

Travel

Visiting the River Towns of Germany

by Jan Ross, Staff Writer

The best way to see the small towns of Germany, which line the Rhine and Mosel Rivers, is on a river cruise. We cruised up the Rhine River to the beautiful city of Cologne, our first stop in Germany. The first place you want to tour in Cologne is the lovely Cologne Cathedral. It is open daily and there are a variety of tours you can take, but sight-seeing during Mass is not permitted. With fantastic stained-glass windows, lovely statues and a quiet and reverential atmosphere, it's an awe-inspiring place to spend some time.

Then, to have a little fun, you should visit The Lindt Chocolate Museum. The museum is perched right by the river and shaped like a huge ship, with a large piece of Lindt chocolate made of plastic on the top. It is open daily, except on Monday, and admission is \$7.50 Euro. We took a self-guided tour around the museum, but it's not until you get to the second floor that you can actually watch them work with chocolate; putting it into molds and then wrapping and bagging some. Be sure to pay a visit to the huge candy shop on the main floor, where you can find every conceivable kind of Lindt Chocolates.

The Rhine Gorge is lined with one beautiful castle and lovely German town after another. We passed the famous Loralye statue on the side of the river and then we were treated to Rudesheimer Coffee, which is a special brandy, coffee and whipped cream drink which you only find in Rudesheim, Germany. We arrived in Rudesheim and paid a visit to Siegfried's Musical Cabinet Museum. Situated in an old house in Rudesheim, a guided tour takes you through the various rooms, demonstrating all the mechanical music cabinets, boxes, pianos, etc.

We docked in Koblenz and took a walking tour. Strolling around the cobblestone streets, seeing the beautiful, arched bridges; lovely houses and

little shops is very pleasant. The view from Ehrenbreitstein Fortress high above the Rhine across the Rhine River is gorgeous. This is also where you can see the famous statue of Emperor William I astride his horse.

In Cochem, we got to tour a real castle. It has been renovated to a certain extent, but they have maintained the ancient appearance and it was really interesting to see the beautiful and authentic furnishings, including some suits of armor! Perched on top of the mountain overlooking Cochem as a means of defense, two of the towers were original structures from the 1200's and it is just amazing to consider how old this makes the structure. Cochem was one of the nicest and most beautiful towns we visited. Co-

chem had beautiful arched bridges, an incredibly gorgeous three-dimensional mural depicting the town's history, lovely little outdoor cafes, churches and cathedrals – in fact, every place we looked; it was like a fairy tale village.

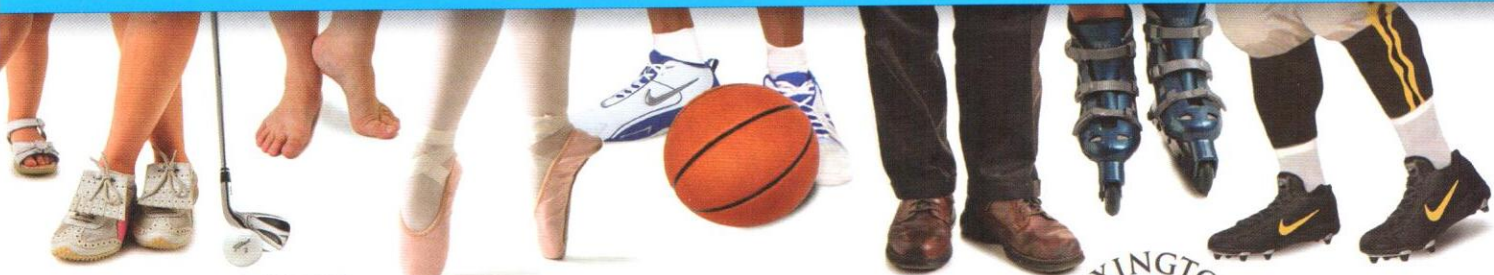
Heading down the Mosel River, we stopped in the small town of Bernkastel. Shopping is wonderful in all the towns of Germany, but it was in Bernkastel that I found the most beautiful and reasonably priced table linens. Buy everything you see – the prices are wonderful and the quality has proven to be very high.

If you have a chance to visit the towns of Germany which line these rivers, take it. It's an incredible journey!



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