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Chocoholics Unite in Cologne, Germany!

Lovely pastel colored buildings and quaint cobblestone streets greet you as you pull into the charming city of Cologne, Germany on an [AmaWaterways](#) cruise of the beautiful Rhine River. Although Cologne may look like it dates from medieval times, much of the city was destroyed during WWII and restoration began in the late 1940's.



THE COLOGNE SKYLINE

The famous twin-spired Cologne Cathedral, which took six centuries to build and is Germany's most visited landmark, survived the war and now looms over the city in all its gothic magnificence. Tiny shops and restaurants are everywhere, offering up local beer, wine, hot pretzels, sausages, and scrumptious desserts.

You should definitely make time to walk around the city, tour the cathedral, and sample some of the local specialties. But if you, like me, are a chocoholic, there is really only one place to immediately begin your visit upon arriving in Cologne. It is, of course, the [Cologne Chocolate Museum](#). Yes, indeed, there is an entire museum dedicated to chocolate. And, yes, there are plenty of samples of chocolate to be offered.



COLOGNE CHOCOLATE MUSEUM

The soaring, modern, glass and steel museum built to resemble a ship is very easy to find as it is located right on the banks of the Rhine. From your cruise ship, you will probably be able to see it and the location is an easy walk from the town and the cathedral. In March, 2006, the museum partnered with Lindt, the famous chocolate maker. And now, Lindt candy, in an astonishing variety of forms and shapes, is available in the large museum gift shop.

The best way to visit the museum is with one of the guided tours where you will learn the history of chocolate, which has been around for thousands of years. From the long journey of the cocoa bean (which, surprisingly, is not sweet at all) to the finished product, the tour also explains the industrial production of chocolate and the factory has plenty of chocolate making equipment on display, both historical and modern. The tour accommodates around 10 people, lasts about an hour, and requires prior registration by phone or email.

The tour is quite fascinating and includes examples of candy making equipment both historical and current, and time spent watching candy making in the glass chocolate factory where the look and smell of fresh chocolate may just drive you crazy! We were surprised at the huge variety of shapes which they can form with chocolate as well as the history of what began as a simple cocoa bean. The influence of chocolate on the Mayan/Incan/Aztec civilizations was especially interesting. After drooling over the melted chocolate fountain, you will be presented with a small cookie to dip in the luscious dark river.

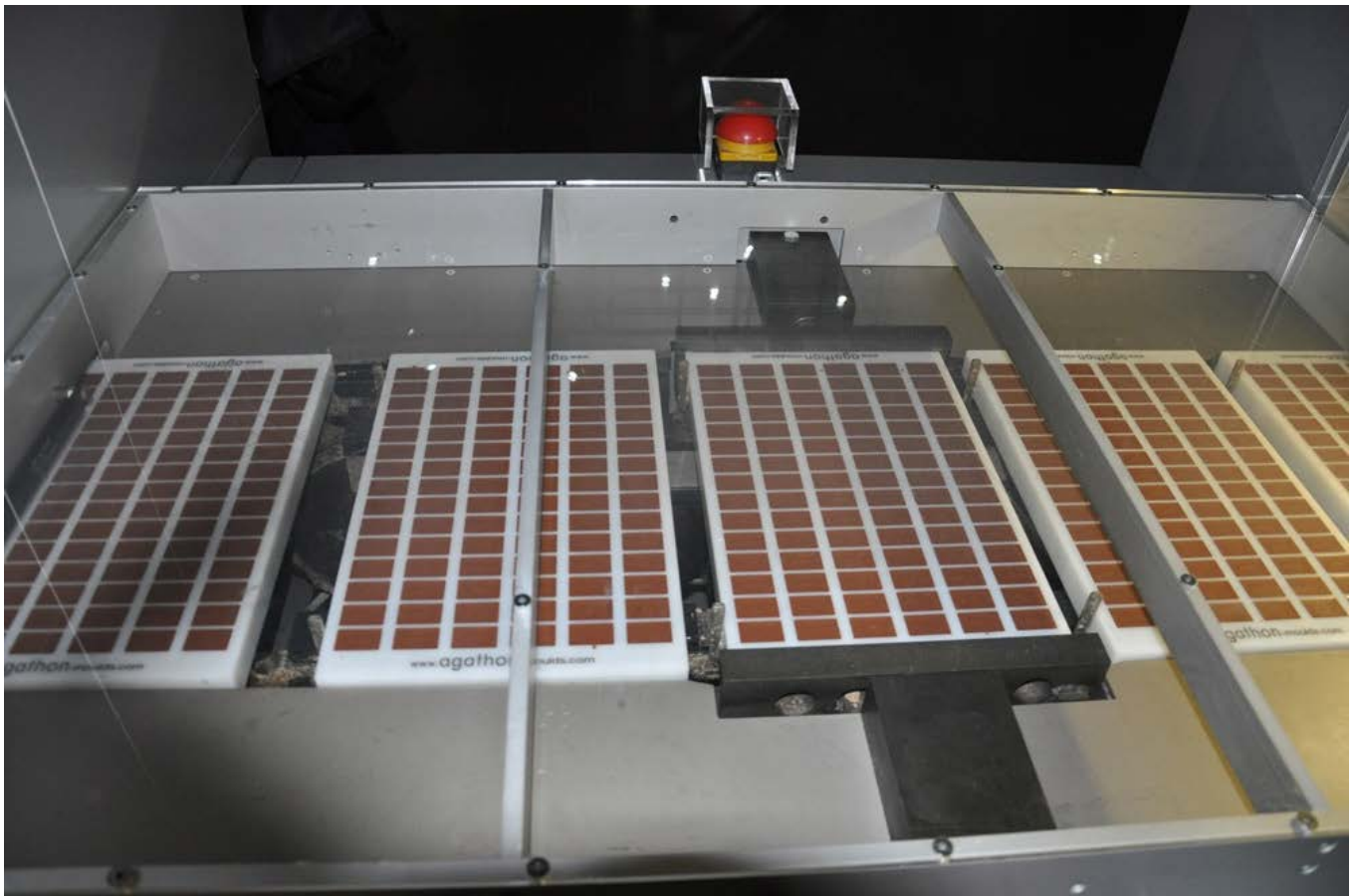


YOU ARE SPOILT FOR CHOICES AT THE COLOGNE CHOCOLATE MUSEUM

If you have children in your group (or you are young at heart!), you will have an opportunity to create your own chocolate bars at the end of the tour with an assortment of choices for fillings. Tours are not the only offerings at the museum; they also provide a variety of candy making classes. Although we were not able to participate due to our limited time, the classes looked to be a lot of fun and, of course, you are able to eat the end product.

We recently tried some dark chocolate paired with wine at a party and the combination made both ingredients taste entirely different. This is the idea behind the tasting classes, which strive to provide a variety of special culinary delights with specialists from different fields who present on their specialties. Chocolate and wine; chocolate and tequila; chocolate and rum; chocolate and coffee; and chocolate and beer tasting classes are all offered at different times.

If you want to actually try making chocolates and pralines, they also offer confectionary classes. Make some lovely chocolates and pack them for gift giving – or give yourself a gift! Classes last for three hours and are various sizes, depending on how many register. In addition to adult classes, they offer chocolate making classes for children as well. The classes can all be booked on their web site.



MAKING CHOCOLATES IS AN OPTION FOR TOURISTS AT THE MUSEUM

After your tour, and after purchasing all the candy you can carry from the gift shop, take some time to relax in the Chocolat Grand Café. Sit on the large terrace overlooking the Rhine, watch the ships cruise slowly past, and enjoy a cup of hot chocolate or a chocolate dessert. It's the perfect way to end a visit to a chocolate factory!

*Cologne Chocolate Museum
Am Schokoladenmuseum 1a,
50678 Cologne
North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany
Tel: 49 (0) 221-931888*

Written by and photos by guest contributor Jan Ross for EuropeUpClose.com

Jan Ross is a full time travel writer who has been traveling the world since she was an infant as her dad was a career Marine Corps officer. She writes for a variety of venues, both print and online, her favorite mode of travel is cruising in both small and large ships, and her favorite activity is lounging on a tropical beach. Follow Jan's adventures at [WanderlustWonder](http://WanderlustWonder.com)

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