a long and challenging hike but that keeps it less busy so suited us nicely. The hike passes notes of great sandstone formations and is mostly shaded by forest. Upon reaching **Pravcicka Brana** (a large archway of stone) you join the up with the pathway from **Hrensko** and the hoard of people taking the short easy route to the top. The scenery was fabulous, the crowds were horrendous. We paid our 75 CZK entry and explored the ridge and restaurant area along with everyone else.

We hiked back down to the main road to Hrensko, crossed over the road and headed down the gorge. After about 20 minutes hiking you reach the first of the punts to take you further down the gorge. More hiking, another punt, then more hiking again, followed by a steep hike back up to the campsite. We arrived at camp around 6.30pm feeling exhausted but exhilarated by a great day hiking.

**Accommodation 1 night- Mezni Louka National Park.** Fantastic location, right at the foot of the National Park 480 CZK with 50CZK refundable deposit. Very basic services and quite dirty showers but with good hot water.

### Pravcicka Brana



### Hrensko



### Day 21- Mezni Louka (dep 10am) to Ostrau (arr 11am) -19Km

Had a very short hike but decided we would set off after an early morning tea. We stopped at the border to buy fuel as it is cheaper in Czech than Germany. We arrived at our campsite close to Bad Schandau around 11 am.

After lunch we set off on a hike to the Wasserfall. It was a much more challenging hike than we were prepared for: often quite steep and in one section requiring metal chain rope for support when crossing narrow rockfaces. We followed the riverbed most of the way and even though it was a hot day the shady forest kept us cool.

We got to the Wasserfall around 3pm and decided to take the historic **Kirnitzchtalbahn** tourist tram back to the campsite (a bit of a rip off at 5 Euros pp).

**Accommodation 6 night- Camping Ostrau Muehle.** A really great campsite 22.50 Euros pp incl electricity. Showers are by token, 10 Euros refundable deposit and 50c per 3 minutes. Services are great. We camped up on the top level which gave easy access to the amenities block. Wifi is available at the amenities block but is not strong. Buses and the tram run past the camp with a stop right outside. The bus to Bad Schandau is not frequent so plan carefully. The tram is frequent but expensive. We only planned to stay 3 nights, but had to tear ourselves away after 6 and only left because it was raining and we could no longer hike.

### Bad Schandau



### Kirnitzchtalbahn



## Day 22- Ostrau -0Km

Gave the RV a rest today and spent the day hiking in the glorious mountains of Saxon Switzerland. We headed off about 8am and headed for **Huhe Liebe** which was a great hike, quite steep at times with lovely views from the top. We continued on to **Schrammsteine** which was really challenging and fantastic. Steep hills and lots of steel ladders took us to the top of the range for an amazing 260 degree view of the countryside. We then headed back down, which was equally as challenging with more steep ladders. We stopped for lunch around 12.

We walked into **Ostrau** which is perched on top of the hill. We walked to the 'lift' up from the road below which offered great views of the Elbe River and the township of **Bad Schandau**. We continued on hiking down to Bad Schandau and went to Lidl for supplies. We caught the 3.36 bus that stops right by Lidl back to camp (2.30 Euros pp bus fare).

### Schrammsteine



### Lift to Ostrau



## Day 23- Ostrau -0Km

Another day of rest for the RV but not for us... more strenuous hiking. Heading off at 8.15am it took almost 1 hour to walk into **Bad Schandau**. We caught the 9.05 ferry over to the other side of **Bad Schandau** so that we could catch the 9.25 train (ferry was 1.50 Euro pp and the train was 2.30 pp).

The modern double decker train (with toilets) only took 10 minutes to get to **Kurort Rathen**. We ran to catch the 10am ferry back across the river to the town of **Kurort Rathen** (1.80pp return). After a short ferry ride we had a cuppa and headed off for the hike to the **Bastei Bridge**, which is very popular so there were a lot of people around. The hike was great, but the crowds were not. The **Bastei Bridge** is something else, fabulous to be on, and equally fabulous viewed from the distance. We wanted a longer hike and to get away from the crowds so we hiked through the **Schwedenloecker**, a lovely narrow ravine. We also passed by **Anselfall**, which we found a bit too touristy.

We then hurried back to **Kurort Rathen** and just made the 2.30pm ferry back to the station where we caught the 3.02 train back to **Bad Schandau** Hbf. We then caught the #241 bus back to camp. The end of another great day hiking part of the 'Painters Way' or Malerweg.

## Bastei Bridge



## Schwedenloecker



## Day 24- Ostrau -0Km

The first bus to **Bad Schandau** does not depart the camp until 9.45am so we had an early hike close to the camp. Again we found great steel ladders leading to wonderful views.

The 9.45 bus took us to **Königstein** where we hiked up to **Festung Königstein** (Fortress). This magnificent fortress towers above **Königstein** but is so immense that it is almost impossible to photograph unless from a distance. We hiked up to the fortress but it is possible to catch a tourist bus up. The entry fee was 10 Euros and you are taken up in a huge lift that accommodates vehicles as well as people. The fortress is completely walled and you can walk the whole way around for 360 degree views. The view of the Elbe River is wonderful as it snakes around the towns in almost a complete circle.

We caught the train to **Kurort Rathen** from **Königstein** so that we could hike **Raunstein**. We arrived around 2pm and caught the 3.30pm train back to **Bad Schandau**.

## Festung Königstein



## Kurort Rathen



## Day 25- Ostrau (local driving)-63Km

You guessed it, another early start. We were on the road by 8:15 and drove straight to the carpark at **Hinterhermsdorf** (paid parking 4 Euros for all day, including nice free toilets). We took the long hike to the sluice. It was a lovely shady hike which met up with the Bootstation at **Untere Schleuse** (where the punts depart from). We watched people disembark from the punt but opted to hike the gorge rather than take the punt. It was a lovely elevated hike with views of the river and we could watch the punt returning to the station at the other end of the gorge. We then took the short hike back to the carpark, arriving around 12 for lunch on the RV.

We drove onto **Hohnstein** and found a park close into town. The Tourist Office advised us where to hike in the time we had (i.e. 3 hours parking spot). The hike was pleasant but the three hours wasn't sufficient and we needed to double back too soon. We did make it to the Brand Lookout for great views of **Königstein** and the **Bastei Bridge**.

We returned via **Waltersdorf** due to an unexpected 'umleitung' which is German for detour.

**NOTE:** No matter how well you plan your route there will always be the dreaded 'umleitung' and you will have to be ready to try to guide yourself back on route. That is when a GPS comes in handy, or your offline mapping APP.

### Hinterhermsdorf



### Hohnstein



### Day 26- Ostrau -0Km

Had to stay around camp until 9:45 then we caught the first bus **into Bad Schandau** then caught the #421 bus to **Pirna**. (purchased a family ticket for 2 zones for 13 Euros). **Pirna** is quite a large town and there were lots of traffic jams so it was a slow bus ride. We arrived in **Pirna** around 11am. We walked the **Cannaltaweg**, but found it to be less than impressive. We then walked through the old town and crossed the bridge to view the town from the other side of the river. **Pirna** is not a particularly picturesque town but it was good watching the riverboats travelling up and down the Elbe.

We opted for the train for the return trip and stopped at **Stadt Whelen** for a short walk. We then caught the next train onto **Königstein** and walked through the old town. We then caught the train back to **Bad Schandau** in time for the 3:26 bus back to the campsite.

Today was not amazing, but we have at least seen all the sights we planned to see..in hindsight we would have used the nice day for more hiking, but it was predicted to rain so this seemed a better option.

### Pirna



### Stadt Whelen



### **Day 27- Ostrau (dep 9am) to Bayreuth (arr 3.15pm) -296Km**

The rain finally arrived, with very heavy rain falling all night. We had originally planned to visit several castles in the area (Pillnitz Schloss and Park, Landschloss Pirna and Barockgarten) but with the rain obviously set in for the day we decided to move on and utilise the wet day to get some of the less scenic driving behind us.

We headed off around 9.30am in the direction of Freiburg. We had intended to visit the castle here but the rain was just too heavy so we continued on, encountering more dreaded 'umleitungen'. We decided that sightseeing wasn't really an option so headed for the motorway in the direction of Bayreuth.

We arrived in Bayreuth around 3.15pm to find that the stellplatz was just about full. We managed to squeeze in between two other RVs and connected to the last available power outlet.

**Accommodation 1 night- Bayreuth Stellplatz.** A really good site 6 Euros pn plus 1Euro for every 6 hours electricity. Run

### **Day 28- Bayreuth (dep 9am) to Kitzingen (arr 2.30pm) -152Km**

Heavy rain overnight, but had eased off in the morning to showers. At 9am we drove to the **Eremitage** capark. On a nice day it would have been within walking distance, but today's rain prohibited that. We donned out wet weather gear and walked through the magnificent grounds of the **Eremitage**. Both the buildings and the grounds are very impressive. The buildings are unique in that from a distance the walls appear to be made of mosaics, but when you get up close they are actually tiny little stones of different colours. The gardens contain several fountains, covered arches and formal hedges. Further away from the main buildings the gardens are less formal with lovely little lakes (or large ponds) with quaint bridges. There is no entry fee, but it would have been worth paying if there was as the building and grounds were spectacular, even in the rain.

We continue on the **Thurnau** which is quite close to Bayreuth and worth the short detour. A very cute town with a lovely church and castle that connect via an elevated wooden covered walkway that extends over the road. Had the timing been right we would have spent the night here as the Council has set up a nice Stellplatz close to the town to encourage visitors. We parked there whilst we explored the town on foot.

We continued onto **Kitzingen**, mostly on the motorway as the rain discouraged sightseeing. We arrived at the campsite before 3pm and had to wait until they opened to register and enter the campsite.

**NOTE:** Many campsites in Europe close for several hours around midday and most of these are gated, so you actually cannot enter the campsite until they open, which can be as late as 4pm. It pays to check this in advance.

We intended to go to **Wurzburg** by train the next day so we walked to the train station to check the timetables. We then walked through the Old Town. There were several nice buildings and a particularly nice old bridge over the river with good views of the town.

**Accommodation 3 night- Campingplatz Schiefer Turn.** A very nice campsite 21.50 Euros incl showers @50c pp. Good spacious pitches, great services and handy location within walking distance of shops and the old town. WiFi available for 2.50 Euros for 5 hours with good reception in the RV- able to watch streamed video.

## Bayreuth



## Thurnau



### Day 29- Kitzingen (Wurzburg by train) -0Km

We rarely drive into the large cities as it is quite difficult to find appropriate RV parking and often quite stressful negotiating the busy traffic. In comparison to a lot of German transport we found the fare into Wurzburg quite expensive at 23Euros but it is nice to give the RV a rest occasionally, and we always enjoy train travel.

We arrived in **Wurzburg** around 9am and walked to the **Residence Palace**. This magnificent palace is on a grand scale and so are the gardens. The courtyard is particularly impressive and provides a great view of the magnificent palace building.

We walked from the palace to the old town and headed for the **Alte Marienberg Brucke**, a lovely old bridge crossing the Main River. This bridge provided great views across to the fortress **Marienberg Festung** on the other side. The walk up to the fortress was quite steep in parts and wound its way through vineyards. From one section of the walk you get a great view of the **Wurzburg Kapelle** on the hill opposite.

We caught the tram up to **Berliner Platz** and then caught the 2:42 train back to Kitzingen.

### Residence Palace



### Marienberg Festung



### Day 30- Kitzingen (explored local towns) -72Km

We decided that we are enjoying both the campsite and the region so decided to explore the local towns surrounding Kitzingen. We pottered around until 10am then headed off for the first little town of **Mainbernheim**. This was quite a nice little town to explore on foot.

TH next town only 5Km away was **Iphofen**, another cute town. We then drove to **Prichenstadt**, which had a lovely TOR (town gate).

We visited **Volkach** but found that it was not as quaint and much more commercialised. Our last town visited was **Dettlebach** which had a beautiful old town. We didn't make it back to the campsite until 6pm.

### Mainbernheim



### Prichenstadt



### Day 31- Kitzingen (dep 9.30am) to Feucht (arr 11am) -120Km

We set off around 9:30am and chose the motorway (A3 then A9) and drove straight to **Feucht**. We headed straight to the stellplatz to ensure we would get a spot as spaces were few. Luckily there was only one other RV so we registered and then had an early lunch.

The train station is an easy walk from the stellplatz and we caught the S3 into **Nuremberg** from **Feucht Ost** (Day pass 11.70 Euros for two). We walked through the old town. It is quite a big city and very busy with market stalls down the main street. We looked across the bridge at the **Holy Spirit** which is built over the water. We then walked up to the **fortress**. The town walls were huge and encase most of the city.

We decided to visit the **Nuremberg Trials Memorial**. We had intended to catch the tram but construction works had closed them down so we walked to the closes UBahn and caught the U1 train for 2 stops (included in the day pass). The Memorial is tucked away a little but we found it and paid our 5 Euros entry fee, which included the audio tour. The memorial was very interesting, but it would take many hours to listen to the whole audio tour, so we chose those exhibits that interested us most. Unfortunately courtroom 600, which is where the trials took place, remains a working court and was in session so we could not go in. It may be worth checking their schedule beforehand.

We caught the U11 back to the main station and then the S2 and S3 back to **Feucht Ost**. We got back to the stellplatz around 5pm.

**Accommodation 1 night- Feucht Stellplatz.** A good overnight stop convenient for the train into Nuremberg (9 Euros plus electricity by Kw. The stellplatz is attached to an indoor tennis hall with a restaurant. The owner is friendly and will provide a discount voucher that can be used toward a meal- we did not try it so cannot comment.

## Nuremberg



## Nuremberg Trials Memorial



### Day 32- Feucht (dep 9am) to Kelheim (arr 6pm) -194Km

Left the stellplatz around 9am and headed for Roth. Unfortunately we couldn't find a park so continued on our way.

We reached **Neuburg an de Donau** around 11am. Parked at a stellplatz while we walked into town. **Neuburg** is a stunning little town almost devoid of tourists. The fabulous Schloss reflects on super calm the **Danube** to create an amazing sight, best seen from the **Englischer Garten**. We walked around the castle and the old town. Such a beautiful place.

We continued on to **Ingolstadt**. We found the last available place in the inner city stellplatz and walked into the old town and did the city walk including around the castle. We visited the tourist office and they booked us into the **Audi Tour** of their production line for the next day (14 Euros). We had previously visited the BMW plant in Munich and loved it..

We returned to the RV but were not happy staying overnight at the over-crowded stellplatz so headed out of town to the **Azure Camping** site. We were not impressed with this campsite or the rudeness of the receptionist. We had seen an offer online for 3 nights for 50 Euros but in person they wanted 90 Euros for 3 nights, so on principle we left.

We drove onto the stellplatz at **Kelheim**, and never regretted that decision. It did mean however that we had to cancel the Audi tour as we didn't want to backtrack to Ingolstadt again.

**Accommodation 3 nights- Kelheim Stellplatz.** Fabulous new stellplatz 8.50 Euros plus electricity by measure. This stellplatz is in two parts. The old section is close to the public toilet block and nearer the river. The sites are not demarcated and power is limited. As many people are unaware of the new section it is also quite crowded.

The new section is tucked further away but worth the extra walking to the toilets. Each site is bordered by a hedge (much like Sneznitz) and every few sites there is a wooden picnic table and bench seats. Your ticket applies to either section so we moved from the old section to the new section, as did many others.

## Neuburg an de Donau



## Ingolstadt



### Day 33- Kelheim -0Km

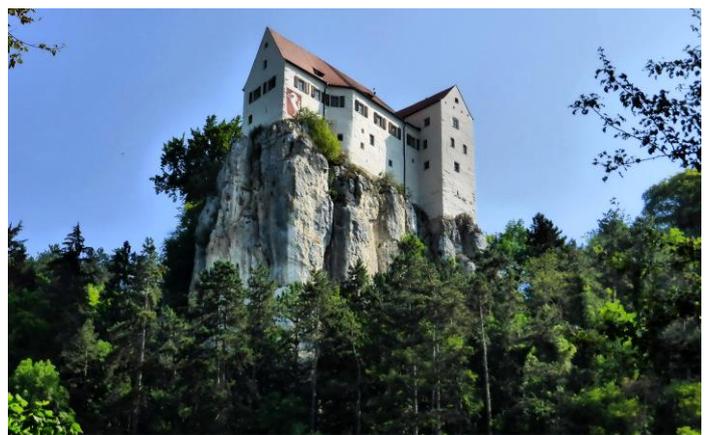
We started the day with a walk into town and visited the Tourism Office for brochures and maps. They recommended where we could hire bicycles for the day, so we walked there straight away. We hired really quite good bicycles for the ridiculously low price of 5 Euros per day each (2-Rad Jessen). We rode back to the stellplatz on the bikes.

After packing our backpacks we rode off along the bike path beside the '**Altmuehl**' or the Ludwig-Donau-Main-Kanal up to **Essing**. We walked across the '**Wiggly Bridge**' and had lunch on a seat by the kanal. We rode past **Burg Prun**, a lovely sight perched high on the hill, and onto the cute little town of **Riedenburg**, complete with its own Schloss. We rode through the town and back to the RV. In total we rode around 40Km today, it was terrific.

### Essing



### Burg Prun



### Day 34- Kelheim -0Km

Nights turned cold but the days were a great temperature for hiking. We headed off around 9am and hiked up the hill to the Kelheim memorial '**Hall of Liberation**'. A completely round building commissioned by King Ludwig to commemorate the victory over Napoleon (there is a bus for those who don't want to hike up). The views down the Danube from the top were terrific.

We hiked the N.2 trail to **Kloster Weltenberg**. It was a nice easy hike around 5Km. The views of the river and Kloster were amazing. We hiked down to the river and could have caught a punt across the river to the Monastery but chose not to. (Busses also take you to the Kloster from Kelheim). We chose instead to hike back along the top of the gorge which was quite steep at times, then descended back down to the river and walked alongside the river back into town.

We got back to the RV around 2.30pm.

### Hall of Liberation



### Kloster Weltenberg



### Day 35- Kelheim (dep 1pm) to Regensburg (arr 4.30pm)-130Km

We woke to a very foggy morning and a huge market taking place on the carpark adjoining the stellplatz. It was a Sunday so it may have been a regular Sunday market.

We spent the whole day packing and cleaning the RV ready for return tomorrow. We drove back to Regensburg via Geisenfeld then onto our campsite at Azur Camping.

### Accommodation 1 night- Azure Camping

#### Kelheim Stellplatz



#### Regensburg



### Day 36- Regensburg to Mc Rent-16Km

Returned the RV to McRent and caught the local bus back to Regensburg. We stayed one night at Ibis again before getting the Postbus back to the airport the following day.

## Want to tailor your own amazing RV Trip?

### HOW I PLANNED THE ROUTE- (for those who may want to plan their own route)

We always book for around 35 days and commence in Munich or Regensburg so after deciding a rough direction I google 'most scenic towns' to get a sense of the area we should head in. I also purchase a 1:800 000 map of the country or area we plan to travel as the maps will often denote the most scenic routes, usually in green.

Once I have a route or area in mind I google all the towns around and on the way there by typing 'image of xxxx'. This is a really great way to quickly get a sense of what each town has to offer. I map out one day at a time determining which way to drive, what towns are worth stopping at and where the campsites and stellplatz are. This is an important step, especially in a place such as the Czech Republic as you don't want to finish the day in a place where you have no possibility of camping overnight. It is important to know what you want to do at each stop, how long it will take, and how far to drive so that you calculate each day correctly. (don't forget to allow for cuppas, meals and photo stops).

As I map the route I also email the tourism office of each town and ask them to advise where we can park our RV and to request any maps or brochures they could post out. You waste a lot of time trying to find a carpark large enough to accommodate an RV if you do not know in advance where to park. You could also end up being fined if you park incorrectly, as it is not always possible to understand parking signage in a foreign language. Whilst a lot of this information is available on line, there is nothing like a hard copy map in the backpack. Most tourism offices are amazingly prompt in responding and are very willing to post out information. (It is really quite exciting going to the letterbox finding it stuffed with brochures and maps).

I also check out the best transport options, timetables and fares. Some towns offer Summer Guest cards either free or at a cost. If you intend to purchase one you need to know what you are likely to utilise and what the cost is to determine if you will get value from the card. You also save a lot of time if you can plan around a timetable rather than sit and wait around for transport to arrive. Sometimes a day ticket offers better value than individual trips, but you won't know that unless you work it out in advance.

When I am researching campsites and stellplatz I check out reviews on line- usually tripadvisor and Campercontact. I also check the transport options close to each site, unless they are within walking distance of the town or attraction. The cost varies greatly between sites, and cost is not always relative to the quality, so reviews often help to determine the best value site (I don't always go for the cheapest- location can trump cost if you would otherwise have to spend money on transport). I research and map as many stellplatz and campsites along the route as I can because sometimes you may want to stop earlier than you planned, or to travel further on past your intended stop (you always need a plan B).

I load everyday into an excel spreadsheet including anticipated mileage, cost, activites etc. I also prepare a more comprehensive word document with pictures for each day that includes screen dumps from Google maps and images from Google Earth. I then convert this to pdf for my ipad. (they c ross reference to each other)

Most often we do not have a GPS so I also map the route onto my ipad in an offline mapping app (I use city maps to go). The paper map is handy on the trip to give a bigger picture overview and is invaluable should you want to look ahead or to change your route on the fly.

On our first trip we actually ended up about 4 days ahead of schedule (as we skipped a section) and were at a bit of a loss what to do for those extra days. I now plan extra days which came in handy on this trip when we decided to cut the Czech Republic back by about 5 days.

Is it a lot of work? YES, but it is fun and results in a holiday that runs as smooth as clockwork. As the navigator (I am not game to drive the RV) it avoids a lot of stress as you know in advance where you are going, and in most instances have pre chosen the best possible route.

**Happy planning**