



**Your on the
Street Reporter**



Uyless Black

**Cruising the Danube River
Wrap Up**

Cruising the Danube River

Contents

Report One: Getting Started

Report Two: Bucharest, Romania

Report Three: Bulgaria

Report Four: Iron Gate

Report Five: Belgrade, Serbia. Touring the City

Report Six: Belgrade, Serbia. The Fortress and Saint Sava Cathedral

Report Seven: Vukovar and Osijek, Croatia

Report Eight: Landscape of Hungary and the Puszta

Report Nine: Budapest, Hungary

Report Ten: Prague, Czech Republic

Report Eleven: Wrap-up

Cruising the Danube River Wrap Up

October 6, 2013

Today, we returned to the United States from the Danube River cruise. North Idaho seemed far away. My friends from the east coast of America tell me north Idaho is far away, in more ways than one. I ignore their jabs. They suffer from geographical envy, smog, and traffic jams.

No matter, our river cruise was a fine way to spend a couple weeks. And having the opportunity to visit so many countries and cities in only two weeks leads me to recommend you to take this trip. For a refresher, this map shows the route the cruise took from Bucharest to Budapest.



As you likely know by now, I recommend the Viking River Cruise (VRC) line. We were not impressed with the dinner food. It was not up to the levels of the other meals and the overall high-quality service offered by VRC. One of our fellow passengers informed us that VRC offers fine dinners on other ships.

As mentioned earlier, if you take a VRC cruise, stay away from rooms that are directly underneath the top deck. The sounds of walkers and joggers can be heard through the room's ceiling. But overall, we were happy and believed the fee for the cruise to be reasonable.

A Tin Cup of Oppression

I now keep on my desk a replica of the tin cups used by prisoners in the Budapest House of Terror (See the figure below). The cup reminds me of the stories I heard about the countless war related sufferings that have occurred in the countries we visited; some ancient and some recent. It also reminds me of the good fortune I have had to be born in a country that has mostly escaped the repeated carnages experienced in many parts of Europe.



A reminder of how good I have it.

While watching the news on television, with coverage about the discontent of many American citizens regarding America, I take solace by looking at this cup. I also wish American malcontents would occasionally pause and reflect on just how good they have it.

Certainly, we have profound problems in America. Many of our prisons are disgraces. So are the denials of speedy trials, the perversions of plea bargaining, anti-republican gerrymandering, and the huge number of incarceration rates. The excesses of Wall Street discredit the idea of meritorious free enterprise. As well, torture does happen in some of our prisons.

But we continuously work to solve or at least remedy these problems. In many countries, oppressive prisons, denial of trials, and outright torture are systemic to their culture. As one person put it: “America’s practice of politics may stink, but it smells better than most countries.”

I would add another observation. In a *Fortune Magazine* article (April 1975), Max Ways said, “Democracy is like a raft: You never sink, but damn it, your feet are always in the water.”

We have a deep core of individuals who are ignorant of the blessings bestowed on them by being born in this country. We have a significant cadre of people who, if given the opportunity, would relegate blacks, Latinos, and other non-white people to positions of social and economic servitude.

America’s malcontents should take the two statements above into account before they take to the streets or expose their ignorance on the Internet.

I hope you enjoyed these reports about a part of Eastern Europe. It was my pleasure to write them. It was pleasurable to have an item removed from my bucket list: Cruising the Danube River.

Perhaps we will come across each other someday. In the meantime, Blog.UylessBlack.com will have my writings posted about other trips and adventures. I look forward to hearing from you. Send to....yes, I am still loyal to an antiquated Internet service provider: UBlack7510@aol.com.