

The Adventure Begins

“It’s a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don’t keep your feet, there’s no knowing where you might be swept off to.”

– J.R.R. Tolkien, [The Lord of the Rings](#)



The day had finally arrived! On September 15, I boarded an Icelandic Airlines DC-8 for the flight to Luxembourg by way of

Reykjavik, Iceland. Up to this point in my life, my only experience of international travel was to Canada. And yet, as a brash 25-year-old, I recall that my predominant feeling was exhilaration with hardly any tinge of trepidation. I was taking off on the greatest adventure yet of my young life.



I took a bus from Luxembourg to Frankfurt, Germany. I took in the sights in Frankfurt and then hitchhiked to Munich on the following day. I got as far as Nuremberg the first day. I met

up with a couple from Australia who were headed to Munich. We ended up in a nice campground on the Dachauerstrasse, the street that leads to the Dachau concentration camp. My high school German came back to me fairly quickly.

I've got a funny story to tell concerning this Australian couple. We arrived in Munich when Oktoberfest was in full swing, I rode to the venue with my new Australian friends. The Oktoberfest venue is huge; each of the major breweries has a massive pavilion, each with its own oompa band. We sat at a table with some Bavarian men who were very rude to us. John, the husband of the Australian couple felt compelled to match the Bavarians beer-for-beer. After many liters of beer, he excused himself to go to the bathroom.

His wife and I waited 5, 10, 15 minutes for him to return to the pavilion. When he didn't return, I went combing through large event grounds. I could find no trace of John. I was concerned, knowing that he spoke no German. When more time went by and John still didn't return, his wife decided to take their car and return to the camp ground. A taxi pulled in about 3am, and John stumbled into his tent. My curiosity was killing me.

I heard his story when he woke somewhat sober the following morning. He had passed out cold somewhere on the Oktoberfest grounds. Coming to, he found a taxi and tried to tell the taxi driver the address of the campground. All he could get out was "Dachau." So, in the wee hours of the morning, the driver took him to the entrance of the Dachau concentration camp memorial! Following his shock, he finally was able to get across to the driver that he wanted to go to a camping place.

I spent a couple more days in Munich. A few days later I was planning to board the Orient Express for Istanbul.