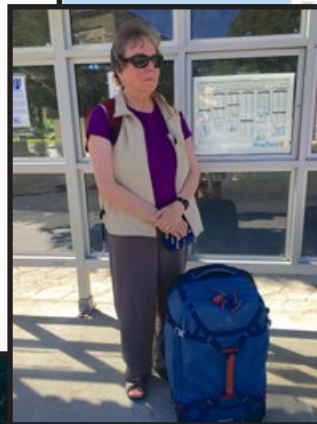
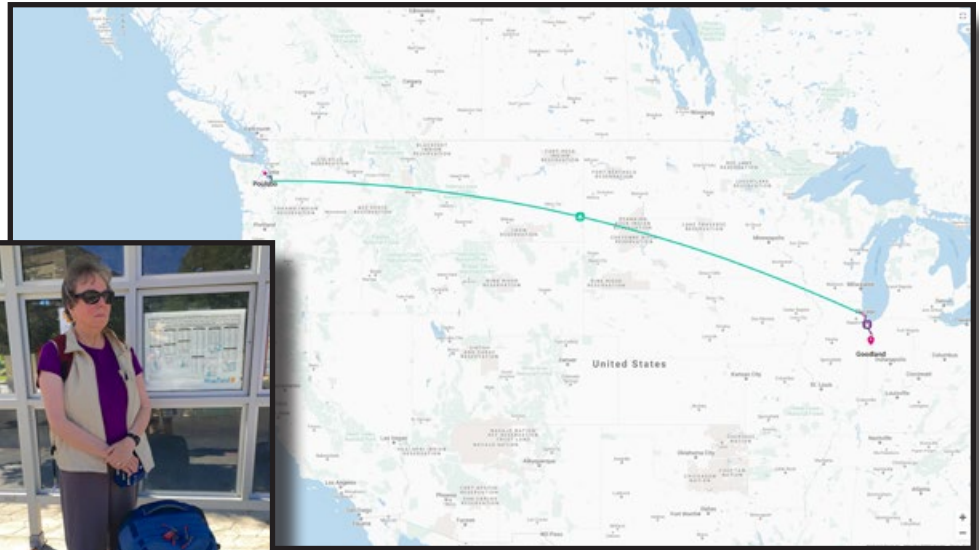




EUROPE 2016

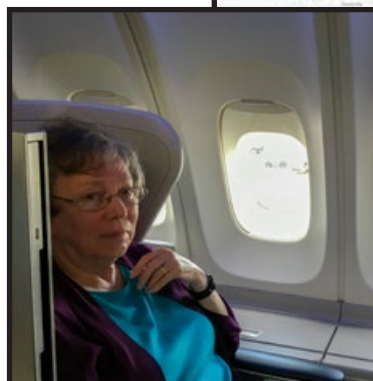
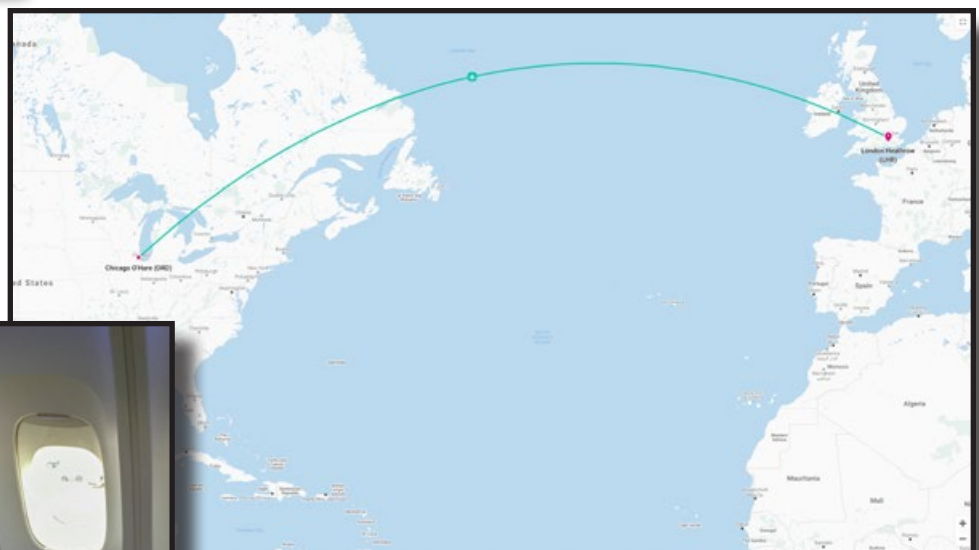
After a very sad day of losing Ani our cat, we left on August 17th to spend my sister Joanne's 75th Birthday with her. She had just been in a car accident so we didn't do much except sit around and talk.

On this trip we walked from our Poulsbo house to a bus stop about 5 minutes away and took public transportation to the airport; a bus from Poulsbo to the Bainbridge Island to Seattle ferry, we walked from the Seattle ferry terminal to a light rail station where we then took the light rail to SeaTac (the Seattle-Tacoma Airport).



We did take a car trip to Nappanee to visit the Newmar RV factory. We saw the Amish horse and buggies and visited the Amish market.

We flew out of Chicago to London on 8/27. Another long flight but we did fly in business class and had our own 'pods'.





From London on, until we returned via air from Budapest, all our travel was by train, UBER, taxi, bus or by foot.

After leaving the airport we took a train through the Chunnel to Brussels, Belgium.

We were to meet up with Tom and Bev Layton in Brugge at the apartment we rented but lo and behold we ran into them at the Brussels train station! We then took the train together to Brugge Belgium and officially started our Europe trip with Tom & Bev.



Brugge is a beautiful town with lots of canals. In 1999, when we were in northern Thailand, we met a couple from Brugge in Pai. We had rented a car in Chiang Mai and drove to Pai where we were staying a few days to explore that area. We wanted to go a bit off the main roads but were apprehensive of doing so on our own. When we met this couple from Brugge, we asked if they would like to come along as a sort of safety in numbers effort. Over the course of those travels they invited us to look them up in Brugge should we ever get there. While we still remember them and enjoyed their company, over the years their contact information was lost so we were not able to fold them into our Brugge adventures. None the less, we enjoyed Brugge doing the appropriate amount of beer tasting, eating, wandering about, photographing, shopping and such.



Bev enjoyed the Belgium waffles with pearl sugar (and other sugared toppings) when and where ever she could!





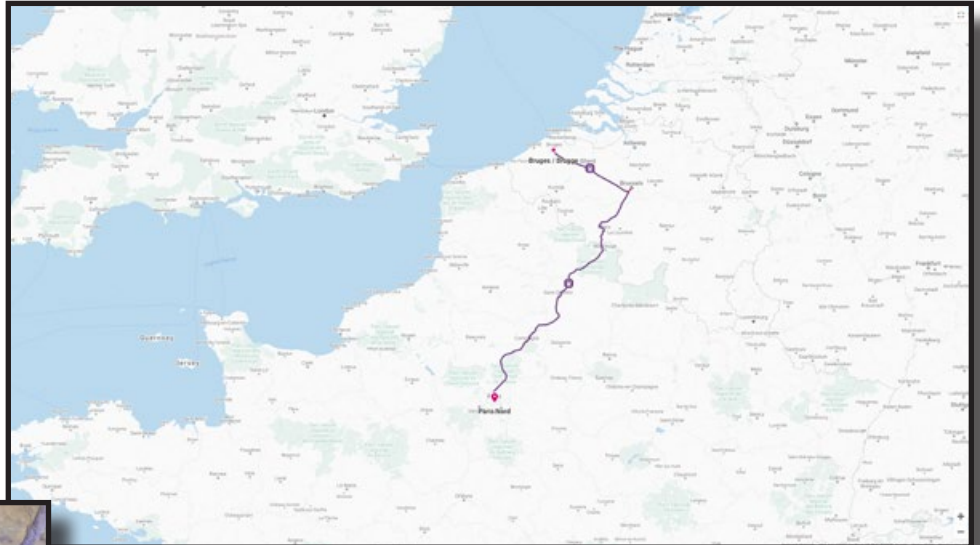


On 8/30 we took a side trip to Ghent and saw the castle and cathedral.

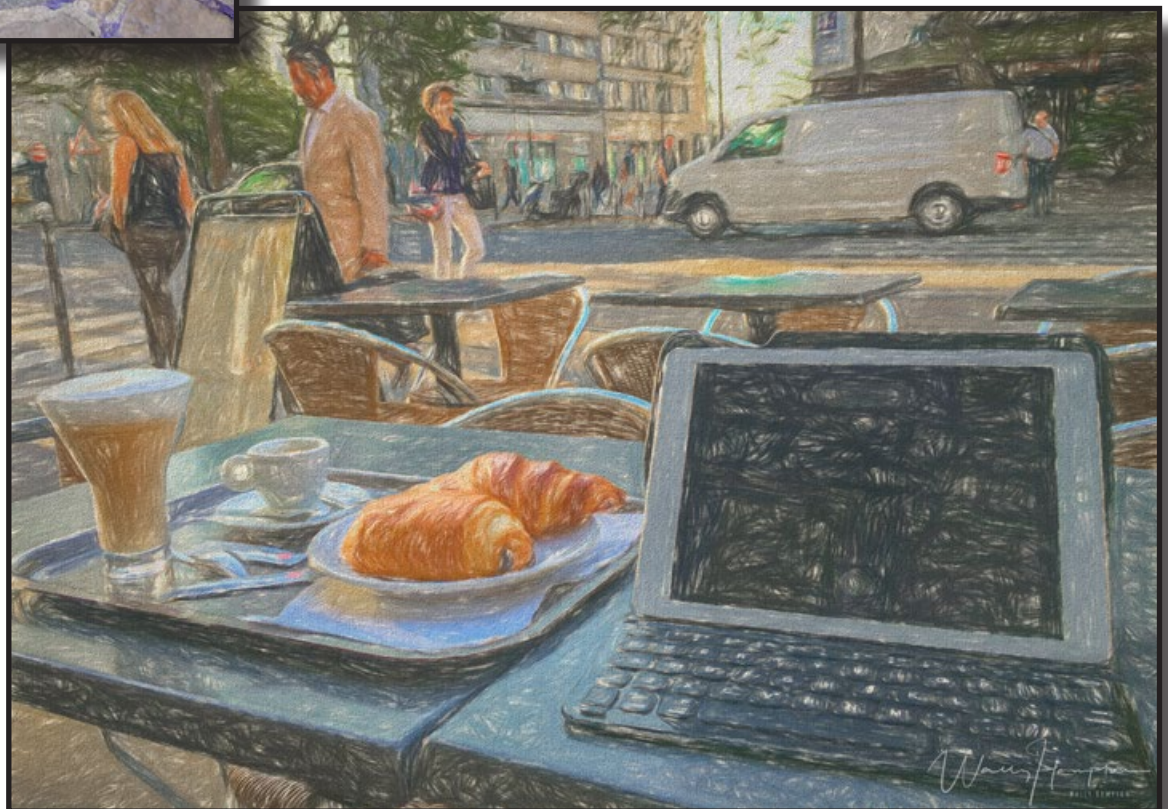




On 9/1 we took a train to Paris to visit Brenda and Hugh.



And finally some decent croissants (as compared to those where we live) and an appropriate Situation Room where I could be a true French flaneur.





We went to Pere Lachese (cemetery) and again experienced the incredible sculptures on the tombs and commemorating the horrors of the concentration camps.

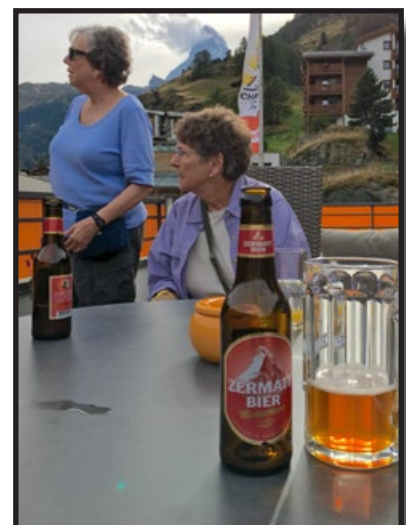




On 9/3 we took the train from Paris to Zermatt, Switzerland and to the views of the incredible Matterhorn.



We had a rooftop lounge on top of our hotel where we spent the afternoon.





From Zermatt we were going onto Salzburg, but broke up that train ride by stopping overnight in Sargans, Switzerland. The first section to Sargens was to Chur, Switzerland on the famous Glacier Express train.

The Glacier Express is a direct train connecting railway stations of the two major mountain resorts of Zermatt and St. Moritz via Andermatt in the central Swiss Alps. The train is not an “express” in the sense of being a high-speed train, but rather, in the sense that it provides a one-seat ride for an 8-hours-long end-to-end 291 km (181 mi) journey, and omits stops made by local trains. The Glacier Express is known as the slowest express train in the world. We did not continue on the Glacier Express all the way to St. Moritz, getting off in Chur and taking a different train on to Sargans.



It was cloudy and rainy for the entire trip but we still had a few glimpses of the grand views the Glacier Express offers. We will have to go back and try this again on a clear day.



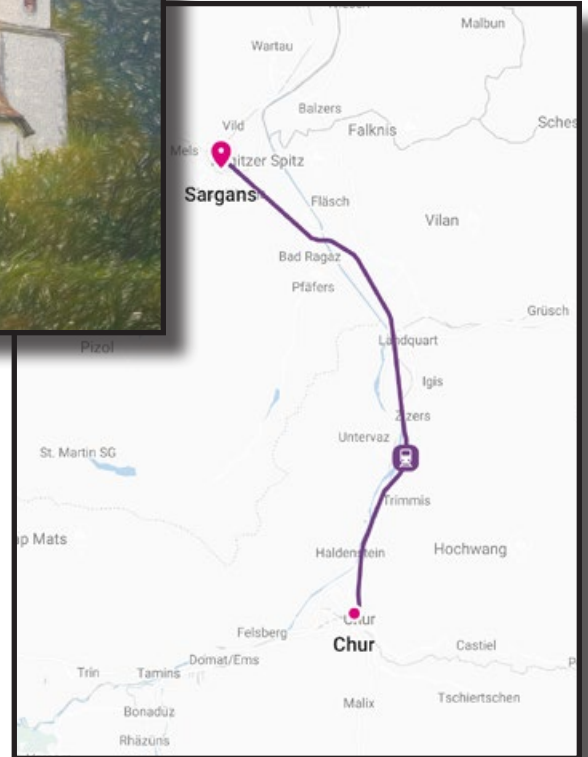
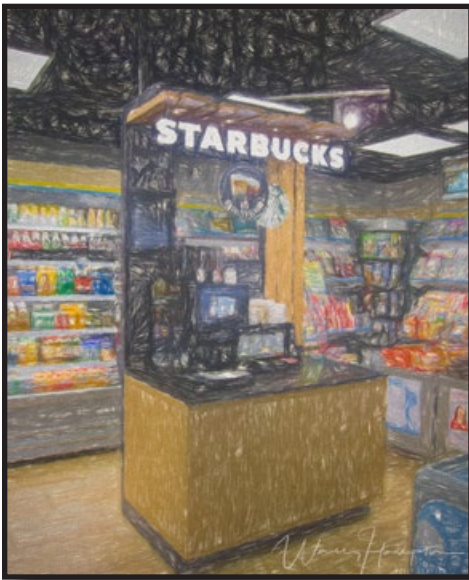
The mascot adorned service cart on the Glacier Express.



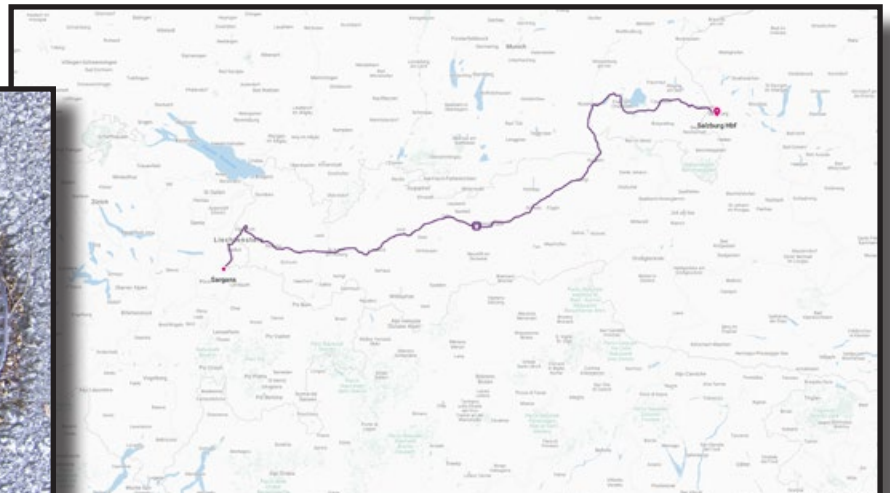


After a short train ride from Chur to Sargans, we walked to our lodging a couple blocks from the train station, checked in and took a short walk around the small village.

In the train station we found the smallest Starbucks cafe in the world and it was 100% self serve, (essentially a Starbucks kiosk).

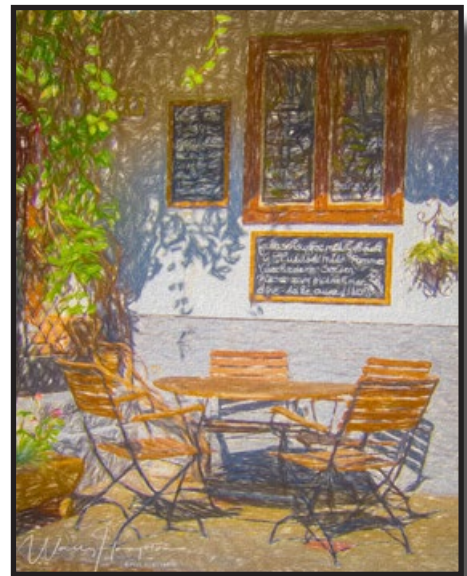
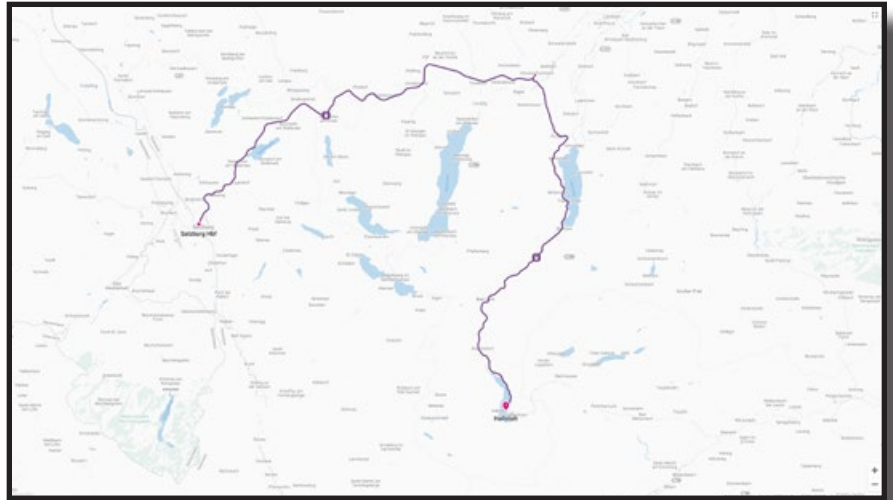


The next day we travelled on to Salzburg.

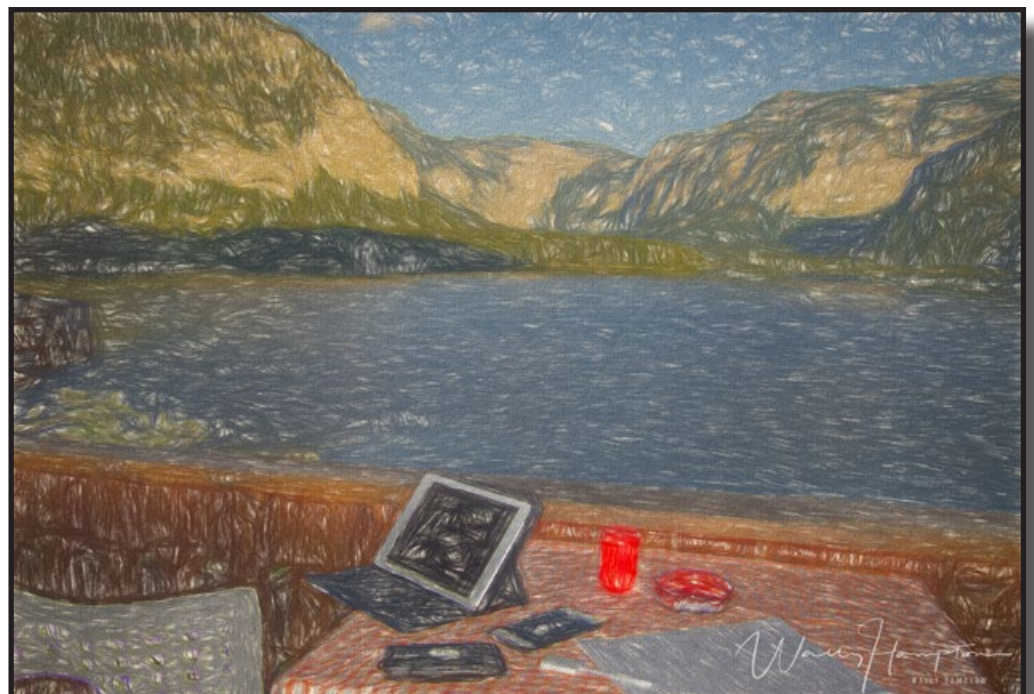




On 9/8 we went to Hallstatt, Austria. We had to take a boat to our hotel. The town is accessible by car but it was much nicer to take the ferry from the train station. While there, we took a boat tour of the lake.



Our hotel had a nice balcony where we could sit, enjoy the lake view and watch people below in the street.

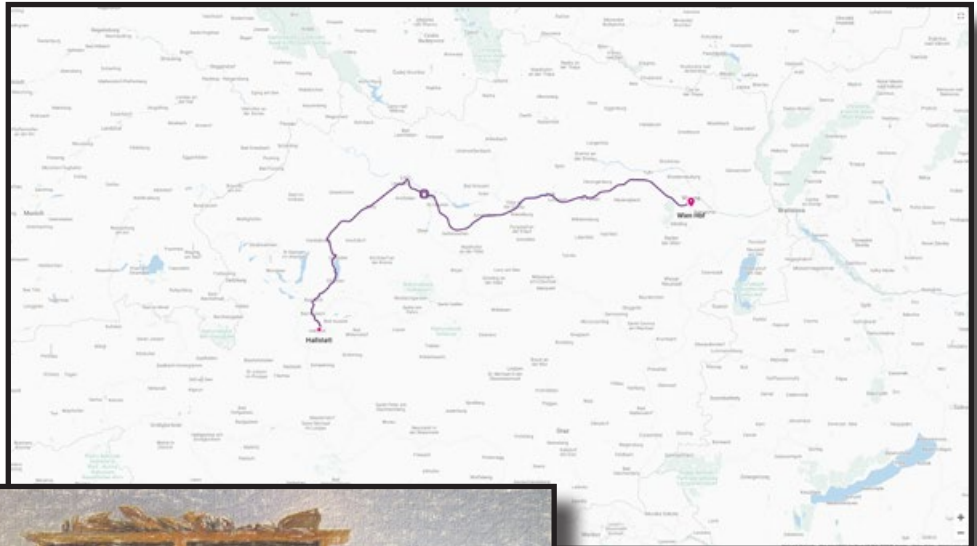




We left Hallstatt on 9/10 for Vienna, a beautiful city with a huge cathedral and very ornate architecture.

We went to the Sacher hotel for their sachertorte. Yummy! The dining room was dripping in red velvet!

We walked by the Central Café where many famous people went in the late 1800's, but it wasn't until years later on another trip that we went in for coffee and croissants.



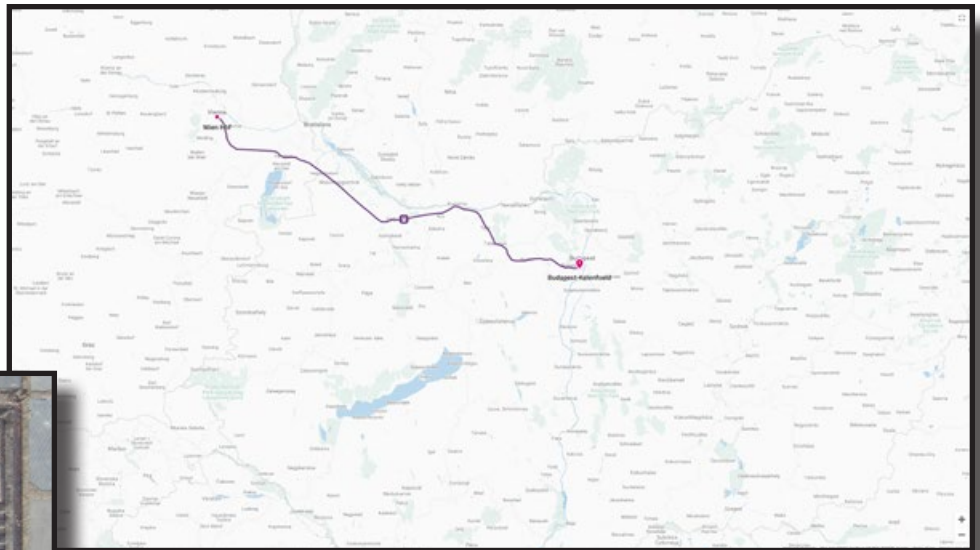
Wendy and I did find a nice Situation Room that we frequented while we were there.





We left Vienna for Budapest and our final leg of the European journey on 9/13. Budapest is another beautiful city with incredible architecture.

We had an apartment near the market and spent a lot of time there sampling foods and buying trinkets. We both went to the famous Rudas Baths and had massages. One evening we all took a night-time cruise through Budapest on the Danube River.



We spent time at the Holocaust Memorial Center (in Hungarian, Holokauszt Emlékközpont). It is a renovated synagogue that dates back to the 1920s and serves as a memorial and museum for and about Hungarian Jews that were murdered in the Holocaust. While largely focused on Jews, the museum also mentions the discrimination and killings of Romani, homosexuals, and the disabled.

The Holocaust Memorial Center is a former synagogue, the Páva Synagogue. It is a national institution established by the Government in 1999 and renovated and opened as the memorial and museum in 2004.

It is the first Holocaust Memorial Center in Central Europe founded by a state. The museum was designed by architect István Mányi and Attila Gáti. Architecturally, the building is asymmetrical. A set of stairs lead visitors to the exhibitions, meant to "symbolize the distorted and twisted time of The Holocaust."

A wall in the courtyard of the Holocaust Memorial Center is inscribed with the names of 60,000 of Hungary's approximately 600,000 victims of the genocide.

To the right are two detail images of the *Emanuel Tree (Tree of Life)* located behind the Dohány Street Synagogue. The weeping willow memorial has the names of 30,000 Hungarian Holocaust victims inscribed in the tree's metal leaves.

Each metal tag has a name of a person that perished in one of the concentration camps. Very emotional...

American actor Tony Curtis — whose father, Emanuel Schwartz, was a Hungarian Jew — provided the funds for the memorial.





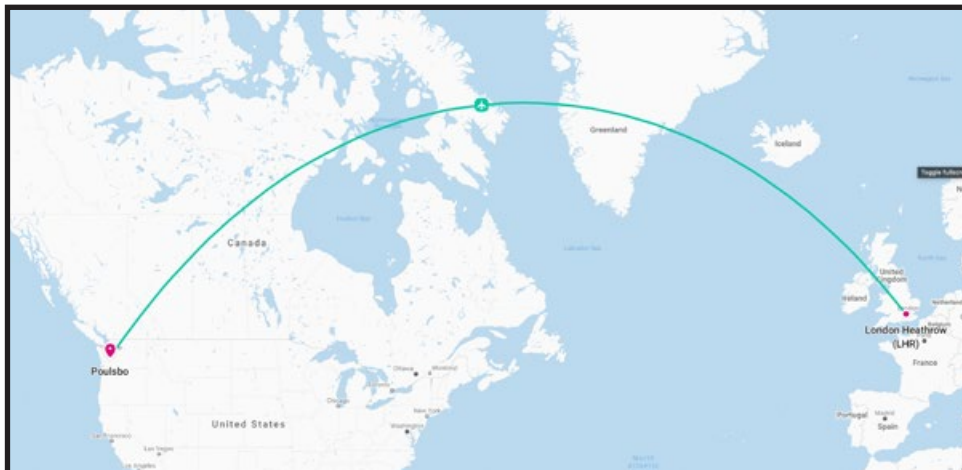
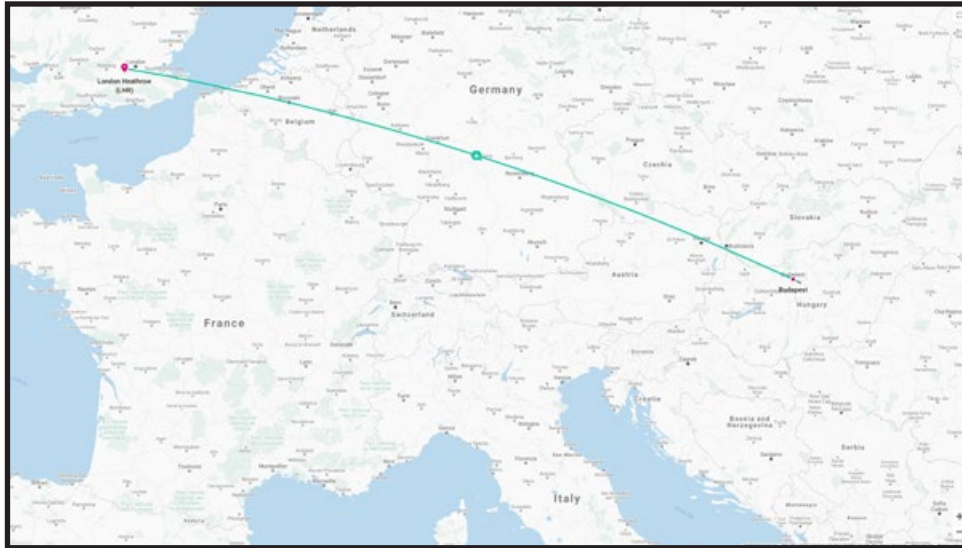
Shoes on the Danube Bank is another of the several Holocaust Memorials in Budapest. It is 60 pairs of cast-iron shoes, placed on the edge of the Danube's bank to remember the Budapest Jews who were killed there by members of the Hungarian Arrow Cross Party (Hungarian fascists). They ordered victims to remove their shoes before shooting them, with their bodies falling into the river and drifting away. The memorial has shoes of all sizes, including children's shoes, setting off a cascade of emotions.



After the reign of terror by the Arrow Cross (Hungarian fascists) and the starvation following the siege, 2281 of the victims were buried in twenty four mass graves in the garden.



To end our trip we flew from Budapest to London then back to Seattle.



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