



from San José
SJC → SEA → AMS → BRU

SJC ← SEA ← AMS ←
to San José

European river/canal tour
April 13 - May 17, 2025



**I travel with
my sister-in-law, Marit,
and her husband, Ed.**



Begin in Brussels, staying near the "Grand Place"



surrounded by gilded Guild Halls,



and beautiful churches (like Notre Dame Du Sablon).



I take the train to Antwerp, and meet up with Marit & Ed at the McDonalds.



We explore Antwerp and see Guild Houses



(with rooftop ornaments showing their specialties),



and "street art" (!)



The windows of Antwerp's Cathedral of Our Lady.



**Our cruise begins in Antwerp.
Before continuing, a quick tour of our boat, "L'Europe":**



The main lounge,



and there's a 2nd, smaller and quieter lounge,



with a small rear-facing deck.



On top is sun deck, which was seldom used due to cold weather and low bridges.



The dining hall is on the lower level.



We're in Holland, and there are tulips.



It's peak tulip season.



Awk! There's no escape: more tulips!



Amsterdam



We go on a tour of Amsterdam by a small canal boat.



Okay, back on dry land, exploring town on foot.



Zaanse Schans, an outdoor museum.



Real windmills have sails held by the latticework blades, and the entire assembly is rotated to face the wind.



Third day in Amsterdam: cold & dreary, perfect for a museum.



We go see the Van Goghs.



Then back to the boat and heading off to the next town.



the Cologne Cathedral,





Time to explore the Rhine,



with castles and quaint towns.



St. Marien Church

CAFÉ HOTEL HAUSER

RHEINHOTEL

Hotel Restaurant Cafe

Hotel





We board buses and go to Heidelberg Castle.





Looking down, we see the town below, with the Church of the Holy Spirit.



Strasbourg: let's go see the E.U. Parliament Building.



We go to central Strasbourg to the plaza by the Cathedral.



[from there, the Cathedral looks immense!]



...it even has an astronomical clock.



The Mainz Cathedral.



We've left the Rhine and now are on the Main (pronounced "mine") River, and Frankfurt, a city of modern skyscrapers.



Frankfurt also has
Classic medieval "half-timbered" buildings,



FRANKFURT LIEGT AM MAINSTRAND AM
RHEINSTRAND LIEGWESI ZUM BESSER MAGEN
GEWIRT VERSTAND KRITISCHEN KANN JEDER ESSE!

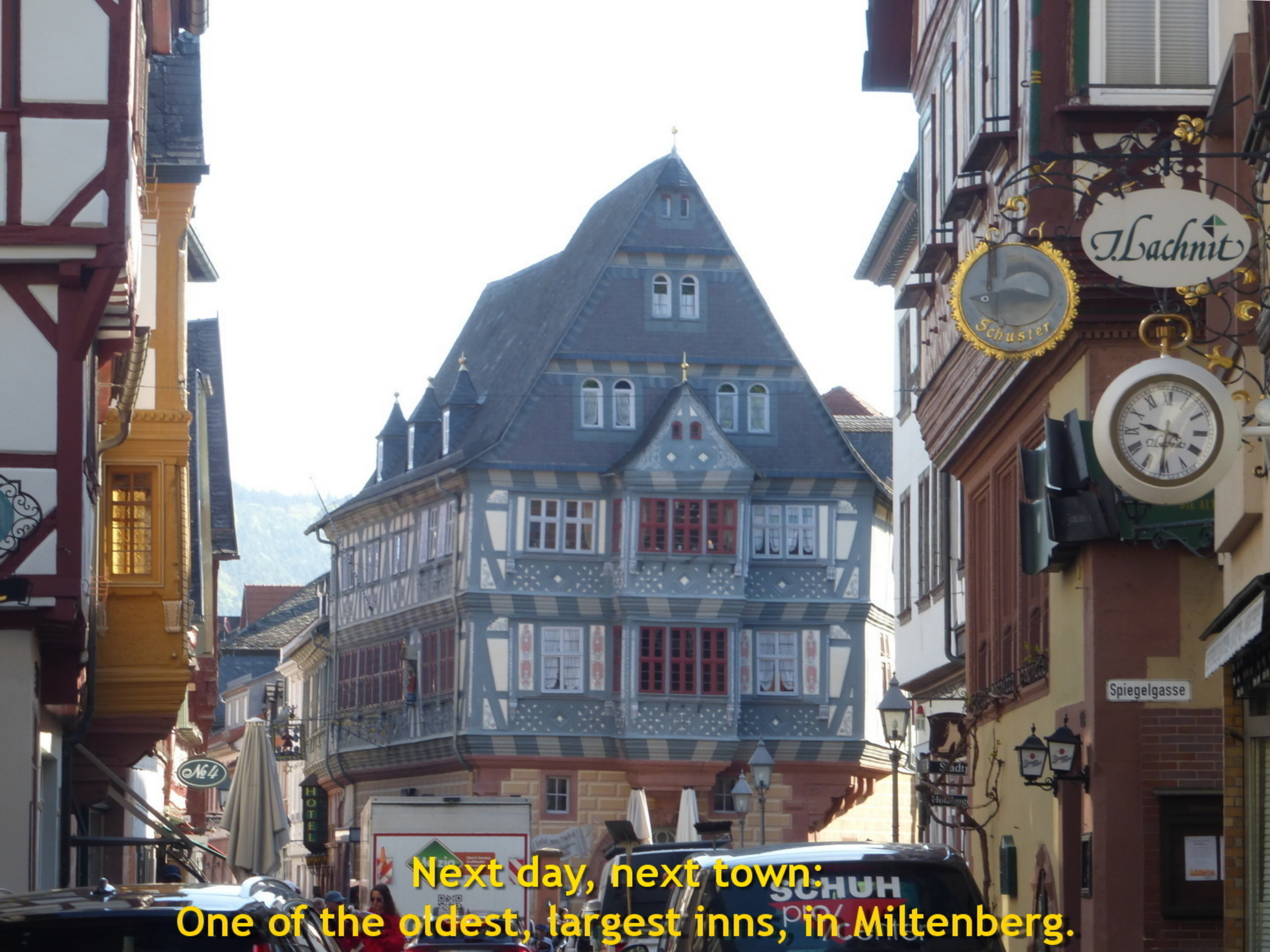
Haus zur Flechte.

ETER MUSEUM

FRIEDRICH STOLTZE

WIRTSGASSE
AM MAINSTRAND

... all restored after the WW-II bombings.



Next day, next town:
One of the oldest, largest inns, in Miltenberg.



Back on the Main, cruising to our next town,



Wertheim am Main.



Another day, another town:
Würzburg, and a grand "Residence" ...



-- and a room of mirrors.



-- walk back into town, ...




**and visit the Wurzburg cathedral
-- which features a menorah inside a Catholic cathedral (!)**



The medieval town of Rothenburg.



Approaching a lock on the Main-Danube Canal



Next, we visit Regensburg, on the old trade route. Regensburg was a =rich= medieval town, built of stone rather than common (cheap) half-timbers.



How rich? They built towers, just to show that they had to money to do so.



"Ha! I got you all beat!"



We pass by a small village with a traditional Maypole.



We pass Krems, where my nephew got married in 2004.



We arrive in Vienna at twilight, and search for a docking space.



Hofburg: Imperial Palace



**In Vienna,
We go to the St. Stephen's Cathedral**





We tour the Schönbrunn Palace,



home of Austrian Emperor Franz I and Empress Elisabeth.



Go back through town to our ship



and quietly glide beneath "the UFO bridge" and on to our next destination.



In Budapest, find a store selling Rubik cubes ... in any size and shape imaginable!



We have a "free morning,"
and we hop on the subway,



and we go to Memento Park: a museum of their Soviet past.



An East-German Trabant.





We also explored Budapest's "Great Market Hall."



We see the Hungarian Parliament Building as we leave Budapest.



Road trip: we go to Osijek, Croatia



TRG
VATROSLAVA
LISINSKOG

EKIPA
3UG2
K...

Not exactly a lively town.



in Osijek: the Co-Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul,



with gargoyles.



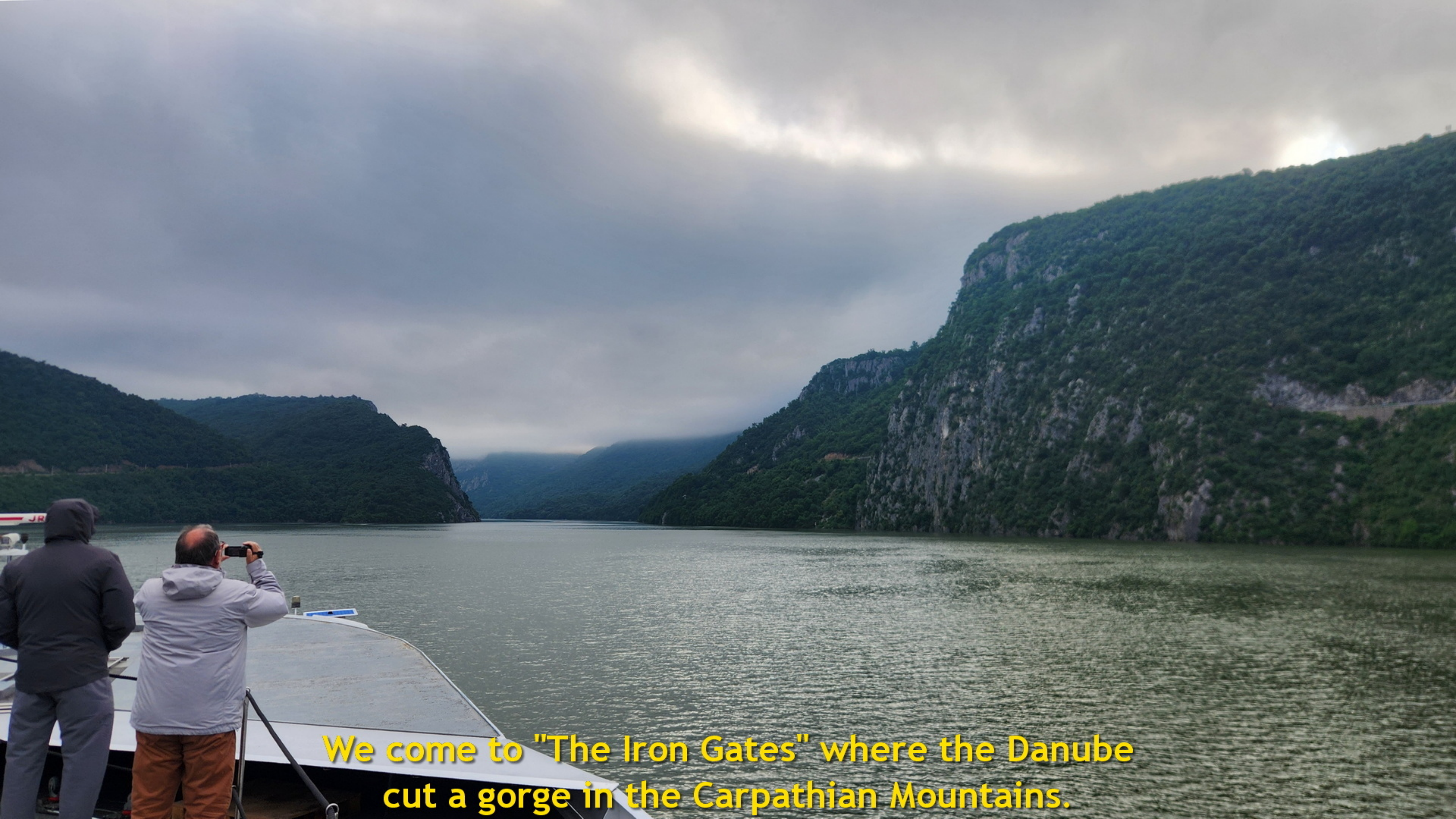
We go to war-torn Vukovar on the Danube, and get back on our boat.



We go on a road trip to Sremski Karlovci and the Orthodox Cathedral of St. Nicholas. The cathedral has a wall of icons rather than stained glass windows,



and very limited seating.



We come to "The Iron Gates" where the Danube cut a gorge in the Carpathian Mountains.





Another road trip, this time to Veliko Tarnovo, capital of the Second Bulgarian Empire from 1185 to 1393.



Eastern Orthodox churches favor paintings to stained glass windows.



Bucharest, Romania:
Palace of the Parliament, by dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu:
the world's second largest building, behind only the Pentagon.



**Constanta, Romania:
a busy and industrial port on the Black Sea.**



Relaxing on the shore of the Black Sea.



Celebrate the end of the cruise with a gala dinner!



After 31 days together, this is the parting of the ways



The cruise is over. Marit, Ed and I return to Bucharest and see the interior of the St. Demetrius-Postă Church,



and Pasajul Macca-Vilacrosse -- an arcade built in 1891.



Marit, Ed and I go out for a nice steak dinner,



and then the waiters break out into a dance.



I have a =very= early, =very= long flight in the morning! Good night and goodbye!