

**DEAR SUBSCRIBER**

**\$282 and No Compromises**

It was one of those mental triple-takes where you can't believe what you've just seen so you look again and again. "It" was a headline on the my.yahoo page that collects the news, weather, sports, and travel info that helps satisfy my need to know what's happening. It read: "Paris hotels under €200 per night? Believe it or not, you can do it, and without compromising your standards." For €200 (\$282) a night I should have to worry about 'compromising my standards?' The City of Light seems to have become the 'city of light-ened wallets.' The Paris headline popped up just a couple of hours after I had noticed a three-star hotel in Berlin on Hotwire.com for \$47 per night.

To be fair, after bemoaning the €400 and up rates at Paris's best hotels, the article at Fodor's website went on to mention half a dozen small hotels between €75 and €200. Its main thrust, however, underscores the fact that accommodations in our three countries, especially Germany and Austria, are significantly less expensive than in Europe's most popular destination cities: Paris, Rome, and, of course, London.

But even in those two countries, the news is not good. Check the lower right-hand corner of this page to see currency exchange rates on the day this was written. It is somewhat discouraging to realize that a €100 hotel room is now \$141. Below is a snapshot of the dollar's sickening slide over the past several years as related to the cost of €75, €100 and €250 hotel rooms:

|                | €75  | €100  | €250  |
|----------------|------|-------|-------|
| Sept. 26, 2002 | \$74 | \$98  | \$245 |
| Sept. 26, 2003 | \$86 | \$115 | \$288 |
| Sept. 26, 2004 | \$92 | \$123 | \$308 |

*Continued on page 2...*

# GEMÜTLICHKEIT

The Travel Letter for Germany, Austria, Switzerland & the New Europe

## Engelberg

*Little known, except by diehard skiers, this Swiss mountain town has lots of character, whether you explore it on skis or on foot.*

**A**bove the Swiss mountain resort of Engelberg rises the white-capped wave of the Titlis summit—just as distinct, if not as iconic, as Zermatt's better-known Matterhorn. It's still quite rare to see Americans here, and whether you visit in winter or summer, you'll enjoy the experience of a destination frequented mostly by locals. The town has avoided the elitism and high prices of most upmarket European ski resorts. Swiss folk from nearby villages, as well as travelers from Luzern and Zürich, wander the streets. (Engelberg is the closest major resort to both cities).

The village enjoys a secluded location, boxed in on all sides by

dramatic peaks and accessible by just one winding road and one steep cog railway that squeeze through tight mountain walls.

With its large, picturesque monastery and Victorian hotels surrounded by towering peaks, Engelberg first developed a reputation among the British in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although often overshadowed by larger Swiss resorts, the resort has recently come back onto the radar of travelers worldwide. The scenery alone offers reason to visit and the myriad of outdoor activities will keep one occupied for as long as the legs hold up. Though there are plenty of activities—hiking, skiing, dining—the

*Continued on page 3...*

## Three Great Days in Salzburg

**T**he scenic way to approach Salzburg is by rail and the two-hour run from Munich is an unfolding drama of beauty: villages clustered around white steeples, rolling green hills, soaring granite faces of the Alps, rushing mountain streams, and quiet lakes. The drama builds until glimpses appear of an impressive fortress jutting above fairytale steeples and domes of an old city below. This is Salzburg, grand almost to a fault and often captive to its musical pedigree—having walked through the house where Mozart was born, and taken *The Sound of Music* tour, many visitors think they've seen it all; in fact, they've just begun. Despite the daily crush of tourists, the city remains, for even the most jaded traveler, a place of discovery: an alleyway

leads to a hidden courtyard with a tiny pottery shop next to a charming café, secret stairs yield a stunning view of the city, or an exciting modern art collection is housed in a 17<sup>th</sup> century building. But Salzburg is slow to reveal all of her secrets, and each succeeding visit uncovers new treasures. We hope this three-day itinerary will help you find an ancient city filled with delightful surprises that go well beyond Julie Andrews.

### Day 1

From the train station it is an easy taxi ride to an array of hotel options in the *Altstadt* (old town). For the best combination of location, service,

*Continued on page 6...*

**Exchange rates as of 9/26/07**  
**1 euro = \$1.41**  
**1 Swiss franc = \$0.85**

**DEAR SUBSCRIBER**

*Continued from page 1*

|                |       |       |       |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Sept. 26, 2005 | \$91  | \$121 | \$303 |
| Sept. 26, 2006 | \$95  | \$127 | \$318 |
| Sept. 26, 2007 | \$106 | \$141 | \$353 |

What the table doesn't take into account, of course, is inflation. You probably got a better hotel room for €100 in 2002 than you will today. And, of course, Germany's value added tax rose three percent this year.

Are there any bright spots in all this? Maybe. Let's assume that 12 months ago, even though you felt the euro was outrageously expensive, you sucked it up and got your Europe fix. But this year? Lots of second thoughts. The straw may have broken the camel's back. The euro is up 11% over 2006. Question is, will it cost you 11% more in 2007/08 than it did a year ago? Probably not. Increased competition has dropped fares to a point slightly lower than they were in the fall of '06. Our travel department is booking November San Francisco-Munich nonstops on **Lufthansa** for less than \$700. You can rent a compact car (four doors, air, perfect for two people) for a week for \$228—sometimes less if you catch a sale. On the basic price before tax, that's about \$1 per day more. Couple that \$1 per day with the increase in German VAT and you'll pay about 6.5 percent more for a compact car than a year ago.

Let's say you want to be in Europe for two weeks. The airfare is the same and the compact car for 14 days costs

about \$30 more than in 2006. So far you've covered two major expense items, air and ground transport, paid both prior to departure in dollars, and your cost is virtually the same as a year ago. Now you're left with food and hotels. At the **Gasthof Fraudorfer** in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, the smoked pork chops with mashed potatoes and sauerkraut cost €10.5, the same as in '06. A year ago you would have paid \$13.34; today it's \$14.81. Let's say you also have a salad, a dessert and a couple of beers. In '06 the per person tab for the entire meal was €27 or \$34. This year it's \$38. For two persons, that's an additional \$8 for dinner. There are thousands of good restaurants in Germany where you can eat well for prices like these. Of course the fancier the cuisine, the more expensive the food, and the higher will be your cost difference vs. '06. Let's figure, including lunches, the two of you pay \$25 more per day for food; over 14 days that's \$350. But with a few picnic lunches and a little less beer and wine you can probably cut that in half.

If you stay in the same hotels in the same towns, there's no getting around it, it's going to cost you at least 11 percent more than last year. If, in '06, your average hotel room was €110 (\$140), this year you'll pay \$155, an extra \$15 per night for lodging, or a total of \$210. So far, your added cost over '06 is \$560. There will, of course, be other expenses: parking, fuel, public transport, entrance fees, snacks, etc., so let's add

another \$200 to the difference and we have determined that your cost is going to be \$760 or about \$54 per day more in 2007/08 than in '06.

But wait, you haven't changed your style of travel at all. Make a few adjustments and you can whittle down that \$760. For example, spend more time in small towns. Five days in a three-star hotel in Bamberg (a wonderful city) instead of Munich should save about \$50 per night or \$250. For even more savings, step down in hotel category. The cheapest double room in Bamberg's **Hotel Nepomuk** (two Michelin roof peaks) is €118. A nice double at the less upscale but equally charming **Wilde Rose** (one roof peak) is €95. That's a \$32 per night saving.

One clever couple told us how they found delicious takeout meals at an upscale Vienna deli and had dinner in their hotel room.

Once again, it's a time to get creative about travel spending. — RHB

**Using Gemütlichkeit**

- Hotel prices listed are for one night. Discounts are often available for longer stays.
- All hotel prices include breakfast unless otherwise noted.
- Local European telephone area codes carry the "0" required for in-country dialing. To phone establishments from outside the country, such as from the USA, do not dial the first "0".

**Logging on to Our Website**

Back issues in PDF format from January 1993, except for the most recent 10, are available free to subscribers only at [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com) (click on "Members"). To access the issues, enter the user name and password published in this space each month. The new codes are:

User Name: **gelb** Password: **2727**

Vol. 21, No. 9  
Oct./Nov. 2007

**GEMÜTLICHKEIT**

The Travel Letter for Germany, Austria, Switzerland & the New Europe

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**Gemütlichkeit** (ISSN 10431756) is published 10 times each year by UpCountry Publishing, 288 Ridge Road, Ashland OR 97520. TOLL FREE: 1-800/521-6722 or 541/488-8462, fax: 541/488-8468, e-mail [travel@gemut.com](mailto:travel@gemut.com). Web site: [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com). Subscriptions are \$67 per year for 10 issues. While every effort is made to provide correct information, the publishers can make no guarantees regarding accuracy.

**POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:**  
*Gemütlichkeit*, 288 Ridge Road., Ashland OR 97520

**HOTEL RESTAURANT RATING KEY**

| Rating Scale  | Scale   | Restaurant Criteria |     |
|---------------|---------|---------------------|-----|
| Excellent     | 16 - 20 | Food                | 65% |
| Above Average | 12 - 15 | Service             | 20% |
| Average       | 8 - 11  | Atmosphere          | 15% |
| Adequate      | 4 - 7   |                     |     |
| Unacceptable  | 0 - 3   |                     |     |

| Hotel Rating Criteria | Value Rating | Scale                     |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| People/Service        | 30%          | Outstanding Value 17 - 20 |
| Location/Setting      | 15%          | Very Good Value 12 - 16   |
| Guestrooms            | 30%          | Average Value 9 - 11      |
| Public rooms          | 5%           | Below Average Value 5 - 8 |
| Facilities/Restaurant | 20%          | A Rip-Off 0 - 4           |

**ENGELBERG***Continued from page 1*

resort does not overwhelm in the way that larger places such as Verbier and Crans-Montana do.

While skiing is the main attraction (snow falls steadily from November through April), many wintertime visitors don't ski at all. Instead, they take a cable car up to the Steinberg glacier on Titlis mountain, where they ride the Ice Flyer chairlift and eagerly ask for photo opportunities with the skiers. On the other hand, advanced and expert skiers will find the hill especially suits their needs. The *off-piste* at the Titlis area is some of the best in Switzerland. If you're an expert skier who feels up to departing from the groomed trails, make sure you have avalanche gear (transceiver, shovel, and probe) and ski with someone familiar with the area (there are many cliffs and crevasses to avoid). Most of the groomed runs have a steep pitch, and the snow usually gets better the higher one goes. If the sky is clear, it's a good idea to start out on the Jochpass/Jochstock side of the resort and move with the sun over to Stand in the afternoon. Brunni, on the other side of the village, faces south, thus it gets considerably more sun and has more beginner terrain. However, the abundant sunshine here melts the snow quicker, so the season on this side of the valley is shorter. (Last year it barely opened at all, but 2006 was unusually bad throughout the country).

**Summer Hikes**

For an excellent all-day, summer excursion, ride the gondola and then two chairlifts to get to Jochpass. Then follow hiking signs to Melschee-Frutt. The hike has only a few short climbs; for the most part you'll cover level or slightly downhill terrain. Start by skirting around a long ridge before descending toward a sparkling glacial lake. Then pass through a tiny village with rustic old barns and stables before the path takes you around another lake and eventually ends at the small resort village of Melschee-

**Engelberg Basics****Population:** 3,600**Elevation:** 1050 meters (3,445 ft.), Titlis glacier 3,020 meters (9,908 ft)**Visitor information:** Tourismus AG, Tourist Center, CH-6390 Engelberg, +41/41/639 77 77, [welcome@engelberg.ch](mailto:welcome@engelberg.ch)**Driving distances to:**

|         |        |           |
|---------|--------|-----------|
| Berlin  | 509 km | 316 miles |
| Zürich  | 95 km  | 59 miles  |
| Bern    | 146 km | 91 miles  |
| Basel   | 132 km | 82 miles  |
| Geneva  | 300 km | 186 miles |
| Lucerne | 44 km  | 27 miles  |

**Rail/bus times:**

|         |      |
|---------|------|
| Zürich  | 2:01 |
| Bern    | 2:12 |
| Lucerne | 1:01 |
| Basel   | 2:31 |
| Geneva  | 4:18 |

**Closest major airports:** Zürich, Geneva**Events and festivals:**

Open Air Music Festival "Muisiglandzgemeind 08" in Grafenort, July

Engelberg Summer Event, June- July, [www.engelberg-sommerevent.ch](http://www.engelberg-sommerevent.ch)

Alpine Pop Music Festival on Ristis, August

World Cup Ski Jump, December 2007

Frutt. You'll find more lifts here and a large vertical rock face, popular among climbers. To return to Engelberg, either hike back the way you came or give your legs a rest and take the gondola down to the bus stop. From there, it's a short but winding ride to the rail station in Sarnen where you can catch a train back to Engelberg.

Another full-day hike starts from the Brunni side of Engelberg and ends at Ruggshubelhut restaurant. Start by taking the Brunni cable car and follow signs towards the restaurant where the long, slowly ascending trail ends. Once there, you can refuel before heading back the way you came—or stay overnight at the hut. The trail, entirely above treeline, provides great views of Engelberg and Titlis across the valley. Some informational displays along the way describe how glaciers formed the valley.

For the best view with the least effort, take the gondola from the village to Trübsee, where you switch to

a cable car that takes you to Stand. Then hop on the Titlis Rotair cable car, proudly declared the world's first rotating cable car (gimmicky and annoying because only the floor rotates so you can't lean against a wall if you're tired) The Rotair spins over the awe-inspiring Steinberg glacier, with its many ice-cliffs and crevasses. From here, it's a 45-minute hike up the glacier to the summit of Titlis, where the view stretches in all directions—south into the heart of the Bernese Oberland and north toward the low, rolling farmland surrounding Luzern and Zürich. Short ski runs typically stay open year-round on the glacier, but in 2006 they had to close for a few months. Due to the glacier's shrinking size, surely the days of summer skiing here are dwindling.

There are countless other short hikes and walks for people of all abilities on both the Titlis and Brunni sides of the valley. The trails are well marked and maintained, and good maps are available at the tram stations.

Other activities in Engelberg include golf, guided hikes up the Fürenalp (doable by anyone in good shape), rock climbing, mountain biking, and sledding. February and March are the best months for skiing. In spring, activities are limited due to lingering snow on hiking trails. And in the late fall, lifts sometimes close down for maintenance (a good time to go if you want to avoid crowds).

**Engelberg Hotels**

The town's hotels have much character and the village is small enough that there are no bad locations. Plus, nearly every room in every hotel has a view of the Alps.

**Hotel Schweizerhof**

Despite its understated décor, this hotel shines because of its friendly staff and owners, the Burch-Weibel family. Over the past 10 years, each floor has been renovated in a variety of styles that offer something for every taste. Except for the top floor, all rooms on the front side of the building

**EDITOR'S CHOICE**

have balconies. While there may be more luxurious experiences for a similar price at other hotels, the friendly, homey atmosphere here is worth a lot.

You might request Number 404, a corner room with three separate balconies that look out on superb views of Titlis and the surrounding Alps. A walk-in closet and separate toilet and bath (the only room in the hotel with this distinction) give the room plenty of space. Light blues and grays with red armchairs and yellow curtains create a cheery ambience.

The smaller Number 207 has a hardwood floor, modern furniture (including a frosted glass armoire), and an out-of-the-way sitting nook next to large windows. This room also has a balcony.

Recently renovated Number 102 features a romantic style, not hearts and lace but lots of light wood, soft reds and yellows, and a big bathroom with a deep tub. Spectacular views up the Brunni side of the valley make up for no balcony.

On the first level, a small fitness room, sauna, and solarium that doubles as a massage parlor are open to all guests. In winter (and by special request from groups of 10 or more in the summer), the hotel serves cheese fondue in a traditional room with dark wood-paneled walls. Across the hall, the elegant breakfast room features high ceilings and chandeliers.

**Contact:** Hotel Schweizerhof, CH-6390 Engelberg, tel. +41/41/637 11 05, fax +41/41/637 41 47,

[info@schweizerhof-engelberg.ch](mailto:info@schweizerhof-engelberg.ch),  
[www.schweizerhof-engelberg.ch](http://www.schweizerhof-engelberg.ch)

**Daily Rates:** Singles CHF 110-155, doubles CHF 180-270

**Rating:** QUALITY 13/20, VALUE 9/20

#### Hotel Europe

Towering ceilings, marble columns, and red carpets set the tone in the lobby of this classic Victorian hotel. We found the front desk staff a little stuffy, but perhaps it's all part of the luxury package.

Elegantly furnished Number 202 is a bright and open space with high ceilings, twin beds pushed together, three separate balconies, two armchairs, a large armoire, a desk, and a couch. Even when the couch is converted to a bed this corner room feels large. The somewhat cramped bathroom detracts only slightly from the room's overall quality.

Number 208, also on a corner, but even larger than 202, has a bigger bathroom and a tub. There are two large beds and, like all rooms here, the couch can be converted to a bed.

The Europe's restaurants offer separate seating for guests and the public. This enormous dining room features large round tables, marble columns, and high ceilings. Across the hall, a small bar with a billiards table offers a cozier atmosphere.

On the ground floor, a modern sauna and solarium and large ski room with heated boot racks complete the hotel's offerings.

**Contact:** Hotel Europe, Dorfstrasse 40, CH-6390 Engelberg, tel. +41/41/639 75 75, fax +41/41/639 75 76,

[info@hoteleurope.ch](mailto:info@hoteleurope.ch),

[www.hoteleurope.ch](http://www.hoteleurope.ch)

**Daily Rates:** Singles CHF 110-150, doubles CHF 180-260

**Rating:** QUALITY 15/20, VALUE 13/20

#### Ramada Hotel Regina Titlis

This large chain hotel has 128 rooms, including 32 suites, all with balcony. The spacious lobby is strewn with couches, chairs, and coffee tables. Granite floors and large potted plants placed throughout, complement the slightly upscale atmosphere. You'll find a friendly and professional staff here, and the hotel's top two floors have recently been renovated.

Number 506 has twin beds and its view up the valley provides spectacular shots of both Titlis and Brunni. The spacious room contains a couch and an armchair in yellow plaid upholstery and a wood-paneled wall in the alpine style. A large closet and royal blue carpeting com-

plete the amenities. The average-sized bath has a full-sized tub.

Suites such as Number 803 consist of two large, open rooms as well as a kitchenette that can be unlocked and used upon request. Relax on the couch or armchairs in the living room, or enjoy your own meals at the oval dining table. The average-sized bathrooms feature two sinks.

On ground level, the hotel bar offers live music and in summer has a large area for outdoor seating. Beyond the bar, Italian restaurant La Strega has stone walls and a fireplace. Some dishes are cooked at your table. A buffet breakfast is served in Restaurant Titlis.

The basement holds an inviting, 12-meter long indoor pool, a coin-op whirlpool, plus a sauna and massage rooms. For an added touch of romance, you can rent a private hot tub with champagne service for 90 minutes (CHF 160).

**Contact:** Ramada Hotel Regina Titlis, Dorfstrasse 33, CH-6390 Engelberg, tel. +41/41/639 5858, fax 639 5859, [regina-titlis@ramada-treff.ch](mailto:regina-titlis@ramada-treff.ch), [www.ramada-treff.ch](http://www.ramada-treff.ch)

**Daily Rates:** Singles CHF 135-150, doubles CHF 165-180

**Rating:** QUALITY 11/20, VALUE 11/20

#### Hotel Bellevue-Terminus

Though clearly it was once a luxury stop, the Bellevue is now a little rough around the edges. Inside the hotel, the promise of the imposing, almost elegant exterior is unfulfilled. The spacious lobby has high marble columns, a fireplace, and plenty of seating, but on a recent visit, the less-than-friendly staff seemed happy to chat among themselves while guests waited to be checked-in.

Twin beds, high ceilings, and a marble-topped desk are the main features of Number 129. The small bathroom has a rather drab decor, but the room's balcony offers views up the valley.

The larger Number 131 also has a balcony, a king-sized bed covered with a flowered duvet, and another marble-topped desk. The floors

squeak here and throughout the hotel. The bath includes a full-size tub and two sinks, although the color scheme is odd: red tiles and green fixtures.

Two huge dining rooms flank the lobby. The breakfast room has creaky wood floors and a beautiful, ornate wood ceiling. The only food served here is a continental breakfast buffet. The other dining room, for groups, also features a lounge with black leather couches and a pool table, as well as a children's play space.

**Contact:** Hotel Bellevue-Terminus, Bahnhofplatz, 6390 Engelberg CH, tel. +41/41/639 68 68, fax +41/41/639 68 68,

[bellevue.engelberg@telealpin.ch](mailto:bellevue.engelberg@telealpin.ch),  
[www.bellevue-engelberg.ch](http://www.bellevue-engelberg.ch)

**Daily Rates:** Single CHF 85-110, double CHF 140-190

**Rating:** QUALITY 7/20, VALUE 7/20

### Engelberg Restaurants

There are a few gourmet dining options in Engelberg, but after a long day in the mountains, nothing beats hearty fare in cozy, casual restaurants—of which there is no shortage in this small mountain town.

#### Yucatan

Possibly the best Mexican food in Switzerland—true that's not saying a lot, but Yucatan serves up a delicious alternative to the Swiss and Italian fare that dominates the village. The main room, bright and spacious, has a long, wooden bar and large tables skirting the perimeter. A smaller room to the side is nonsmoking. The decor feels authentic, with brightly colored walls stenciled in lively designs.

A starter of nachos, heaped with cheese, salsa, guacamole, and sour cream, is enough for four people. Burritos, smothered with cheese, come with sides of Spanish rice and refries. There are also fajitas and quesadillas plus a selection of big, juicy burgers with rich toppings such as avocado and bacon. Entrees are in the CHF 17-30 range.

A favorite après-ski spot, Yucatan can get pretty lively during its daily happy hour (between 5 and 6pm) when beer is half-price (CHF 3 for a half-liter), but usually quiets down later. Live bands in the evening can also draw crowds.

**Contact:** Yucatan, Bahnhofplatz Engelberg 6390 CH, tel. +41/41/637 13 24

**Rating:** QUALITY 12/20, VALUE 12/20

#### Chuchichäschtli Restaurant

Ancient wood floors, vine-wrapped, intricately-carved beams and posts, old cowbells, and a pair of antique stoves, create a fantastic ambiance in this classic Swiss restaurant. Mismatched wooden tables and chairs lend an even more homey, alpine lodge feel. Chuchichäschtli seems to be a local favorite, as a steady stream of customers flowed through on an otherwise quiet, off-season Monday. The staff offers a warm greeting and there's outdoor seating on a deck raised above street level behind a decorative wood railing.

The fare, of course, is traditional Swiss: mainly sausage, pork, beef, and soups, plus some vegetarian options. Homemade tomato soup, filled with tomato chunks, chopped onion, basil, a dollop of sour cream, and sprinkled with minced chives, arrives piping hot to warm you from the inside out. Rich and flavorful spaghetti with meat sauce is just as hearty, and comes with a generous side of grated Parmesan cheese. Prices are typical of the area and won't break the bank.

**Contact:** Chuchichäschtli Restaurant, Klosterstrasse 11 6390 Engelberg CH, tel. +41/41/637 16 74,

[www.chuchichaeschli-engelberg.ch](http://www.chuchichaeschli-engelberg.ch)

**Rating:** QUALITY 12/20, VALUE 11/20

#### Berghaus Jochpass

On its mountainside perch, this traditional Swiss restaurant is perfect for lunch during a long day on the slopes, or after a couple of hours walking the many hiking trails around Jochpass. Rich dark wooden posts and beams, framed black and

white portraits of grinning, bearded men, and old ski photos make up the cozy décor. If the sun is shining, you may want to sit at a picnic table on the large porch outside and enjoy a view that stretches out to the surrounding rocky peaks and glaciers.

The food is hearty and filling. The bratwurst with *Rösti* and onion gravy is as good as it gets. And to warm you up, there's always that classic ski lodge goody, hot chocolate.

Prices (CHF 18 to 35) are higher than the adjoining cafeteria-style restaurant but not exorbitant.

**Contact:** Berghaus Jochpass, top of Jochpass station, tel. +41/41/637 11 87

**Rating:** QUALITY 11/20, VALUE 11/20

#### Bierlialp Pizzeria-Trattoria

A good choice for Italian food, Bierlialp Pizzeria-Trattoria is family friendly but does not lag in quality. The kitchen, fully visible from the tables, has a brick pizza oven. The long, narrow layout of the restaurant makes it feel smaller than it is and adds a touch of intimacy. The

#### Key Websites for the Traveler

- [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com) Gateway site for travelers to Germanic Europe, including car rental, rail passes, hotel bookings, traveler feedback, travel tips, and past issues (free access to back issues for subscribers; see log-on info on page 2).
- [www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com) The Michelin database of hotels and restaurants, plus great interactive trip planning tools.
- [www.travelessentials.com](http://www.travelessentials.com) Guidebooks, maps, travel accessories, luggage, all at 10 percent off for subscribers. Use discount code gemut2006.
- [www.webflyer.com](http://www.webflyer.com) Informative frequent-flyer forums make this a must for air travelers.
- [bahn.hafas.de/bin/query.exe/en](http://bahn.hafas.de/bin/query.exe/en) German rail website, with train schedules throughout Europe, as well as Germany.
- [www.sbb.ch/index\\_e.htm](http://www.sbb.ch/index_e.htm) Swiss and European rail schedules.
- [www.ski-europe.com](http://www.ski-europe.com) Top Web resource for skiers with much data on Alpine resorts.
- [www.myswitzerland.com](http://www.myswitzerland.com) Website of Switzerland's national tourist authority.
- [www.germany-tourism.de](http://www.germany-tourism.de) Germany's national tourist authority.
- [www.austria.info/us](http://www.austria.info/us) Austria's national tourist authority.
- [www.historicgermany.com](http://www.historicgermany.com) Website for an alliance of historic German cities.
- [www.thetravelinsider.info](http://www.thetravelinsider.info) Info on electronic devices used by travelers — cell phones, computers, etc.

friendly staff ensures a lively vibe throughout the afternoon and evening hours.

The pasta entrees we sampled arrived with rich and balanced flavors. Thin-crust pizza did not disappoint, with fresh and plentiful toppings. Reasonable prices make this eatery a good choice all around.

**Contact:** Bierlialp Pizzeria-Trattoria, Dorfstrasse 21, CH-6390 Engelberg, tel. +41/41/637 17 17

**Rating:** QUALITY 13/20, VALUE 13/20

### THREE DAYS IN SALZBURG

Continued from page 1

and quality, try the **Altstadt Radisson SAS**. For a bit more local charm and only a step away, the **Altstadthotel Wolf** is a good bet. A longtime *Gemütlichkeit* value choice is the stylish little **Hotel Jedermann**. For an absolutely idyllic setting just a short bus ride away, there's the newly expanded and always excellent **Pension Sallerhof**. And no story on Salzburg is complete without a mention of the wonderful **Schloss Haunsperg** in nearby Oberalm bei Hallein. Once you've settled in to the room of your choice, it is time to begin your three days of stunning vistas, charming side streets, and enticing eateries.

Unless you arrive very early in the morning, Salzburg's picturesque main thoroughfares are likely to be filled with tourists. One way to rise above the crowds and celebrate your arrival is with a beer at **Stiegl** on Festungsgasse. The brewery has been a vital part of this city for 400 years and is a great place to start your short visit. Assuming you've already had lunch, bypass the main beer hall and the restaurant and head for the *selbstbedienung* garden above. The views are much better and the atmosphere more relaxed.

Afterward, continue up the hill to the fortress, **Hohensalzburg** (perhaps forgoing the expensive but efficient funicular in favor of some exercise). If the crowds are thin, you can join the guided tour for the views from the upper ramparts, but feel free to skip it and wander along the top of the Mönchberg towards the **Museum of**

**Modern Art** at the other end of the cliffs. Few tourists make use of this lovely park and the late afternoon sun paints everything golden. Besides, dinner tonight will be at the museum's **Café** m32Its location, perched at the top of the Mönchberg in the spot once occupied by Casino Salzburg (now located in Schloss Klessheim just outside town), is unbeatable as the sun drops and the lights of the city come twinkling on.

### Day 2

Don't dawdle this morning; there's a lot to explore before the city thickens with crowds. If you've got room left over from breakfast at your hotel, step around to **Fasties** in the Pfeifergasse for a mid-morning snack, though you may have to wait in line behind locals with the same idea. Pay attention to what they order, as the menu changes and is generally scrawled on a chalkboard outside. If it is later in the day, you'll want to try their soups and sandwiches.

From Fasties, return to the **Mozartplatz** with its large statue of the composer in the center. Facing the **Glockenspiel Café**, bear right towards **Judengasse**, which leads to Salzburg's heavily-photographed and traveled, pedestrian-only main street, **Getreidegasse**. At its end, turn left on Hofstallgasse and work your way back along the side of the cliffs, passing the **Pferdeschwemme** (horse trough), **Neutor** (a tunnel directly below the Mönchberg), and the center of Salzburg's famed music festival, the **Festpielhaus**, until you reach the **Domplatz**. Every summer, this large square in front of Salzburg's biggest church is transformed into a theater for an open-air production of Hugo Hofmannstahl's *Jedermann* (Everyman).

Duck through to the **Residenzplatz**, laid out by Salzburg's notorious ruler, Archbishop Wolf Dietrich. The large square is dominated by an impressive fountain and provides an open, sunny place for resting. Horse-drawn carriage tours of the city leave from the square as well.

Work your way back along **Chur-**

**fürstrasse** to the **Universitätsplatz**, where a farmers market sets up most days. Browse the fresh produce and local products to find side dishes, but for the main course head over to one of the sausage vendors lined up along north side of the Universitätsplatz. Order a *käsekrainer* (sausage with melted cheese), choose a crusty roll, and eat it standing up at the table alongside the sausage cart. Wash it down with a cold beer and get ready for the next adventure.

Make your way across the river and into the **Mirabell Gardens**. Built at the end of the seventeenth century, these gardens are another famous Salzburg landmark, both for their beauty and for the *Sound of Music* scene filmed here. From nearby Mirabellplatz, hop the Number 25 bus toward Rif for the **Untersbergsbahn** in **Sankt Leonard**.

Although there are many trails to the summit of the Untersberg, most are a good day's hike. Save that for a longer visit and be whisked to the top via cable car. Once there, you can scramble along the paths to lookouts in every direction. On one side is the parade of snow-covered Alps (even in summer) marching off towards Innsbruck. Another direction boasts a panorama of farms, small villages, the Hohensalzburg and the *Altstadt*.

Back at your hotel, relax for a few hours and then it's off to the "new city" for drinks and dinner. If the evening is chilly, stop by **Zum Fiedelen Affen** (merry monkeys), where the primate decor lends a lighthearted atmosphere. If the weather is warm, head for **Die Weisse**, a lovely beer garden tucked away off the Rupertgasse for a pre-prandial beverage. The speciality is wheat beer, so if your glass is cloudy that's a good thing. Be careful though, the hours can slip away here and you don't want to miss dinner.

For dinner, try **Wasserfall** on the Linzergasse at the base of the Kapuzinerberg, where the excellent Italian food is accompanied by the trilling sounds of an indoor waterfall. Afterward, if the moon is out, try climbing the steps to the top of the

Kapuzinerberg where you will be rewarded with dramatic views of the lighted city set against the cliffs of the Mönchberg. Or, for a less challenging post-dinner walk, stroll the banks of the Salzach before stopping by **Cafe Tomaselli** in the **Altermarktplatz** for coffee and something sweet. This Salzburg institution is the oldest continuously operating café in Austria.

### Day 3

Since you won't venture far this morning you can linger a bit over breakfast. As one of the cultural gems of Europe, Salzburg has its share of great museums and galleries. Start in the Residenceplatz with the **Residenzgalerie** and its fine collection of Dutch and Flemish art. The **Dom-museum** offers the church's extensive accumulation of religious art and treasures while the new **Salzburg Museum** introduces visitors to the various myths and personalities of Salzburg's cultural past. And before hunger strikes, be sure to take a spin through the **Rupertinum**, enjoying its fine assortment of 20<sup>th</sup> century art.

For lunch, mosey back through town to **Papagenoplatz** (named for the character in Mozart's *Magic Flute*) and grab a table under the hanging plants at **Zirklwirt**. The portions are big enough to keep you going for the rest of the day. Order the chicken gyros with all the mixings nicely laid out, or the misnamed "Steak Sandwich" (it's actually chicken). In any case, this peaceful garden retreat, just steps from bustling Mozartplatz, offers a fitting finale to your Salzburg tour. Despite all you've seen, you'll leave knowing there are many more discoveries left for future trips.

### Salzburg Hotels

**Hotel Altstadt Radisson SAS**, Rudolfskai 28/Judengasse 15, tel. +43/662/848 571, fax 848 5716, [www.radisson.com/salzburgat](http://www.radisson.com/salzburgat), [Radisson-altstadt@austria-trend.at](mailto:Radisson-altstadt@austria-trend.at), doubles from €235

**Altstadhôtel Wolf**, Kaigasse 7, +43/662/843 4530, fax 842 4234, [www.hotelwolf.com](http://www.hotelwolf.com), [office@hotelwolf.com](mailto:office@hotelwolf.com), doubles from €98

**Schloss Haunsperg**, Hammerstrasse 51, Oberalm bei Hallein, tel.

+43/06245/80662, fax 85680, [info@schlosshaunsperg.com](mailto:info@schlosshaunsperg.com), [www.schlosshaunsperg.com](http://www.schlosshaunsperg.com), doubles from €135

**Pension Hotel Sallerhof**, Hauptstrasse 9, Grödig, tel. +43/624/672 521, 624/672 521 18, [www.sallerhof.com](http://www.sallerhof.com), [info@sallerhof.com](mailto:info@sallerhof.com), doubles from €84

**Hotel Jedermann**, Rupertgasse 25, tel. +43 662 /873241, [office@hotel-jedermann.com](mailto:office@hotel-jedermann.com), [www.hotel-jedermann.com](http://www.hotel-jedermann.com), doubles from €90

### Salzburg Restaurants

**Café m32**, Mönchberg 32, tel. +43/662/841000

**Fasties**, Pfeifergasse 3

**Wasserfall**, Linzergasse 10, tel. +43/662/873 331, reservations required

**Café Zirklwirt**, Pfeifergasse 14, tel. +43/662/843472

### Bars and Cafes

**Stiegl**, Festungsgasse 10, tel. + 43/662/842681, daily from May 10 through September

**Die Weisse**, Rupertgasse 10, tel. +43/662/8722 46, [www.dieweisse.at](http://www.dieweisse.at), closed Sun.

**Cafe Tomaselli**, Altenmarkt 9, [www.tomaselli.at](http://www.tomaselli.at)

For more on Salzburg go to [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com). 

## News/Deals

■ **Cheap Winter Packages:** Our friends at **SkiEurope** have announced their annual SuperSki Week packages (remember: you don't have to ski), including:

- Innsbruck, from \$650
- Salzburg, from \$850
- Interlaken, from \$919
- Garmisch-Partenkirchen, from \$939

The deal includes six or seven nights' accommodations, roundtrip airfare from the U.S., and daily breakfast. Contact: tel. 800-333-5533 or [www.ski-europe.com](http://www.ski-europe.com).

■ **Swiss and Austrian Deals from Minotel:** Get 15 percent off hotel bookings made before December 31. (When reserving online, enter the promotion code "September.") Fall specials include three nights for the

price of two at certain hotels in Lugano, Salzburg, Wengen. Visit [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com) or [www.minotel.com](http://www.minotel.com) for details.

■ **Vienna Shopping:** Three 7<sup>th</sup>-district clothing boutiques in Austria's capital are experimenting with a new business model: They've added stylish hair salons to the high-fashion shopping experience. See what the fuss is all about at:


Glanz & Gloria, Schottenfeldgasse 77, 7th district, tel. +43/650/400 60 89, [www.glanzundgloria.at](http://www.glanzundgloria.at)

Schon schön, Lindengasse 53/ corner of Andreasgasse, 7th district, tel. +43/699/153 777 01, [www.schonschoen.at](http://www.schonschoen.at)

be a good girl, Westbahnstrasse 5a, 7th district, tel. +43/1/524 47 28, [www.beagoodgirl.com](http://www.beagoodgirl.com)

■ **Jungfrau Special:** This fall, CHF 415 (about \$354) gets you five nights' accommodations, daily breakfast, and a six-day train pass for the Jungfrau mountain railways. Rides up to the Jungfraujoch and the Schilthorn-Piz Gloria are included. Prices are scaled according to hotel categories. Contact [www.jungfrau.ch](http://www.jungfrau.ch).

■ **Beware of DCC and the Travel-Money Card:** Many travelers returning from Europe report being given the choice of paying for credit card purchases in local currency or US dollars. Choose dollars and you will pay three to five percent more than if you paid in euros. **Dynamic Currency Conversion** (DCC) is a great deal for merchants and the companies who sell it to merchants. But for travelers it's a rip-off. DCC charges a fee to convert local currency to dollars. It also determines the exchange rate; one that is higher, of course, than the interbank rate charged when you pay in local currency and let your credit card convert the euros or francs to dollars. Outside the U.S., always insist on paying in local currency.

Another shaky proposition is AAA's prepaid **Visa TravelMoney Card**. The card is accepted by merchants that also accept Visa. The problem is you get a lousy exchange rate and pay about 7 percent more than if you simply paid with a credit card. 

## Readers' Forum

*Our request for your river cruise experiences and suggestions brought many responses. Here are a few. Given our space limitation we have edited and condensed.*

### Vantage Tours' River Navigator

We recently did a 16-day trip with **Vantage Tours**. (14 on the Rhine and Danube). Having taken more than 20 ocean cruises and driven more than 15,000 kilometers during five trips to Germany I feel qualified to note the pluses and minuses.

First, the *River Navigator* was extremely comfortable. The 150 sq. ft rooms were beautifully laid-out, with more storage space than many much larger ocean ships. The cruise was the most relaxing vacation ever...no pressure to do anything...no stress about seats for a show or extra-priced dining rooms, etc. Meals were a pleasure. Breakfast and lunch buffets were the equal of most first class German hotels, with made-to-order dishes always available. Dinners were good, but not exceptional.

The personnel were superior in every way. Well-trained, polite, efficient, and very friendly. Each night we had a show from local talent along the rivers. Singers, band, choirs, etc. Not Broadway, but intimately performed in a lounge where everyone was close up. We stopped at some interesting towns that would have been missed on most land tours. Best to avoid the included shore tours and wander on your own in these places.

The only minus was the price. More than \$10,000 for both of us. Three years ago it was half that, but the cost went up because of the weak dollar...and mostly, because the operators have a good thing going and BECAUSE THEY CAN! These trips are sold out immediately, some almost a year in advance. It seems to have become THE thing to do.

We met interesting and fascinating people. You can sit wherever and with whomever you want. Perfect trip for those who mix well; not recommended for introverts. Also not recommended for those under age 60!!!! Everyone on board was a "senior."

GENE LOPOTEN  
LOWER GWYNEDD, PA

### Cruise pluses and minuses

Pluses:

1. Unpack once.
2. Boats usually dock within easy walking distance of each city, making it easy to come and go on your own.
3. Meals are generally good and certainly convenient.
4. Cruise line guides and excursions are good.
5. The people you meet on the boat are interesting and fun to be with.
6. Since everything connected with the cruise is in English, it's a great way for inexperienced English-speaking travelers to enjoy foreign countries.

A few minuses:

1. Not as much freedom as traveling independently.
2. Except for cruise-sponsored excursions, difficulty of getting much farther from the boat than walking distance.
3. High or low water levels can cause part of the cruise to be revised or even omitted. (Friends had to be bussed from Basel to Strasbourg and then wait a couple days for flood waters to go down.)
4. Cabin space is much smaller than the typical hotel room.
5. Boats frequently sail by dinner time, eliminating the possibility of enjoying city or town night life.

Some suggestions for river cruising:

1. Don't buy the cruise line pre-trip or post-trip. They are expensive and provide little more than a hotel. Arrange your own. In December '05, we stayed in Vienna and Nürnberg at *Gemütlichkeit*-recommended small hotels, which were much nicer, better located, and less expensive than the cruise line's large chain hotels.
2. Though airfare is available through the cruise line, you can usually book your own flights and have more flexibility, especially if you do your own pre- and post-trips. The disadvantage is you will have to arrange your own airport transfers and find the ship.
3. Eat as many meals off ship as you can. The extra cost is worth the experience of eating locally.

DICK KREITNER  
VIA EMAIL

### Educational Cruising

We have been on two river cruises within the past 10 years, both sponsored by Yale University, and thought they were fabulous. Most mornings, faculty members gave presentations which prepared us for the sights ahead. An optional list of books was also available.

The first trip began at **Villa d'Este** on Lake Como and finished with a glorious sea arrival into Venice. Along the way we visited Milan, Parma, Mantua, Verona, Ravenna, Chioggia and Padua. One lecturer was an expert on Palladian villas and another spoke on history.

The next trip was from Switzerland to the Rhine River, and through a canal to the Danube, concluding in Budapest. The theme of the lectures was music. Again, daily shore excursions to everything within reasonable distance by private charter buses. We began in Lucerne and the Jungfrau area of Switzerland then voyaged the Rhine and Danube to Budapest. It was 14 wonderful days of daily lectures and excursions, concerts and fine meals on and off the ship. The last evening we floated under the lighted bridges of Budapest into an illuminated fairyland.

JOSEPHINE BENNINGTON  
VIA EMAIL

### Best Cruises

I have taken six river cruises. The one aspect that attracts me, other than the obvious, is that you unpack once. As for the food (with the exception of **KD Cruises**) on the **Deilmann** cruises there at least two appetizer choices, at least three entree choices, two dessert choices, and I have, on occasion, ordered off the menu. They are very accommodating with passengers' special requests.

On the Danube between Budapest and Vienna the topography is boring and flat because it's the Danube basin, but Vienna to Regensburg it's beautiful with stops in Dürnstein, Melk, Passau and Linz.

The most beautiful trips have been the Rhine and Mosel (twice and I would do it again in a heartbeat). The most interesting: the Elbe (Potsdam to Prague).

CLINTON CREASY  
VIA EMAIL

**Visit Gemütlichkeit's online reader forum: [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com)**