

FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR
15:00 → 17:00 LW → BRN	18:00 → 20:00 AR → BRN	19:00 → 21:00 LW → BRN	20:00 → 22:00 LW → BRN	21:00 → 23:00 LW → BRN	22:00 → 24:00 LW → BRN	23:00 → 01:00 LW → BRN
18:00 → 20:00 BRN → LW	19:00 → 21:00 BRN → LW	20:00 → 22:00 BRN → LW	21:00 → 23:00 BRN → LW	22:00 → 24:00 BRN → LW	23:00 → 01:00 BRN → LW	00:00 → 02:00 BRN → LW
25:00 → 27:00 LW → BRN	26:00 → 28:00 LW → BRN	27:00 → 29:00 LW → BRN	28:00 → 30:00 LW → BRN	29:00 → 31:00 LW → BRN	30:00 → 02:00 LW → BRN	01:00 → 03:00 LW → BRN
2:00 → 4:00 LW → BRN	3:00 → 5:00 LW → BRN	4:00 → 6:00 LW → BRN				

09-11-1992 – St. Louis MO

Not even out of the country & I've been hit by price shock: \$8.00 for a sandwich & a coke at the airport restaurant.

Ambassador class seating is great! (747)

JFK – first image: Crowded & dingy. Very big but not very attractive. In a word: Utilitarian.

Aircraft to Berlin: L-1011

Had a hard time getting comfortable – only managed a few periods of sleep. Woke up near midnight (St. Louis time) – just in time to watch the dawn break over the northern tip of the UK

My first view of Norway was a spectacular 37,000-foot panorama of the Western coast as the sun climbed higher into the sky. What a rugged and beautiful sight – broken clouds with white mist settled into the valleys between the mountains. I am really looking forward to seeing Norway from the ground.

Stopped in Copenhagen – most of the passengers got off there. Those of us that remained went through a very thorough security check – had to stay at our seats with all our carry-on luggage while the remainder of the plane was searched.

Only about 5 people got on for the 40-minute flight to Berlin.

09-12-1992 - Berlin, Germany

Arrived at Tegel Airport – was greeted by a jetway that wouldn't work, so had to wait for steps. Was cloudy, about 60 degrees. Customs was a breeze – no forms, no stamping of passports, no luggage search.

Took the bus downtown (3 Dm), along with a lot of other passengers. Got off at the correct stop & walked ~ 4 blocks to the Hotel Domus. The convertible suitcases worked great, although by this time fatigue was taking its toll on Kathleen's (and probably my) cheerful disposition.

The room was not yet ready, so we stored our bags & set out to see the city.

Walked down the Kurfürstenstrasse Avenue of stores. Noticed that many shoppers appeared to have been making purchases. Had bratwurst for lunch before dragging ourselves back to our now ready room where we napped for 3 hours. Showered & rested, we are ready to set back out.

Took pictures of the view out of the hotel room, looking right and left.

Viewed the remains of a church (built in the early 1800's) that had been bombed during WWII. The devastation that this area of Berlin underwent because of bombing is staggering.

Had a good meal at Jahrmarkt – & ordered off the daily menu (Pork!) and loved it. Then we walked around - seemingly with half of the tourists in Berlin. The number of people on the street is almost beyond belief! We were both tired & turned in around 11 pm.

09-13-1992 – Berlin

Phew! What a day! Had a hard time waking up this morning: set the alarm for 8:00, so I had better than 8 hours of sleep, but my body did not feel ready to wake up I guess.

Breakfast is included in the Hotel & was quite good. Hard rolls, soft boiled eggs & delicious ham & cheese. Very good!

We went over our itinerary for the rest of the stay & Poland & altered things a bit. We then marched purposely to the train station to purchase the tickets to & from Poland. What a mess! We ended up in the wrong line several times: when we finally did get into the correct one our purchases held things up for quite some time (apparently, they are not used to selling tickets for Polish trains). We actually had one man come up & tell us (quite heatedly) that we should have booked a travel agent rather than hold up the line for so long. I don't blame him, but what we were doing wasn't that complicated (Berlin – Warsaw – Krakow & return, plus the leg to Copenhagen) but it took a while.

Then we had to figure out the phones so we could call to make hotel reservations: more confusion ensued. We finally figured out how to dial internationally but couldn't get through to Poland. Had no problem with Copenhagen though.

We then (finally, as by now it was around 3 pm) headed out for some sightseeing.

We walked through the Tiergarten (a large park) towards what used to be East Berlin. The park was beautiful, and had several beautiful statues, but what filled my soul with awe (and my eyes with tears) was the East end of the park, which until recently was behind the Iron Curtain. They are now building a road of some sort where a portion of the wall once stood. I walked through the construction & back again without another person paying even the slightest bit of attention to me. Not too long ago I would have been shot for daring to attempt the same simple act. I was, and still am, deeply moved by the experience, and by the difference a few years can make.

We continued on into the former East zone. What architecture we saw! Stunning churches, the Palace of Frederick the Great. Commercialism seems to have rushed in to fill the void left by the retreat of Communism. Neon signs most familiar to any American seemed to be everywhere. Also, city is filled with dark-skinned, dark haired people (I cannot tell their country of origin) selling all manner of trinkets. T-shirts, post cards, "genuine" Russian military clothing (if all the hats we saw were genuine there won't be a warm head in Moscow this winter!). and other junk.

Had a wonderful dinner in East Berlin on the bank of the Spree river, with the Berlin Cathedral as a backdrop. They served the most marvelous fried masked potatoes (Looked like tater tots) with my stuffed veal. Um!

Bought a number of post cards, so I had better get writing!

09-14-1992 – Berlin

Phew – what a night! On our way back to the hotel last night we stopped off at one of the many sidewalk cafés' that dominate the streetscape in downtown Berlin. We had stopped at several on previous occasions but left before even got waited on (after waiting 5 – 10 minutes). This time we got good service and stayed. Kathleen had coffee & cake while I enjoyed a beer, & we both watched the flow of humanity as it surged past us on the Ku'dam.

We did not go to bed until well past midnight, & both tossed and turned for some time before I finally fell to sleep. Well, as near as I can tell, Kathleen's body fell into a violent disagreement with the food that she had consumed. Her body won the battle but lost the war: the food was ejected, leaving Kathleen much the worst off when

morning broke. Heeding (perhaps too late) warnings against the Berlin water system I went out first thing in the morning to get some bottled water to help stave off her dehydration. Kathleen rested while I went to breakfast, then we both slept until noon before venturing out.

We had planned to go on a boat trip but decided to just wander around a part of town we hadn't explored yet instead. Found an outdoor mall of sorts frequented by locals – even shopped in a Woolworths!

Picked up some food for the trip into Poland on the way back to the hotel. Kathleen rested for awhile before we went back out for dinner, her first food for the day. Had a delightful meal at an Italian restaurant across the street from the hotel. Walked to the South of the hotel after dinner (the only direction we had not yet explored) and found several attractive pubs & restaurants. Maybe next time.

Have a 6:30 am train to catch, so we came back to the hotel to pack up, check out and get to bed early.

09-15-1992 - In-Route to Poland

As I sit in first class comfort on a train traveling from Berlin to Warsaw, then Krakow, I am suddenly struck by the remembrance that this same journey was probably made some 50 years ago by hundreds of thousands of less fortunate souls who never returned. It is a sobering and disquieting thought.

We were up early today, rising at 4:30 in order to make the early train. We had discussed taking the bus or S-Bahn to the station but decided to take the easy way out & go by cab. It turned out to be a great idea, as the train station was not by Tegel airport as we had both assumed (after an obviously too brief look at the map), but rather “in the East” in the words of our cab driver. This required a 20-minute (and 25 DM) trip through the dark and quiet streets of Berlin.

In spite of our consternation, we arrived at the correct station in plenty of time, and had no difficulty in finding our train, our car and our seats. So I am now sitting in our own compartment (we alone share the six seat non-smoking cabin), watching the day break over the East German countryside. The nearly full moon is still high in the sky and seems to be following us like a great protector.

We are both thrilled and excited to be on the first rail leg of our journey. So far it is everything that we imagined it would be.

Poland! My passport has received its first stamp as we crossed into Poland. We have been reading in a guidebook about what we must do in Warsaw to get our train reservations (we already have the tickets) and it does sound daunting. Long lines & a bewildering array of counters await us according to the book. We can only hope that they are talking about the height of the season and not when we are arriving!

Arrived at Warsaw Central to the accompaniment of the Eagles “Hotel California” piped in over the PA system. For some reason it reminded me of the helicopter on China Beach blaring “Born to be Wild”.

Anyway, we managed to get the rest of our reservations made with the assistance of a very nice English-speaking person who helped us while looked on in dismay at the length of the lines at the information booth. Things were a bit rushed, as the legendary European train was about 30 minutes late.

09-16-1992 - Krakow, Poland

More on the Warsaw experience... The train station was a truly bewildering experience, on the surface. There were no informational signs saying where anything was. We seemingly just went along with the tide of humanity, all the time wondering & worrying if we were going the right direction. We ended up in the main hall where the ticket line and information area were located by sheer luck.

We were helped by an English-speaking local & got into the correct line for our Warsaw-Krakow train reservations after trying to exchange our travelers checks & being told to “come back in 10 minutes”. All was going well with the reservations until we found that there was a fee involved (we had paid for the tickets in Berlin). I got back to the end of the line while Kathleen went to exchange money.

She tried to exchange a travelers check, and again got the “come back in 10 minutes” line. After watching someone exchange a Pound note she flashed some good American cash & got immediate service. We got our reservations, went to the International window and got our Warsaw – Berlin reservations, found our train & were on our way to Krakow!

Shared a compartment with an interesting woman who had left Poland 33 years ago (she appeared to be in her 60's) and now lives in Australia. She had traveled extensively & loved to talk. Every time Kathleen and I began to look at our book to find a hotel for Krakow she started to talk again!

We arrived [in Krakow] and decided to stay right downtown rather than stay on the outskirts of town as we had considered. We got off the train and walked the 4 blocks or so and found it with little difficulty. The room has only a sink, but the bathroom is on one side and the shower is on the other side [of our room] so it will do, especially for the price (400,000 Zl, or \$30)! Weird couch-like beds though.

Had dinner in the hotel restaurant and loved it! I had roast chicken, Kathleen had a stuffed cabbage. Delicious and cheap! I screwed up getting the change & gave the waiter a whopping extra \$3 tip!

Walked around some & looked at the city There is a massive wall & gate that was the original gate to the city, which was not bombed during the war & as a result is very old and beautiful with narrow and winding streets.

In Krakow

Had breakfast included in the room, although each additional cup of coffee cost 7000 Zl or about 50 cents. Booked a tour to Auschwitz (190,000 Zl each), took a quick walk around the city, and here I am on the bus!

American music is pervasive in Poland. Everywhere we go it is playing - in the restaurant, at the hotel check-in counter, and on the streets!

Auschwitz: Well, to begin with we got on the wrong bus. It must be common, because they went ahead & honored our tickets. One other guest in at our hotel did the same thing.

Stopped first at Birkenau, which was the large camp that processed most everyone. I was prepared for the inhumanity that was described but was staggered by the scale of the camp. The Germans burned most of it, and nothing has been restored, but there are a lot of buildings that survived. Even so, you can see that it was huge!

We then went on to Auschwitz, which was a Polish army facility before the war. It was mainly used to house forced laborers. Saw the unspeakably horrible conditions those poor people lived in, & the way that they were tortured. One could almost feel the evil that had maintained such a facility & do such things.

Going with a group was certainly more convenient, but it didn't allow you time to absorb the horror, terror & unspeakable suffering that had gone on there.

East Berlin had an immediate effect on me. This may take a while to digest.

Got back to town around 3:30 & spent the rest of the day sight seeing & shopping. Bought a T-shirt (60,000 Zl) and a set of stackable dolls for mom (120,000 Zl).

What a city! Everyone in the stores & restaurants is so friendly, and they all speak English. The old-world beauty of the buildings and narrow streets is simply marvelous. Our hotel is situated near the old city wall, in the older part

of a very old city. We went through the church that is part of the old royal residence – saw tombs from as far back as 1100. Something like 40 of the 44 Kings of Poland are buried there. Quite impressive.

Well, must pack up – have a 7:00 am train to Warsaw, where we will spend the day before catching an overnight train to Berlin, where we will kill a few hours before heading to Copenhagen.

09-17-1992 - Warsaw

Got up early (5:30 am), checked out and walked the short distance to the train station. Found our train with no difficulty and were soon on our way to Warsaw.

Interesting Note: we had to surrender our passports when we registered at the hotel in Krakow. I know I heaved a big sigh of relief when I got mine back.

Met a woman in her early 20's on the train. Turns out her mother is Polish, and her father is German. She has just finished medical school in Poland (she went there because it was free) but will practice in Germany. She was quite interesting and helped us get our bags checked in Warsaw and directed us to the correct bus (we arrived at 10:00 am).

We took the bus (#175) up to the old town. After a cup of coffee and a snack we set of walking. Bought a book of self-guided walking tours and did just that. The instructions were a little hard to follow, but we managed it.

Neither of us realized that Warsaw had been almost completely destroyed by the Nazis after the 1945 uprising (the book said 85% destroyed). As a result, utterly everything we saw was only about 50 years old, or less. Warsaw is Old, and most anything of significance has been destroyed and rebuilt 2 – 3 times. Amazing!

Also saw New town (build outside of the original city walls) as well as a lot of the rest of the city. Saw the changing of the guard at the tomb of the unknown soldier and the Saxon gardens.

We had to work at it a bit, but we also saw what remains of the old Warsaw Ghetto. There is a monument in a park, and a park around the bunker where the last of the defense was held, as well as a new monument at the location where 600,000 residents of the Ghetto were loaded aboard trains for transport. While walking back towards the train stations we stumbled across a museum (closed) that had a portion of the main gate still intact. We stopped a local couple and asked them what it was. They explained that it was a prison for Poles that was later also used for Jews.

Walked around the Soviet-built institute for Culture on our way to dinner. Ate at an Orbis-run hotel that caters to western travelers. Had wild boar, potatoes and cabbage – Kathleen had roast pork. We both had Ukraine Soup and a bottle of wine of Italian Merlot for 350,000 Zl. Before that we had drinks in the bar – 2 bottles of beer and 1 glass of white wine for 65,000 Zl.

After that we walked to the train station, got our bags out of storage (135,000 Zl) and tried to get onto our train. Our car was locked – we ended up on a 2nd class coach which normally seats up to 6 in a compartment. Fortunately, we have the compartment to ourselves. Kathleen is asleep and I will be soon (it is midnight).

On yes – we mailed all of the post cards we have written up to now: some in Krakow and the rest in Warsaw. Will see how long it takes for them get to the US.

09-18-1992

Leaving Berlin, in route to Copenhagen

Well, we survived the overnight ride from Warsaw, although it had its strange moments. We were first awakened by a young woman who wanted us to carry some of her cigarettes through customs for her (we said No!). There were numerous stops on the way, and I always seemed to wake up for these. Then, our tickets had to be checked

(once in Poland and once in Germany). Then our passports had to be checked 3 (almost 4) times. But the best part of all (for me, at least) came when I opened the bottle of what turned out to be shaken-up carbonated water, which proceeded to foam all over me. Imagine my surprise!

Got to Berlin about 8:00 am, checked our bags in a locker (2 DM) and set out to see the town again. Kathleen had not rested very well (I feel great!) and was a bit out of it all day. We decided to go to the American Express office to get money for Denmark, Sweden and Norway. There was a line, it moved slowly, and we got all of the currency from these countries that they had (which wasn't much) and went on our way.

I was struck by how regimented the German people are. They all obey the Walk/Don't Walk signs. In line [at the American Express office] Kathleen a little past the "Please wait here" sign and was given a sharp reminder from the woman at the American Express counter. We stopped at a museum displaying a huge Greek building. A young man sat down on the floor to listen to his taped tour and was told to go sit on a bench. We walked into another room through a re-constructed Greek doorway and went down the side steps instead of walking straight through and were told not to do that again!

Rode the U-Bahn everywhere today. Have almost mastered getting around that way. They are well integrated in with the train stations and bus routes.

Had breakfast at the train station while we tried to figure out what to do and to give Kathleen a change to get some coffee and wake up. Had scrambled eggs with ham delicious!) and 2 rolls with butter (Kathleen and I) and both had coffee for 17.50 DM. Kathleen later had lunch at McDonalds – it looks and tastes just like home.

Seeing Berlin again after Warsaw provided an interesting contrast. When Warsaw was rebuilt, they attempted to re-create the old city, and appear to have done so quite successfully. Berlin, however, appears much more modern and thriving. I don't think anyone could tell from looking at pictures – it almost has to be experienced to be felt.

I think our overnight train experiment was a failure. I feel well rested, but Kathleen has been dragging all day, and we still have a long trip to Copenhagen ahead of us (won't arrive until 11 pm or later, as the train left 20 minutes late).

Somewhere South of Denmark

We departed Berlin at 2:30 pm and rode up through the Northern part of Germany with a nice couple from Oregon who are on the last 2 days of their 3-week trip. They were a little older than us but had just completed a trip that sounded a lot like ours – 3 weeks with a Eurail Pass and no set itinerary.

We crossed over on a large ferry. The 3 or 4 cars that were continuing on to Denmark were uncoupled, then pushed into the hold of the ship. We all got off and went upstairs (I know that is not correct on a ship) where there was a Duty-Free shop, a currency exchange and a restaurant that served the most marvelous smorgasbord (75 DKr, plus 16.50 for a beer). It was very crowded, and we waited up on the top deck before heading in, which was a mistake because the food selection was not great. We ate well anyway: Fish, several types of meat, potatoes and much more, all of it delicious. We sat with a marvelous old Danish couple. She spoke very slow but good English and was just a joy to talk with. They live on the island of Mon, moved there from Copenhagen 33 years ago.

We now have the compartment (one of the nicest we've had yet) to ourselves for the 2 ½ hour journey to Copenhagen. We don't have that far to go but will make 15 stops.

The boat portion of this trip was neat! It took about 2 hours and was my first trip at sea. I hope we get to do that some more.

Copenhagen at last!

Arrived at 11 pm. This leg of the trip has transformed Kathleen into the Queen Bitch. We broke into an argument over the map at the train station. The hotel is only a few blocks from the train station. Fortunately, I led us right to it. They had our reservation; the hotel is big and modern – it is just what we need!

09-19-1992 – Copenhagen, Denmark

Slept late today (9:15) and am happy to report that Kathleen has recovered her usually cheerful disposition. Had a breakfast consisting of rolls, ham, cheese, sweet rolls, OJ and coffee (included in our room for 900 DKr or \$153).

Spend the day walking around. They have a long pedestrian-only shopping area – found the store selling Royal Copenhagen porcelain stuff. Kathleen bought a beautiful platter, while I bought a vase (Xmas gift for mom for \$650 DKr, less 20% VAT – 520 DKr) which we will have shipped back.

Walked on to the seashore and walked North along that for quite a while. Had a delicious hot dog served with ketchup, mustard and ground up fried onions.

Saw the famous statue of the little mermaid and the Citadel, an early (mid 1600's) fort, surrounded by a moat and a tremendous earthen wall – quite a construction feat. Walked back through the Royal Residence and watched the guards for a while before walking on. Found a neat restaurant (Summonsok or something close) with good food and reasonable prices (steak for Kathleen, lasagna for me, Carlsberg for both for 165 DKr. Had several beers after dinner (20 DKr each) and talked. It was nice.

09-20-1992 – Copenhagen, Denmark

Our hotel, The Absalon (named the legendary founder of the city) is quite modern and nice. It is in a section of the city that contains a large number of other hotels and sex shops.

By the time we got down to breakfast the room was quite crowded and we had to sit at a table what was occupied by a 50-ish gentleman who turned out to be quite talkative and full of stories. He was Danish by birth but now lived in Australia and has traveled extensively throughout the world (140+ countries). As a youth he drove a VW Bug around the world and entertained us for some time with his tales. He also sat down with us and a map and suggested places to see.

[His name was Paul Loofs: see <https://www.fastcompany.com/3026568/vw-tells-the-story-of-one-beetles-incredible-journey-around-the-world>]

We proceeded up to the Amalienborg residence to watch the ceremonial changing of the Royal Guards, which takes place at Noon each day. It was quite impressive: they march through town with a band for 30 minutes before they reach the residence. Then they went through an elaborate ritual, resplendent with several numbers by the band (which numbered 20 or so members and was excellent) before they marched back off their barracks. It was humorous to watch the 6 policemen protecting the armed guards from the crowd!

We then walked up to the museum to Danish Resistance effort during the German occupation of WWII. It was extensive and fascinating. A tour booklet (15 DKr) gave an overview of each section, which consisted mainly of a series of photographs and memorabilia with explanatory notes in several languages, including English. They even had a functional wireless set which was being operated by a Danish Ham who was in the middle of a competition. We talked for a few minutes in between his furious pounding on the old Morse key and he had me sign his logbook for visiting ham operators. Kathleen was fascinated by this place and poured over each display and was 2 – 3 displays behind me the whole time. And with good reason: The Danish were apparently not a people to be pushed around. When word leaked that the Germans were about to deport the Jews, they whisked better than 6000 of them to safety in Sweden. The Germans captured only about 750 of the 7000 that were in Denmark.

We then walked over to the Royal Museum of Fine Arts for a brief tour (they closed soon after we arrived) but did manage to see many beautiful paintings.

From there we walked to the Rosenberg castle and gardens, both of which were extremely beautiful. The park especially was nice. As we walked in, we were greeted by the sight and fragrance of a seemingly endless row of flowers.

Walking back to the center of town we found ourselves outside of the Somersok restaurant, and having so enjoyed ourselves the night before, we went in and had another delicious meal (steak, fries and salad for me, Onion soup, Fried chicken strips for Kathleen and beers for 200DKr). Afterwards we walked to the planetarium (Europe's largest) and browsed around the exhibits before returning to the hotel where we did laundry (hopefully the first and last time on this trip) and packed for our departure for Norway.

Kathleen got to looking at some of the literature we had received in the mail back home and decided that we could and should try to get on the cruise to St. Petersburg. We will try to work it if possible.

09-21-1992 – On the train to Oslo

Asked the hotel for hotel recommendations in Oslo: They called and reserved a room for us! How nice.

Had breakfast (stole the makings for two ham and cheese sandwiches – can't believe I did that... you'd think we were two impoverished students) before checking out and walking over to the train station.

I had walked over there last night to get a reservation, but they had just closed. Got there today too late to reserve a seat, so had to take a chance. This turned out to be a non-problem – the 1st class coach was the last half of the 3rd (and last) car on the train, and there are few passengers in it. We have a delightful compartment to ourselves. The people we met from Oregon told us that the trains got nicer as they went North, and same to be holding true for us. They also told us that they almost never bothered with reservations (which you must pay for) except for when they wanted a sleeping car.

We converted some money to Norwegian Kroner, then went to wait for the train. As we had 45 minutes until our 9:45 departure I ran back up to a store we had been in the first day and bought two T-shirts that we had admired.

Had a short trip to the coast, then a 20-minute ferry crossing into Helsingborg, Sweden, where we are not sitting (11:30 am). I will now try to map the remainder of our journey to see if we can fit in Russia.

4: 00 pm. Looking back, I have found the Danes to be extremely friendly, outgoing and relaxed. This could be felt overwhelmingly as we walked into the cafeteria on the ferry from Germany into Denmark: as we walked through the doors, we were greeted by a blast of light, warmth, smoke and the sound of hundreds of exuberant voices. It seemed that sailing on the ferry, stuffing themselves on the smorgasbord and buying duty free beer and cigarettes is a popular day trip in this area.

So far, we have had a most pleasant journey. Our little 3-car train doubled in size in Helsingborg, the most notable addition being a cafeteria car which serves free coffee and tea to first class passengers.

The scenery has become increasingly mountainous, and we have encountered numerous long tunnels. We have been teased with several runs along the coast of the North Sea. As we approached and past Gothenburg we noticed that the trees are beginning to take on their fall colors, and that there are many firs. We have continued to be the only passengers in our compartment (indeed, the entire train is relatively empty).

I have mapped out an ambitious but fun schedule for our stay in Norway that will take us well above the Arctic Circle, but which should get us to Helsinki time to catch the cruise to St. Petersburg. It does not leave much slack, so we had best not miss any trains for the next week or so.

The rest of the time has been spent on a most pleasant manner: reading, talking, making plans, or simply watching the ever-changing panorama outside our window. I have found the train portion of our journey to be utterly enjoyable.

Kathleen has spent part of the time reading about Oslo and has identified the key things to see and good restaurants near our hotel. She is real good at that and seems to enjoy doing it too: the perfect traveling companion (as long as she doesn't get too tired!).

I have not yet mentioned my cold, perhaps in the vain hope that refusing to acknowledge its existence would somehow make it go away, but there is no denying the deep tickle I feel in my chest, the slightly stuffy head or the irritated throat. It started in Warsaw and has progressed slowly.

Had I felt better, Copenhagen would have been a good place to run, something I have yet to do. We found good paths, and many runners, near the planetarium, as well as in the park near the mermaid.

5:10 pm Norway! Have just crossed the border at Kornsjø. Am seeing a lot of trees, hills, lakes and rocks. I have seen several vistas of wooded hills around beautiful lakes that remind me of parts of Wisconsin that I love so much. As much as I love mountains, water and scenery like this I have to believe that heredity has something to do with it. I feel like I am coming home.

Oddly, I have no such feelings about Germany. Mother has always told me how much I look and walk like Dad (I even think I have his hands).

Hotel Oslo, Norway: Had been on nodding acquaintance with the couple in the next compartment. Finally talked to them when I went over to the window on their end of the car to avoid a light pole in a picture. They are from Canada (West coast) and are wandering around on a Eurail pass also. They were in Cologne and could not get a hotel room at any price and decided to head North.

He came by later to ask about hotels in Oslo. Told him about what we had booked, but he felt that it was a bit expensive and said he'd try his luck at the Oslo Information window. When we got in we decided to do the same so see what they could come up with.

Well, we hit the jackpot. The person there was marvelous. We ended up at the Hotel Oslo for 400 Nkr a night (we would have paid 970 NKR) only a few blocks away from the train station (we would have been 10+ blocks away). The place is a bit like Krakow, only with a WC in the room.

The lobby is on the 3rd floor and the shower is a bit crude (it looks like you pull a shower curtain in front of the door spray the sink, toilet and the corner where the shower is. Seriously), but it is less than half the price.

Ate at a decent enough restaurant – had stuffed flounder, boiled potatoes, salad and ½ liter of beer each for a total of 239 Nkr. Additional beer was 37 Nkr.

The city appears to be bit more depressed than Copenhagen at first glance. More on that after I see it in the daylight tomorrow.

09-22-1992 – Oslo, Norway

Got up early today – ate breakfast by 8:00 am (the usual: ham, cheese, rolls, Bread (they have a toaster!), soft boiled eggs, coffee, juice and cereal). This hotel is OK (certainly can't complain about the breakfast). The room is a little on the small side, and the shower is a little weird (it is barely just half of the bathroom, with the shower curtain covering the door). On the whole the place is a bit old and run down but is acceptable for the price.

Headed out and bought film (75 Nkr for 2 rolls!). Went to the American Express office and exchanged some money, then scooted to the Oslo Sweater Shop which, by all accounts, is THE place in Oslo to buy a sweater. They

certainly have a lot of them, and I eventually settled on a lovely hand knit one for 965 Nkr (including 90 Nkr for shipping). I may find them cheaper later, but our guidebook says not.

Having made my major purchase for the trip we headed out to the Polar Expedition Museum where we learned about all of the great Norwegian polar explorers and toured a 100 year-old ship that has spent many winters in the Arctic (the Fram – they actually pulled it ashore and built an A-Frame building around it) – quite fascinating.

Went through the Maritime Museum rather quickly – had quite a few boat models showing different types of boats, several cabins from actual boats, and other maritime stuff. Ate lunch outside by the water (another hotel-supplied sandwich) and headed up the road to the National Folk Museum. This turned out to be kind of a dud – it consists of about 150 buildings from all over southern Norway but being “out of season” most of the buildings and all of the activities were shut down. We did not have a guidebook – it cost a fortune – so most of it did not mean much. Wouldn't you know – I bought a T-shirt on the way in!

Oh yes: All of the museums are on a little peninsula (Bygdøy) surrounded by beautiful houses. On the bus out there, Kathleen told the people in the seat behind us that the bus went right to the museum. Well, it didn't, and we ended up walking a bit extra. They were very nice about it. In fact, they were mad at the bus driver because he had promised to tell them when to get off.

Anyway, they are from South Africa and were very nice. They are staying at our hotel and have been up the coast. They later left us a note at the hotel telling us what they remembered about the steamer and were very nice.

Anyway, after the Folk Museum we got on the subway out towards Frognerstretten Holmenkollveien. I say “towards” because we got on what we thought was an express, but which actually turned out to be a train that stopped 3 stations short of where we wanted to go, which happened to be a ski area in the mountains outside of Oslo. So, we hiked past the site of the 1952 Olympic ski jump competition, over 1 mile of cross-country ski trails (all uphill) to a wonderful restaurant. We had 2 beers, marvelous trout with potatoes (boiled) and cucumber salad with coffee, Apple Cake and Cloudberries with cream for 600 Nkr. Cloudberries are a local delicacy. They only grow above the Arctic Circle, have seeds larger than grapes and look kind of like albino raspberries. They are kind of tart, with a citrus-like taste, which is very much improved by a topping of sugar and thick cream.

Turns out the restaurant is a short 2-mile walk to the tram station we were trying to get to, so getting home was easier, although it was farther up the hill.

It was quite cold up by the restaurant, which was situated at the altitude of nearly 1400 feet. It was naturally warmer back in the city (which has taken about 30 minutes to reach on the tram), which seemed much livelier and more alive than it did last night. I think that part of the reason for the negative impression last night was the weather (it had just finished raining) and the neighborhood we traveled through to get to our hotel (the City Hotel) which is not located in the trendy, upscale part of town.

The view of the city from the surrounding mountains is spectacular (in spite of the overcast day). There are buildings everywhere from the shore to the mountains as far as the eye can see.

Well, off early tomorrow (a 7:30 train) so must pack up.

09-23-1992 On the train to Bergen from Oslo

At last, after having read about it months ago, we are on our way to Bergen and the Myrdal-Flam detour! We are in one of the new First-Class coaches with seating like an airplane (two seats left – one right) that recline and have footrests and fold down trays. In some ways (leg room and the ability to recline) they are more comfortable than the compartments, although not as private.

Had to pay on-board (20 Nkr each) for reservations – the first time that has happened. And on this run you pay for coffee (11 Nkr).

The fjord boat part of the detour shut down at the end of August, so we will miss that (damn!). Had a look at the cost of lodging in Bergen last night – looks very expensive. Hopefully the tourist information booth can help as much as the one in Oslo did.

Kathleen also looked at the information given to us by the South African couple about the boat service up the coast. She seems to feel that such a trip may be as appealing as going to St. Petersburg. We will try to get more information at Bergen.

The weather has warmed up a bit, although it is again overcast. The South African couple, who took the boat all the way up to Lapland and back, said it rained every day. I hope we get better weather!

9:00 – So far the ride had been quite enjoyable. The train goes through narrow gorges, then bursts out into areas of incredible beauty as one overlooks water, and in the distance, multi-colored trees in their fall beauty, stepping up the hillsides.

Got into Myrdal on time (what a fabulous trip getting there was – shot a lot of film). The air was cool and it was overcast. The tram was right across the platform and was waiting not only for us, but the train from Bergen as well, which got in shortly after ours did (we saw the couple from Canada, but they got onto another car on the train). The tram ride into Flam was all it was billed to be (and I have the film to prove it). When we got to Flam we found that the fjord boat trip was still running! We got the last two tickets!

Stood around Flam for awhile waiting for the boat trip. It is a beautiful valley on the water of the fjord. It looks so beautiful that it almost doesn't seem real. There are sheep everywhere, and every farm looks neat as a pin.

Even though it was "off season", the tram was packed, and the boat was a sell-out. There were two groups: a bunch of Japanese tourists and an elderly Scandinavian bunch, which was (of course) the group we ended up with on our boat (There were two boats, 40 feet long, mostly open).

The fjord trip was too beautiful to describe. I took an obscene number of pictures, so I hope that they turn out. Even though it was overcast and misty it was marvelous: the rocks, the towering mountains, some with snow still. The 2-hour tour (40 Nkr) went by quickly. Then came the bus trip.

Everyone got off the boats at Gudvangen, walked through a gift shop, and got right into the waiting bus, which left soon thereafter (the Japanese group had their own bus, as did the old folks), and which cost us another 40 Nkr each.

We knew something was up after he turned off of the main road onto a narrow road. The driver then stopped and spent a minute or so getting the bus into the proper gear. He then proceeded up one of the steepest, most winding roads that I have ever seen a bus navigate. We were going uphill, and my ears kept popping all the way. I guess it was a one-way road, because there sure wasn't anyplace for another vehicle to go. We passed a raging waterfall, and all the while the valley seemed to fall below us, first on the left, then on the right. We were near the front of the bus, and Kathleen was truly frightened as the front of the bus seemed to loom over nothing as we rounded each corner.

We soon reached the top, and another 10 minutes or so found us at the Stalheim Hotel, which had a gift shop full of Japanese tourists and a view of the valley that we had just climbed out of that was magnificent.

The rest of the trip into Voss was uneventful, except for the fact that we kept stopping to pick up or drop off a steady stream of local teens. When we boarded the train at Voss (a local to Bergen) we ended up in a compartment surrounded by them.

For the whole detour portion of the trip we weren't really sure what we were doing but got by just following the crowd.

Got into Bergen around 7:30 pm. After some wandering around (we had poor maps) we found the Tourist Information center, where we were helped by another knowledgeable (and attractive) person. She booked us in an efficiency apartment (smaller than it sounds) for 500 Kr. It seemed practically new and was in the center of town.

We had managed to avoid the rain the whole trip, but it was raining when we got to Bergen. We walked to dinner in a light but steady drizzle. Ate at the Brugge Loflat, a typical low-ceilinged Norwegian restaurant. I had fried Herring with potatoes and cucumber salad: Kathleen had pork, both had beer for under 350 Kr. My fish was excellent. After that we walked around for a while before retiring.

We got more info on the coastal steamer and now feel that we may try that. So will keep to "the schedule" and depart tomorrow, even though the unexpected fjord tour got us into Bergen later than expected.

09-24-1992 On the train: Bergen to Oslo

Got up very early (5:45 am), showered, packed, then walked in the rain through the dark streets of Bergen. Since it is raining, we are just as glad to be leaving.

Our room had no breakfast, so we bought some juice and bananas at the station, then a roll and coffee on the train. We also called the Grand Hotel in Åndalsnes and booked a room. Used 1.80 off a 10 Kr coin!

The scenery past Myrdal is no less beautiful than it was yesterday. I did get very excited and photographed the first and only patch of sunlight I have observed here. Most of the way is in tunnels and snow sheds, which makes taking pictures tricky. I know that I took at least two pictures of snow sheds while trying to photograph the valley that we descended in the train. However, I did manage to squeeze off three quick shots of the lake at the summit, some 1300 meters in height.

The Eurail book raves about the Dombås – Åndalsnes route (this afternoon's trip) as being one of the most beautiful rail trips in Europe. It is hard to believe that it is more beautiful than this!

New disaster! While at the station this morning Kathleen dropped her pack. She just discovered that it broke the lens cover of her new lens. The cover appears to have been the only casualty, although there is broken glass dust everywhere. Todd's lens cloth was invaluable. As we descend, we begin to see plant life again: small trees and bushes at first, giving way to larger trees as we descend further. All are in beautiful shades of green, yellow, orange and red. The contrast with the starkness of the rocks is striking.

Oslo – Åndalsnes Train

Got into Oslo a few moments late but had no problem making the train (with 4 minutes to spare).

The train goes to Trondheim, but the last 2 cars go to Åndalsnes. The dun has broken out and it is a beautiful afternoon in Oslo. Kathleen has mapped out the rest of our trip. Looks like a lot of fun, with much time on the local steamer, by which means we will see much of the coast of northern Norway.

Our journey to the Arctic Circle (and beyond!) continues. Just passed through Lillehammer, site of the 1994 Winter Olympics. We could see signs of construction everywhere, and one could almost feel the sense of anticipation.

The clouds have returned, but no rain (yet). We met our first grumpy conductor (or else he was a bad comedian). He told Kathleen that she had lost part of her ticket and said that she had to get off because she tore her ticket out of her little booklet.

By the time we headed out of Dombås for Åndalsnes it was dark and nothing of the much-vaunted scenery could be seen.

We got into Åndalsnes and were greeted by a slight rain. After asking directions we found the Grand Hotel with little problem. It really is a marvelous old place, with lots of charm and character, all for only 895 Kr a night.

Had dinner in their restaurant, as it was by this time after 9:00 pm. I ordered fried catfish, which came topped with fried mushrooms, onions and peppers and a large portion of sour cream with carrots, broccoli, boiled potatoes. Kathleen had poached salmon, we both had beer for 300 Kr. We were both very tired, so we retired and slept like rocks.

09-24-1992 - Åndalsnes Norway

In spite of the fact that this was not an early travel day we still set the alarm for 7:00. After breakfast we checked out, changed money, dropped our packs off at the station and stopped in at a travel agency. For 20 Kr they booked our steamer for us (cost: 1275 Kr each), so that is really going to happen!

Spent the rest of the day wandering around the city, which is very beautiful. It is built into the hillside along a scenic Norwegian fjord. It is a smaller town and was wonderfully convenient for us, as the bank, travel agency, station and Tourist Information center were all within a few blocks of each other.

The information center was, as usual, great. We got info about Trondheim hotels, data on the steamers, as well as the suggestion to go to the Travel Bureau for the booking.

The weather looked good for a while, but it gradually got more cloudy, then began to rain lightly. It rained intermittently all day, but never enough to be a problem.

Kathleen bought a new lens cover for her camera (200 Kr) at a camera store. We got into quite a conversation with the owner, who talked at great length about politics and the role of government, as well as the women's movement and child rearing practices in Scandinavia. Thus enlightened we went on our way.

We spent a small fortune on food on the train yesterday, so we availed ourselves of a food store and bought bread and cheese and some more cookies. As usual, we made sandwiches at breakfast, which we will have for dinner on the way to Trondheim as we had hamburgers for lunch.

The last bit of advice we got from Tourist Information was to buy a book put out by the Norwegian Railway on all their routes for 25 Kr. While we were getting reservations for the Dombås – Trondheim leg of today's journey (required) we picked up the last one in Åndalsnes – it is really nice, gives the history about each run, describes the stops, etc. I'm surprised our Eurail book doesn't mention it.

Caught the train back to Dombås at 4:15. The route certainly is beautiful, but I liked the Oslo - Bergen run better. Or maybe I'm just getting used to beautiful scenery?

Got into Trondheim at nearly 10:00 pm, and of course it was raining, but not very hard. We had to walk about 10 blocks to the Trondheim Hotel and encountered a lot of younger people out and about – many groups of them singing. There is a University here, and it really has the feel of a college town.

Found the hotel with little trouble (we did walk past the entrance) and checked into a modern room. We had eaten on the train so skipped dinner and went out for a beer (39Kr each) and went to bed.

09-24-1992 Trondheim – Bodø

Got up to ore rain and one of the nicest breakfasts we have faced yet – large variety of fish and condiments. Walked to the station during a convenient lull in the rain and hopped on the train.

Kathleen has been bothered by an increasingly sore shoulder and on the way to the station began to limp too. However, when I asked her about it she replied that she did not want to talk about it. As we were headed onto the train she walked to the end of the car with a closed door. I stopped and called to her so she could go towards a

door that was open and nearly bit my head off. I do not know what the problem was – she slept and seemed to recover, so who knows...

Got a compartment to ourselves again for the ride to Bodø. The scenery is (again) breath taking very mountainous, with deep green pines contrasting sharply with the golden-red leaves on the trees and bushes around them. It has rained off and on, although the sun has made a few brief appearances, and the clouds occasionally drop below the tops of the hills. There are streams, rivers, lakes and ponds everywhere, and a surprising number of houses and towns. I had expected more desolation.

The car ahead of us has been setup for young children, with seats for parents and a play area for the kids. Kathleen has also read about cars equipped for elderly and ill people. The rail system here is well integrated with the bus and boat system and ought to be the envy of the world.

5:07 pm – We have just crossed the Arctic Circle. The rail line crosses it on a desolate, wind swept plateau some 500 meters above sea level. The area defines the term “bleak”. There are no plants (beyond, maybe, some moss). Just rocks and clouds and grey sky.

Just after we passed the circle, which is marked with a stone marker, we immediately began to descend down into the valley on the other side and began to see vegetation again.

First class has emptied out as the trip has progresses – there are only 3 of us now. The Norwegian rail service 2nd class coaches are pretty nice, and that appears to be how the locals travel.

The light has begun to fade, partly because of the cloud cover, but also due to how far North we have traveled.

We are just discussing how pleasant it is to travel this way. The time passes very quickly, and the scenery is like a non-stop travel show. The fall colors here are fabulous – the contrast between the evergreens and the deciduous trees is striking, and the landscape just amplifies it. And, it has been out there to admire since we got onto the train this morning!

Just before we got to the Arctic Circle, the train stopped out in the middle of nowhere to pick up a group of hikers – they were waiting beside the tracks in what looked like a bus stop.

The stop before Bodø is where most everyone got off – that is also apparently where the good bus connections to Narvic are.

Did much better on food today. Had sandwiches made at the hotel this morning for lunch, and had the bread and cheese purchased yesterday for dinner, along with bananas, apple juice and cookies. Quite a meal!

Will get into Bodø around 7:30 pm.

Bodø, Norway

Found a map of the town showing the hotels in the train station and walked the 6 or so blocks to the Nerøna Hotel listed in our book as a Bed & Breakfast but it looked like a Hotel to me! And relatively inexpensive too at 450 Kr. The room was very nice, although it has two twin beds.

We walked around a bit after checking in but settled down in the bar (the Picadilly) next to our hotel which had 5 – 6 locals at the bar. The music was American, the décor was British, and the beer was delicious at 35 Kr each (0,5 l).

We had been there for about ½ hour when a man made his way unsteadily towards us and proceeded to sit down next to me. I could see the bartender and everyone else sneaking sly looks at us as this man tried, in very bad English, to communicate something to us. This went on for 15 minutes or so, and we never did understand what he was trying to say. We were finally rescued by the arrival of several other members of the group from the bar who

spoke very good English. The first man wandered off, but Kathleen and I had a very lively discussion with the other two, who interpreted for the Norwegian who did not speak any English.

One man was a 53-year-old divorced electrician, the other a mid-40 year old who worked in the billing department at the Power company. We drank 4 beers and talked about Norway: they wanted to know where we had been, where we were going, how long we were staying and what we thought. They indicated that we were in and headed towards the best part of Norway (the North).

The older man remembered the German occupation, although as a child he only remembered them giving him candy. He said the Germans had treated people pretty well. We finally broke away and went to bed about 11:00.

I forgot to mention that part of the rail line to Bodø had been built during the war by Germans using Yugoslavian, Russian and Polish slave labor. Kathleen and I discussed this on the way up: What a horrible fate it must have been to have been forced from your home and transported hundreds of miles to an area as bleak and harsh as this, and to be forced to work under very horrible conditions. It almost makes me feel guilty for taking so much pleasure in the trip.

09-27-1992 - Bodø, Norway

Did the usual morning routine and headed to the train station (which is conveniently near the boat dock) to dump our bags in a locker. Stopped by the SAS Hotel and cashed more travelers checks on the way.

Just wandered around town and stopped to pick up some food before stopping at the Neptune Café, a restaurant recommended to us by our electrician friend. He didn't steer us wrong – we had fried haddock, boiled potatoes, salad and sodas for 75 Kr each, and it was good.

After that we walked back through town, collected our bags and got on board the Narvik. We are at the moment sitting in a wind sheltered corner of the top deck waiting for departure. The day has been glorious – the skies were mostly sunny, and the temperature was probably around 60 degrees. This harbor town is beautiful, and we are looking forward to our voyage.

The boat itself is quite large and modern (built in 1982). It has about 6 or 7 decks with a large plexiglass-lined deck open to the sky at the stern, and a large enclosed lounge with lots of windows and skylights in the mid-section.

There were a large number of children aboard, and they appeared to be having the time of their lives, running around and yelling with youthful abandon. They got off with us at Svalvar and were last seen heading out of town on a bus.

We watched the sun set behind the Lofoten island chain, but I refrained from taking any pictures (I had tried to slow down some, having shot around 10 rolls of film already!). Later, as the sky got completely black, we saw stars like I have never seen before. I lay back in a deck chair in the dark area of the stern and stared in amazement at the Milky Way, which looked almost like a cloud: there were so many stars! It can understand the name now: I did look almost like milk had been spilled in the heavens.

I also observed a large number of moving objects. They seemed to be moving too fast to be planes, yet were too numerous (I saw at least 4) to be anything else.

Got into Svolvar at 9:00 pm and wandered around awhile until we found the Norton Lofoten Hotel (they had said it would be obvious when we got in – it wasn't!). Checked in and headed down to the bar for a drink.

The hotel seemed empty – the bar certainly was, and at the price of beer I could understand why – 45 Kr each! It was very pretty though, in what I have come to know as the Norwegian style – Wood, low ceilings. The bar keeper had a lovely Scottish accent, had spent 6 years in Scotland. Many Norwegians were evacuated to Scotland during WWII – must have family there). Had 2 beers and hit the bed.

09-28-1992 – Svolvær, Norway

Didn't set the alarm, so had a chance to sleep in a bit. Had a leisurely breakfast, packed, checked out and left our luggage in the care of the hotel (there were no lockers anywhere). Wandered down to Tourist Information and got directions to and a map to a hiking trail on the edge of town that would lead us to the top of the hill and a great view.

Found the start of the trail OK, but it soon petered out. Tried making our own way, but we were greatly hampered by Kathleen's tennis shoes, which had no traction. Made it about 1/3 of the way and did have a great view of town anyway.

Found an old cemetery and wandered about: Saw a lot of Hansen's there. Then went back into town for a lunch of cod, boiled potatoes and carrots (65 Kr). Did some shopping: Kathleen found some coffee mugs made in Poland. Also bought some Olympic T-shirts.

Walked over a large bridge to the old part of town, which really seemed to be kind of un-populated. Was mainly homes and several fish-related warehouses. Found the Berg family crypt [Gunnar Berg was a Norwegian painter known for paintings of his native Lofoten] which was really hidden and a tremendous view of the islands and waters to the east. Sat and enjoyed the view until it started to get dark.

Walked back to town and stopped in at a bar that our bar tender last night told us about. It was done up in a whale related motif. Hung out there for a few hours and a few beers (40 Kr each) until it was time to head up to the hotel to collect our bags.

Got to the pier just as our boat (M/S Kong Olaf) pulled in at 9:00 pm. It is smaller than the Narvik, but is quite adequate. Got a double room (although there are 4 bunks) with no toilet or shower (both are down the hall), although it does have a sink. It is kind of quaint, although the doors (2 closets and main door) squeaked loudly until I wedged something between the door and the jam. There is a rumble and noticeable vibration from the engines, but it is kind of comforting.

The weather today was glorious – not a cloud in the sky, and the temperature as 50 – 60 degrees. A bank of clouds rolled in just at sunset, so we cannot enjoy the view of the stars that we had last night.

09-29-1992 – Aboard the Kong Olav

Survived my first night aboard ship in spite of the four young kids in the cabin next door. They kept carrying on and bumping into the wall until I banged back, then they quieted down. I guess they had figured that they had the boat to themselves. As there are not that many people on board.

The other boat noises kept me from sleeping real well – everything was a little strange and I kept waking up. In spite of that I woke up well rested and 7:30. The room had seemed a little hot as I went to bed but it cooled off as the night progressed. The bed was quite comfortable, and I really didn't want to get up.

The shower was great – lots of pressure and hot water. Neither Kathleen or I had to wait to get in, so there is something to be said for traveling off season. Ate food we brought aboard for breakfast. Took a look at the costs for the steamer that we were quoted at the two tourist information booths, and which we confirmed ourselves, and compared it to what we actually paid: we ended up paying 30% less by booking through the travel agent. We don't understand why, but we won't complain.

Also quickly reviewed expenses to date. We seem to be on track to spend the money we allocated based on \$125 per day, even with gifts.

The day is cloudy and grey, but the islands sliding by the port side of our Northbound boat are still beautiful and endlessly fascinating. I did not expect to see all of the trees, vegetation and habitation that we are seeing this far North. The Gulf current is indeed benevolent to the inhabitants of this region.

Had nearly 3 hours in Tromsø, which is a very large town. Our friends from Canada called it “The Paris of the North”, and it was beautiful city. It was a starting point for Amundsen’s arctic expeditions and there is a statue in the town square of him.

I bought a red and black Norwegian style sweater here for 690 Kr – it is wool and very warm.

We had eaten lunch from the food we brought on board, so headed up to have dinner in the restaurant. It was delicious. I honestly think one of the best meals of the trip. Spinach soup, boiled potatoes and a fish in a hollandaise sauce with tiny shrimps. It was served off of a large dish, and seconds were offered (and fondly accepted by us). The cost was 155 Kr each. A 0,5-l beer was 38 Kr. This was Mack beer, the first we have had. I prefer the Norland we have been getting up to now.

I have been fascinated by the loading and unloading of cargo at each port. It seems that most everything required for life on these islands is carried by these boats. All manner of food (lots of fresh fish), fruits and vegetables, cars, boats, tires. You name it and we’ve probably seen it in the past few days.

Well, Hammerfest at 7:00 am tomorrow, then a 1:15 pm Southbound to start us on our journey home.

09-30-1992 – Hammerfest, Norway

Woke up to a beautiful morning that quickly degraded into a cloudy, windy day of brief rain showers. Landed at Hammerfest a bit late (about 8:00 am) and looked for someplace to leave our packs. Stopped in the Norcargo/Hertz office to ask and the woman at the Hertz counter kindly offered to watch them for us. Thus unencumbered, we set out to see the town.

The city is crescent shaped, clustered on the water, with a steeply rising mountain rising behind it. There is a walkway that zig-zags its way up the mountain: the climb leads you to the top of the mountain and a marvelous view of the city, harbor and surrounding islands. The trail leads you between the numerous and lengthy snow fences to the peak of the hill, a rocky and windswept hill. People have built numerous piles of rocks as markers up there, and we added our own contributions to several.

There was something very special about this place that captured both Kathleen and I. We both took numerous pictures and were quite content to stand or sit and reflect on the feeling of tranquility that embraced us like the wind that continuously flowed past us.

There was a towering island about a mile away that mesmerized me. I could have stood on the point of land, facing into the wind, and stared at that majestic mountain all day. My lens could not do it justice, so I asked Kathleen to get a good picture of it. I hope it turns out.

Walking past the snow fences that stretch from the summit to the path back down one heard the wind whistling through the fences, as if it was speaking to us.

I was so taken by the mountain behind town that I picked up a rock to bring home with me so I will always remember it.

Kathleen had heard from the Canadian couple about the Russian flea market here, and sure enough we found it. Kathleen bought a scarf and a deck of cards: I bought a deck also. She asked the price in Russian and got the cards for 15Kr. I went by later and had to pay 20Kr!

Coming down off the hill we stopped in at a local cafeteria and had coffee. A sweet old gentleman stopped by on his way out to talk to us for a few moments. Kathleen has found the people here to be somewhat cold and distant until you look at them and smile, whereupon they turn into smiling friendly people.

Did some shopping before stopping for lunch. I had roast chicken. Kathleen thought she had ordered salmon but got instead a piece of mystery meat which turned out to be Ox.

Our Southbound boat was late, so we just wandered around aimlessly, had a cup of coffee and killed time until the Harald Jarl arrived.

It proved to be a step above the Kong Olaf in accommodations but rolled noticeably in the stiffing wind. We sailed through a patch of black clouds, wind and rain, and the boat rolled and pitched enough to make both of us ill. Kathleen only felt bad (she knew enough to take the motion sickness pill early on – I waited too long) but I threw up once, then felt much better. Things calmed down a bit after that, but neither of us felt up to dinner, although we did snack on peanuts and chocolate later.

We both slept soundly in a cabin that was much more spacious than the one we had on previous ship and woke up to another beautiful morning.

10-01-1992 – Harstad, Norway

Got off the boat at 8:15 am in Harstad, where we will catch a 10:10 bus (for 125 Kr each) to Narvik, where we hope to catch the afternoon train for Stockholm. We both feel a sense of motion, like we were on the boat. Kathleen feels the side to side rolling: I feel the up and down motion that was so pronounced last night. It is odd that neither of us had bit of a problem on the other two ships.

Harstad is a typical town for this area. I guess if we had flown here from the US and saw it for our first view of Norway, we would go through a roll of film within the first 5 minutes. Now it hardly warrants a single picture. Indeed, Kathleen remained in the bus terminal while I walked around the town. I did take one picture of some towns people buying fish from a boat at the pier.

Narvik, Norway

The bus route took us through an area that was almost painfully beautiful. The upper reaches of the mountain were covered with a fresh dusting of snow. The water was still dark water that reflected the colorful countryside. There are more deciduous trees here than there were up North, and they are still showing their fall colors.

The bus station in Narvik is about one block from the train station. Our train left at 1:25, only about ½ hour after we arrived! We travel 2nd class coach to somewhere that sounded like Vindok, which we will reach at 8:00 pm. There we change trains and get a sleeper (220 Kr each) to Stockholm.

Southbound!

The sleeper room was interesting: narrow, with three bunks on the right and a sink. We had the misfortune to end up in the compartment next to a group that wanted to party, which they and many of their friends did until well past 11:00 pm. I went out and talked to them and got the conductor (who did not speak English) to talk to them, but they were drunk and nothing seemed to make much of an impact on them.

Fell asleep in spite of the noise and slept well until 8:30, when we got up and had some breakfast.

The train from Bodon had a dining car, where we had dinner shortly after we got on (curry chicken on rice with a salad for me, cold salmon, potatoes and a salad for Kathleen, beer for both of us for 180 SKr (Nkr x .89 – SKr).

10-02-1992 – Stockholm, Sweden

After breakfast we returned to our compartment and folded the two lower bunks up and pulled out the seats. It converted into a very comfortable 3-chair compartment. Quite nice!

Arrived 10:40 or so and decided to go to the Hotel service at the train station. Told them we wanted someplace fairly nice for our last two days, near the station for around 900 SKr. We got someplace a short 3 blocks away for 590 SKr (Freys Hotel) that has turned out to be quite acceptable.

It is a sunny day with a temperature of 50 degrees.

We started out by walking over to the American Express office to cash some traveler's checks. Stockholm is simply beautiful. There seems to be an endless series of magnificent buildings overlooking bustling streets or boat filled waters.

The mood is definitely big city: the people walk faster, as if with a purpose, and the drivers are more impatient, more likely to cut someone off, honk their horns and run a red light. Quite a contrast to the placid towns we have become used to. Everyone seems much better dressed.

We walked through a large open-air market where fruits and flowers are sold. The smell was delightful.

Headed down to the Old Town, passed the Royal Palace. Had a quiet lunch (fried fish, salad and some kind of pressed mashed potatoes for me, spaghetti with a sea food sauce for Kathleen, beer for us both. The meals were 43 SKr, but the beers were another 50 SKr!. Set back out, saw the cathedral next to the palace – very old, with beautiful carvings.

Walked over to the National Museum to see the Rembrandt exhibition that opened just that morning (admission 40 SKr). Not as many as paintings as we expected, as well as a large number of paintings that were attributed to him but which have since been questioned. The show did a good job of showing paintings of those who influenced, worked with and/or were influenced by him.

Walked around some more before stopping in for three beers at a bar. Watched the crowd of office people come and go. Had a typical Swedish dinner: fried pork in a white wine sauce with vegetables and fried potatoes for me, Salmon for Kathleen (300 SKr). Walked back to the hotel and crashed.

10-03-1992 – Stockholm, Sweden

Last full day – hard to believe! Slept in and had a leisurely breakfast then mapped out the day.

Walked to the NK Department store and shopped. This is the largest department store in Scandinavia (6+ floors) and has a lot of nice (and expensive) stuff (things here are very expensive). Saw a fashion show complete with a model in a see-through blouse. Welcome to Europe! I didn't buy anything, but Kathleen did.

Had a hot dog and coke for lunch, then headed back to the old town to walk around the shopping strip. Had the bulk of a roll of film to shoot, so will have a lot of shots of this city. Stopped into a bar for a beer (39 SKr each!) before heading on.

Looked at the Grand Hotel; to see if we wanted to eat dinner there but decided on the restaurant at the Opera House instead. Walked back to the hotel and changed and got to the restaurant at about 6:00 pm.

The building itself was built in 1767 and can only be described as magnificent. Dinner itself was a treat: some kind of sea food (shrimp?) topped on a biscuit to start, then a plate of Herring, salmon (3 ways). Ham and melon. The main dish was a roast of beef with a vegetable medley and escalloped potatoes, with strawberries, wild strawberries, black berries and vanilla ice cream for dessert. Ordered a bottle of wine too, so the whole bill came to 910 SKr. It was the fantastic dinner that we had promised ourselves so long ago when we were planning this trip, which is about to end.

Came back to the hotel and packed (boo!) and wrote one last post card. Will get up at 6:00 and head out to the airport for our flight at 8:50 am.

10-04-1992 – Stockholm, Sweden

Didn't get our wakeup call but had set the alarm as a backup so got up on time. Walked down to the bus station (right next to the train station) to catch the bus to the airport (50 Kr each). We cut things a little close: We had only 30 minutes or so before our flight left, but that turned out to be plenty of time.

The flight went through Copenhagen where there was a scheduled 1:45 layover. However, our 11:40 departure got delayed to 14:40 due to a hydraulic failure on the aircraft (a Boeing 767). We got 120Kr each for lunch, which enabled us to eat like pigs and still had enough left over to buy some chocolate!

Stockholm airport has the most elaborate duty-free shopping area I have ever seen. It was like a large shopping mall. We had already bought something in Stockholm. So didn't get much more, but we had fun looking.

Prices were out of sight. A paperback book was 115 Kr. A 80P newspaper cost \$5.59.

The (delayed) flight took off as promised. The flight was pretty uneventful, and the time passed quickly. Watched Patriot Games (again).

Got into JFK around 6:30. Immigration and Customs were a breeze (although the people seemed like typical New Yorkers: Abrupt almost to the point of being rude). I don't know why they even bother going through the motions anymore.

New York, New York

Of course, our plane to St. Louis left on time, so along with what seemed the entire plane load of people, we were booked onto a flight the next day and were given a voucher for a hotel and meal. The lines were long, and service was slow. However, when we got up to the counter our agent was friendly and helpful. She even walked us up to where we were to catch our shuttle to the hotel.

The van took awhile to get to the hotel, as it had to route to several of the terminals to pick up others. The hotel itself was run down (the Midway) and dirty and seems to lack good management. Kathleen was hungry so we went to the restaurant and she had a burger – I just had a beer. Finally crashed at 9:30 EST (2:30 Central European Time).

10-05-1992 - New York, New York

Got up at 6:00 am and had breakfast. They wanted us to eat their buffet – we resisted and convinced them to use our dinner voucher (we hadn't used it the night before) to let us order off of the menu. The buffet was dull: cereal, sweet rolls, melon.

The ride to the airport was short. Had coffee, bought a book, cashed a travelers check (\$2.50 fee for a \$100 check) and boarded the plane. Our friend last night upgraded us to 1st class so we had row 1 seats. Great!