

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | MONDAY, 8 APRIL 2013



Breakfast in Germany, Lunch in Switzerland, Dinner in Austria.

Talk about be Europe being cosmopolitan. Australia has no land borders to worry about so we tend not have the same concerns that the Europeans might. But today, with no fanfare, we crossed into Switzerland from Germany and then just as quickly into Austria without even realizing. It was only when we read the

prices at fuel stations and deciphered the road signage that we realised which country we were in. Border crossings were not obvious and they were unmanned (or at least we did not get stopped).

Europe, it seems, is almost one unified country.

Frustration

We sat for a moment cursing. The front wheels of our van were spinning and throwing mud up at the door of the barn. We were pointed downhill with the barn door centimeters away. We both had known in our hearts a kilometer back that the road we had taken to “the camp site” was a little too narrow and winding. I had decided, at the last minute, to turn back by nipping into the barn’s driveway for a U turn. Now we were stuck.

The frustrating part of our day had started and it only got worse. But thankfully, at the end, everything worked out. Let me start from the beginning.

We spent the morning finding a place to park on the outskirts of St Gallen. The signs were not very good for our motorhome. We would not fit into the multi-story car parks signposted. But we did finally find a great place to park and rode our bikes into St Gallen old city. Most shops were shut. We can only assume that Monday was their day of rest. This meant that, although the buildings looked impressive, there was little atmosphere - no people.

We snapped photos, especially of the 1755 Heritage listed Abbey. What a totally amazing place inside and out.



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ST GALLEN This lovely place was first settled by a monk who fell into a briar bush and decided, after he has pulled out all the thorns from his arse, that this was a perfect place to set up a town. Ouch. So much idiotic crap.



SWISS LANGUAGE Talk about multi lingual. Most swiss can understand French, German and Italian. We wonder if they think in all three languages at the same time?



AUSTRALIANS IN A DUTCH MOBILE HOME? Most locals believe we are Dutch because we drive a Dutch motorhome. When we open our mouths they then think we are English. “Giddy mate” stumps them every time.

We crossed over three countries today and never really knew which one we were in at the end of the day.

We have seen inside many churches to date but we were still gobsmacked. The outside too was surrounded by so many beautiful buildings and on our bikes we were able to view them from all sides. St Gallen is definitely worth a visit - but preferably not on a Monday.

We found a Tourist Info Office. The lady recommended we visit nearby Appenzell and camp in the hills nearby. "OK for campervan?" Heather asked. No worries. It turned out to be poor information.

We drove on and it was only when we turned into a very narrow uphill "road" that we started to get a little concerned. The GPS still urged us on. Finally the road got the better of us. Nope. I turned into a short barn driveway off the road and that's when Heather's heart sank. We were stuck and some distance from any houses or farms from which to get help.

But I remembered Martin, the van's owner, showing me two flat plates to put under the wheels to stop them spinning. I was able to slowly reverse and skid the van around and turn it back on to the road again. Phew.

We left behind a sad mud splattered barn door. What a relief to get out.

We tried for another camp site nearby but this too looked a little too risky so we turned around early before we got into trouble and finally agreed it was better to go back the way we came.

Finding camps that are open around this time of the year is difficult. We headed the GPS for one but found that it did not take motorhomes. On the way to our next selection we came across a sign to a camp not on our list so we thought - why not? 5kms may sound like a short distance but we can honestly say it seemed to take an eternity. We thought we were up shits creek again as the road got narrower and narrower the further we went. We were in the country now with muddy fields and no way to turn around. Blast.

But then, out of nowhere, we came across a sign with "camping platz." Unfortunately it had big boulders near the entrance with a barrier that blocked our way in. Beyond them were what looked like lots of permanent caravans. Heather went in to investigate and I was relieved to see her come out smiling. It was now 6 pm but we were finally home. They even had internet.

The receptionist lady was fabulous. She even said we had lovely accents - can you believe that! That was after

Heather had to ask what country we were actually in!!

It turns out we were in Austria. The countries all come together in this part of the world. Things can get quite complicated when one does not have paper maps (at husband's insistence) and the internet is on the blink! Heather always needs the security of paper maps - it must be the accountant coming out in her.

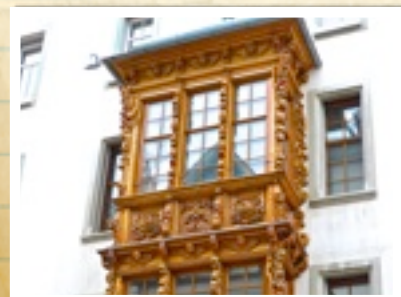
Our park was actually in a wildlife reserve on the banks of the Bodensee. We will make the most of it tomorrow by going for a long walk.



BAY WINDOW



MORE BAY WINDOWS



EVEN MORE BAY WINDOWS





PHOTOS

