

Natural Splendour at Plitvice Lakes National Park

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Plitvice Lakes National Park, Croatia
Monday, May 30, 2016

"Rivendell" said Frodo. "Very good: I will go east, and I will make for Rivendell..." He spoke lightly, but his heart was moved suddenly with a desire to see the house of Elrond Halfelven, and breathe the air of that deep valley where many of the Fair Folk still dwelt in peace." Fellowship of the Rings.

Monday 30th of May 2016

Time to move on again and say goodbye to my brother Craig. He's staying on for a couple more days in Split before returning to London. Anna and I are off on a bus to Plitvice National Park to see the lakes. This is one of the places that Steph showed us pictures of that inspired us to come to Croatia, so we have high expectations.

An early start today and we were on our way on the bus at 8:30. It took us away from the coast with its Mediterranean scrubby vegetation and soon started climbing up the coastal mountains on some pretty impressive bridges and tunnels - probably paid for by the EU to encourage Croatia to join. Once we were over the first line of mountains, we came to a wide plateau that looked very fertile and if it was in Australia, would have been used for grazing. There was no large scale farming we could see. In fact, the scenery reminded us of Vietnam - small villages lining the road at short intervals - with houses surrounded by vegetable gardens. The newer houses were similar to Vietnam as well with concrete frames infilled with small hollow bricks that the more affluent finished off with hard plaster. The mountains and plateaus continued all the way to Plitvice, with the vegetation becoming more lush as we went.

We had a minor glitch by getting off the bus at the wrong stop at Plitvice. This resulted in a mile long walk on rocky paths pulling our fully laden suitcases behind us hoping the wheels wouldn't fall off. We found our accommodation which was more like a Swiss style chalet than the Croation architecture seen so far. This area is a ski resort in winter.

We are looking forward to tomorrow. Dinner at the cafe over the road.

Fine and 21 degrees. 250 km on the bus. 9.5 km walking.

Tuesday 31st of May 2016

High expectations can lead to disappointment - but not in this case. Plitvice Lakes National Park is spectacular. The water is such a vivid turquoise colour. The waterfalls are reminiscent of Rivendell in the Lord of the Rings movies. We started fairly early before the crowds, but as the day wore on, delays were encountered at some of the more photogenic spots as people queued to take their selfies and carefully composed snap shots.

The lakes were formed when softer areas of limestone were dissolved by water over thousands of years leaving behind the harder karsts, which form walls across the river path creating natural dams. The lakes are surrounded by thick forest and the water in the lakes is extremely clear, maybe due to the high calcium content causing sediment to precipitate out. When viewed from a distance the lakes are vivid turquoise - possibly due to the light coloured limestone base underneath.

One of the highlights of our trip so far.

Dinner at the same bistro as last night - it's the only one in our village.

Fine and about 20 degrees. 15 km walking.

Comments

What a change between Split and where you have been! Split, costal, yet dry. Plitvice, lots and lots of water! A joy to see!.

Back in Blighty, cold (had the heater on in the office today [yep, middle of 'Summer']). Jealous ++

— From Craig McArthur, on Jun 3, 2016 at 10:57PM

Pictures & Video



View from bus window from Split to Plitvice



Oops. Wrong bus stop. Tramping through forest...



Our accommodation. Very Swiss looking.



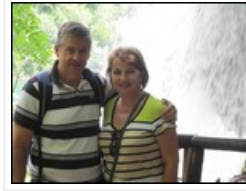
Boardwalk begins...



Wow!



Cool!



Waterfall



Lower lakes



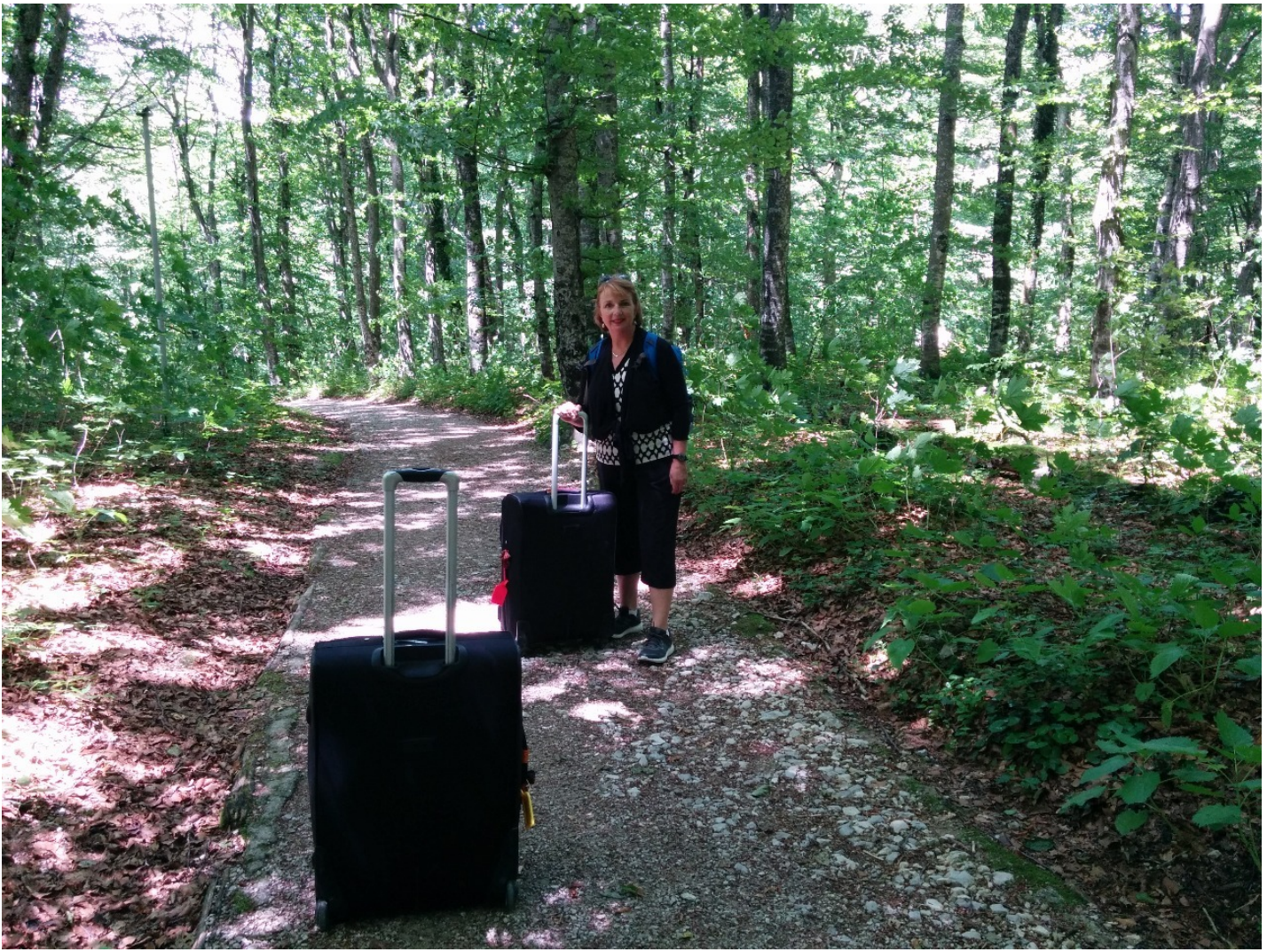
Water so clear fish seem suspended in air



Lake and sky



View from bus window from Split to Plitvice



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Our accommodation. Very Swiss looking.

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Cool!

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Waterfall

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Lower lakes

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Water so clear fish seem suspended in air

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Lake and sky

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