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Autumn Adventures

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AUTUMN ADVENTURES!

11/28/12

This last month is going by way too fast! It's scary to think that in just over a week we will be on a plane back home to the US. There's so much more I want to see and experience; one semester abroad is just not enough!

November has been full of exciting and unforgettable adventures. In this entry I will talk about All Saints' Day and going to the central cemetery, going to the Opera house for the ballet, and our trip to Braunau, Austria to visit our language assistant, Manuela!

November 1st is a very important Catholic holiday, and as such the institute was closed and we had another day off. We decided to go to the central cemetery, because Allerheiligen is like Memorial Day in the US and lots of people were going to the cemetery. The Zentralfriedhof is humongous and absolutely beautiful. There are so many different types of graves and gravestones.



FIGURE 1: VIEW OF THE LONGEST CASTLE IN EUROPE

The cemetery is also very old and we saw some of the oldest Jewish graves. It was an absolute labyrinth and we walked for a good 45 minutes in almost silence, taking everything in.

On the second of November, we went to see the Romeo and Juliet ballet at the famous opera house! Annika and I met at Kelly's house to get ready, and Addison met us a little later. Kelly's host sister took pictures of us looking all fancy and then we went to the opera house.

Going to the ballet was such a cool experience. We sat upstairs in a little balcony. It was like our own little private room

to watch the ballet (with 5 other people, but still). We also had our own private place to hang up our coats. Before the ballet started we could look out at everyone across the house; just being a part of this picture was a great experience, but the ballet was very entertaining, and I will never forget the boys jumping around and bumping shoulders in an epic bro-dance.

The next weekend Annika, Kelly, Addison and I went to Braunau, Austria to visit our language assistant from last year, Manuela. Braunau is a small town in the province in Upper Austria and Hitler actually came from here (but Braunau doesn't want to really advertise this fact!). We took the train together on Friday the 9th, and got to Braunau in the late morning.

It was so nice seeing Manuela again! She took us on a tour of the town which lasted about an hour. We really enjoyed being in a small town again. We have gotten so used to the hustle and bustle of being in Vienna it was nice to have a relaxing vacation. During the tour we went to Germany. Braunau is right on the border which is the river Inn. We walked across the bridge and stood in Germany and Austria at the same time. Just a couple minutes from the center of the city is Hitler's birth house. There is no sign or anything, just a rock as a small monument against fascism.

After our tour, we walked to Manuela's parents' house where her mother had made us pumpkin soup. I don't know if I've written this before, but I absolutely LOVE pumpkin soup! This is something we should eat more in the US. After lunch, we went outside and met Manuela's chickens in the backyard, and we helped her mother make a very delicious apple strudel. We all got to roll our own strudels, and despite being a little tentative to destroy it, we were all successful and it was truly the best apple strudel we'd ever eaten.

We went to a traditional restaurant for dinner with Manuela that evening. A traditional dinner includes bread, butter, cheese, and lots of meat! This place was also famous for its apple cider, which was like wine except made from apples, and it tasted pretty good.

Following our nice dinner, we went to see James Bond at the German movie theatre. Oh it is very funny hearing James Bond and the other characters speaking in German. We all pretty much agree that we prefer to watch movies in their original languages. Some things just are not easily translatable. It's interesting how growing up in America, we were the ones, the English-speaking people, that made the movies. For people in Austria, it was "them" and they dubbed the films into German. Personally, I don't know how the Germans and Austrians don't get confused out of their minds not being able to hear accents or anything, because sometimes they can be very pivotal to the plot!

The next day we went on a truly awesome adventure! We went to Burg zu Burghausen, which is a castle in Germany near the border. This castle is the longest in Europe, and we went to a lookout point to see it from a distance before crossing the river to visit it. One totally fantastic thing about this castle: People live here! Like normal people, not kings or queens or dukes, but people like us!

I guess you could say I've gotten a little obsessed with castles since coming to Europe. I love them; they're just something we don't have in America. The whole history..with empires and kingdoms, the middle ages and knights, it's just something we read in books or watch in the movies. But when we get here it hits you "Oh, this actually exists. This actually happened here. More than 500 years before the United States even existed."

We walked through the castle taking dozens of pictures and afterwards we went to a cafe in one of the courtyards and enjoyed some tea and hot chocolate.

We drove back to Braunau after this excursion and went to another restaurant in Braunau and had a really nice lunch with an assortment of delicious foods: Wiener Schnitzel, dumplings, and goose.

Sadly, our trip was only one night so after lunch we had to go back to the train station and travel back to Vienna, but our time with Manuela was very nice and I'm really glad we had the opportunity to visit her and see more of Austria during this semester.

Well, that's the first half of November! I wish I could have updated more often this month, but we have just been doing so much and school really picked up after midterms. My next entry will talk about the rest of our adventures this month, including our trip to Budapest, and visits to many interesting and cool places here in Vienna. I will also talk about the wonderful, joyful, and magical Christmas Markets of Vienna, of which there are several! Until next time...

Ariana Lipkind