

There are always mixed feelings when moving on. Some sadness with leaving a wonderful place, but also the excitement of going to another new destination. Slovenia might have seemed like an unusual place to go, but we have absolutely loved it. I have no doubt we'll be back.

Today's journey should have been a simple train ride with a quick change at Schwarzach St Veit in Austria. It turned out to be a little more complicated, but amazingly we arrived just a few minutes later than scheduled. The train station was 20 minutes walk from our apartment, so we had always planned to take a taxi. Andy had found an app to call a taxi, but for the first time the cab that arrived was too small for our bags. The car was huge but the boot was small, the complete opposite of the Fiat in Rome. So Matt and I jumped in the first cab and the driver called a second one for the others.



Waiting for the taxi – the hat covers a fountain

When we got to the station, the number and time on our ticket didn't match anything on the departures board. There was one that was close, so we double checked with the ticket office

who confirmed it was the right train. It was slightly delayed so we had fun watching all the trains, which were quite different from other countries. It was also the only main station we have seen where the staff just wandered across the tracks.





This was the only train I had booked that I hadn't been able to make seat reservations on. There was no problem making a reservation for the section after the change, but that was half an hour and the first stretch was over three hours. We were hoping it wasn't too busy, especially with all our luggage and Matt still pretty whacked out. What we found was a crazy party train. It was an older compartment style train, and every compartment was full of partying Croatians. The corridors were packed as well and no one could move. It certainly wasn't what we expected at 9:30 in the morning, but this lot must have left Zagreb at 7am and the party was in full swing. They were well prepared with trolleys for their drink, which was being wheeled through the train. It was all pretty funny, but the novelty would have worn off after a few hours.

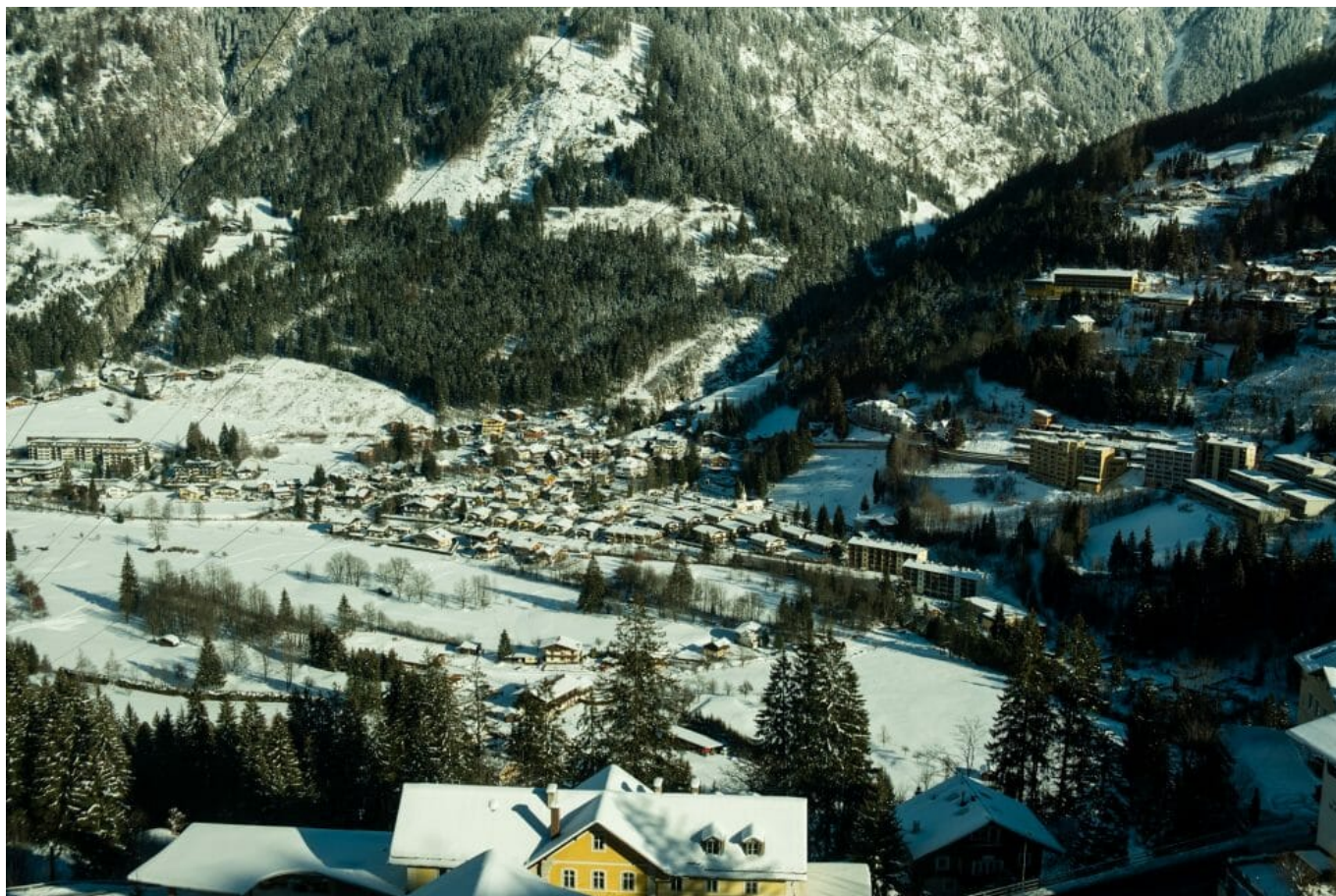
The first class compartments were virtually empty, so we moved down there while we hatched a plan. Andy went in search of the conductor to see if we could upgrade our tickets. He very kindly said we could stay in first class free of charge, so we thought we were sorted. Apart from the distant singing and a lot of police on the train, it all seemed pretty normal. We had an unusually long stop at Jesenice, and then suddenly realised the partying

Croatians were all gone. We still don't know whether the police kicked them off the train or that was their intended destination. Soon after there was an announcement that our train would terminate early at Villach, just over the Austrian border. The reason given was "just for today", so we suspect it may have had something to do with the train needing to be hosed out!

Another train arrived a bit later to pick us up so we could continue our journey. This was a lot more civilised with normal seats and normal passengers. By this time we had no idea how late we were running and whether we would make our connection in Austria. The journey through the mountains was another beautiful train ride. Austria has had nearly three metres of snow already this year so it was a winter wonderland.



Train views



Passing ski resorts

We were late to our connection station, but it looked like we would still make the next train. We checked the board on arrival, only to find our next train had been cancelled. But the Austrians don't let a bit of snow bring them to a standstill, and a replacement Postbus arrived at the scheduled train time. As we drove towards Zell am See we could see why the trains weren't going - the tracks were completely buried in snow. They get things cleared pretty quickly here, but I guess small regional lines are lower priority and the weather is extreme. We pulled up outside Zell am See train station only 4 minutes later than scheduled.



A quick taxi ride through the snowy town took us to our apartment. It was great to arrive and know we have a whole week in one place. The City Express lift is over the road, along with the ski hire and ski school. We had a late lunch at a nearby restaurant - Wiener schnitzel, parsley potatoes and cranberry sauce of course! The rest of the afternoon was spent organising ski gear and getting groceries. We were all pretty tired after another day travelling so had a light dinner at home and crashed early.



Our home for a week



Balcony View