

On Saturday we left our little village behind and travelled north for part II of our Austrian adventure. We were bound for the village of Bichlbach in the Tyrol region of Austria, but got there via Germany. The borders wiggle around in strange directions and that was the quickest route.

Sommerrodelbahns (summer luges) are popular in Austria. We had great memories of riding one in the 1990s and were keen to take the kids to one. The only drawback with them is that they only operate in fine weather. There was a good one en route to the Tyrol, about an hour into our journey. We called in there as the rain had stopped, but it wasn't operating so we continued our journey. There is a sommerrodelbahn near where we are staying so we decided to head straight there as the forecast was for clearing weather.

Just after we passed through the German town of Bad Tolz, Anna spied another sommerrodelbahn at Blomberg. The weather was lovely and the luge was operating, so we decided to grab our chance and ride that one. It's quite different to the luge in Rotorua as you go down in a fibreglass chute. It's very slippery and I have no doubt that you would fly out of the chute if your speed got out of control. We had a giggle at the start of the luge tracks as we received our luge driving lesson. It was given entirely in German and we all managed to convince the luge man that we knew how to drive the luge even though we didn't understand a single word of the lesson! It was nice to be in a place that wasn't set up for tourists, it was a real locals attraction.







The luge was a great way to break the journey and it was only another hour before we reached Bichlbach. We stayed in this region back in the 1990s and it was one of our favourites. I was a little worried that my memories were better than reality, but as soon as we arrived those worries disappeared. There are lots of mountains around us, but the dominating landmark is the Zugspitze mountain. When we arrived at our Bichlbach apartment, we were thrilled to find we had a view of the Zugspitze from our balcony. It is hard to believe we have a beautiful and spacious two bedroom apartment with a view like that for less than NZD100 a night!







We have free use of mountain bikes here so we explored our village on bikes after we had unpacked. Later on I went for a longer bike ride in search of a restaurant for dinner. The network of cycle trails here is extensive and I biked down the valley to two other villages. It was such a beautiful ride and will be remembered as a highlight of this trip. It was a stunning warm evening so we drove to Lermoos in the hope we would find a restaurant with a view of the Zugspitze. We succeeded in our mission, finding a restaurant with delicious food and a million dollar view. The photos below show the view from the sun terrace where we ate our dinner and my meal of lamb cutlets and other goodies. All three dishes in the photo below were mine! It was a perfect evening in a beautiful part of Austria, it was so good to be back here.



