

EUROPE 2023

4 months | 6 countries | 8 house swaps | 10 journey legs



A bucket list day

I have wanted to see a full performance of the Spanish Riding School since I can remember. 40 years ago, when we were here with the kids, we could only afford to go and see a practice. Well today was the day! It was quite emotional really, to see the beauty of the horses and the grand indoor, chandelier-lit arena.

The school is an Austrian institution but named after Spanish foundation horses that were later bred with local Karst horses and also Arabians. The first riding arena was commissioned in 1565 and the current arena was built in 1729. How beautiful it is.

In previous travels we have visited both the Lipica Stud in Slovenia - the original home of the Lippizaner horse breed, and Piber (in Austria) where the horses are all born and raised. During WWII there was a famous evacuation/relocation to safety with the help of General Patton of many of the horses, to prevent the Russians from gaining access to them.

The performance today graduated from the young stallions (who were just out to get some more experience, and one did play up) to the full school doing a musical precision ride. In between we saw the horses in hand (called on the ground) and one being driven from behind doing all the movements that can be done in saddle. A truly unforgettable performance.





We then wandered the nearby streets and enjoyed the atmosphere of this very classy city. We eventually found a busy little cafe and stopped for a full lunch. It was quite chilly by mid afternoon so we headed home for a warm bath and afternoon snooze. Another memorable day.







