

My husband and I truly enjoyed the “Best of Germany and Austria” tour April 26 to May 3, 2014. On the Rhine cruise from Ruedesheim to Boppard we marveled at the 13th century castles amid the verdant vineyards. We were transported into the genuine medieval atmosphere of Burg Eltz, built in 1157 in the lush Mosel valley. Cochem, established in the 9th century, also was delightful for its half-timbered houses and picturesque Reichsburg. After a tour of fabled Heidelberg castle, we arrived at the most enchanting medieval village in Germany. Staying overnight in Rothenburg ob der Tauber made us virtual participants in the 14th century, especially due to the Night Watchman’s tour. We also loved Dinkelsbuehl with its 14th century towers and half-timbered architecture. Despite the cool drizzling weather Schloss Neuschwanstein was resplendent as the fairytale castle in the Bavarian Alps.

How majestic were the snow-capped mountains, as we drove on to delightful Innsbruck! The Hofburg there was elegant, but the next day’s excursion to Schloss Herrenchiemsee was fabulous. The extravagant décor of this Versailles-like palace was beyond dazzling. The fountains of Schloss Hellbrunn near Salzburg were unique and entertaining. How wonderful to walk the Salzburg streets where Mozart grew up and view the organ in the cathedral where he played! The Wachau Valley village of Duernstein with its 11th century castle ruin was charming. In Vienna, so rich in art and music, we marveled at the Stephansdom and enjoyed the Haus der Musik and the Kunsthistorisches Museum.

We especially enjoyed staying in the Bellevue Rheinhof in Boppard and the Hotel Eisenhut in Rothenburg. All the hotels had bounteous breakfast buffets. The dinners on the tour were all very delicious and featured tasty German and Austrian cuisine.

Our guides Astrid and Gundula and our bus driver Moustafa were very helpful and informative. We felt immersed in a genuine cultural experience and at times could imagine being in the medieval world or the Habsburg or Wittelsbach milieu. We had a wonderful tour!

This tour has whetted our appetite to see more of these beautiful countries. We loved what we saw in Germany and Austria and would highly recommend this tour to others. Many thanks.

William and Judy Claffey  
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