



SAFE BET FOR A RELAXING STAY

BEDFORD LODGE NEWMARKET, SUFFOLK

WHAT'S IT LIKE? This Georgian hunting lodge was converted into a hotel in the 1940s. Today, it still has that country house feel but with bags of modern luxury. If you're a horse-racing fan, it's close to the racecourse and we watched horses being trained at the stables next door from our window.

ROOMS ANY GOOD? There are 80 boutique rooms and suites — or you can book the three-bed mews house if there's a gang of you.

Silk cushions and velvet throws make the beds feel decadent and there's all the Molton Brown goodies you can handle.

EAT THERE OR TAKE

hot spot IT'S 27°C IN MEXICO — a week at the 5★ GR Caribe Deluxe All Inclusive Resort is from £1,169pp with Travel Republic. The price is based on all-inclusive with flights from Edinburgh on March 13. See travelrepublic.co.uk

hot spot IT'S 20°C IN GRAN CANARIA — three nights at the 3★ Cay Beach Princess Bungalows in Maspalomas is from £458pp with TUI. The price is based on self-catering with flights from Edinburgh on March 11. See tui.co.uk

TORONTO PRICES ARE OFF TO A FLIER

LOVERS looking for a romantic getaway this Valentine's Day should look no further than Toronto.

With its romantic skyline views, beautiful light festivals and breath-taking scenery, you can enjoy all of the city, right, has to offer with return flights from Glasgow from just £354pp with Air Transat. Just over seven hours from Glasgow. See airtransat.co.uk or call 00 800 872 672 83.

IF you need some winter sun then fly to Lanzarote. TUI has a flight-only deal from Edinburgh on February 14 from £31pp (two booking at same time). See tui.co.uk or visit your local TUI holiday store.

LAVAUUX is dubbed The Wine Route Of Switzerland and is famed for its light, crisp white wines. The sloped vineyards are in a UNESCO listed area that offers remarkable views of the Alps and Lake Geneva. A flight-only deal from Edinburgh to Geneva is from £68.99pp. See opodo.co.uk

THE argument for Glasgow Airport to have a rail link has



Air news increased after a new study revealed it contributes £1.44billion to the Scottish economy and that is predicted to rise to £2.57billion by 2040.

The survey by York Aviation also said the airport is projected to almost double passenger numbers to 17million a year. The airport supports more than 30,000 jobs, potentially rising to 43,000 by 2040. MD Mark Johnston said: "We have invested more than £130m in our facilities since 2011 and have a strategy in place to put us on the path to becoming a 17-million passenger airport by 2040. To do this we also need to address the current constraints such as motorway congestion and delivering the planned rail link."

STEP BACK IN TIME ON TRIP TO

HERE was a stunning picture-postcard scene centuries in the making.

The riverside façade of the medieval Old Town was a striking introduction to Tübingen, enticing us to explore further.

This was clearly a city with a fascinating story to tell.

And we instantly saw why it is one of 17 cities carefully chosen by Historic Highlights of Germany, which offers intriguing destinations off the usual tourist track.

In fact, Tübingen is the newest addition to their itinerary — and for history buffs like myself and wife Lynn it proved a real gem.

We'd arrived by train and checked into Hotel Krone — just five minutes' walk from the station — feeling relaxed and ready to enjoy all this university city in Baden-Württemberg has to offer.

The Old Town has the feel of a living museum and it's so easy to explore by foot.

Our starting point was the man-made Neckar Island, a park with a striking 200-year-old Plane Tree Avenue.

And the island which splits the Neckar river provided our stunning view across to the Old Town.

The vista included the original university building, the Old Assembly Hall, dating from the 15th century, and the spire of Gothic Collegiate Church, dating from the same period.

Within a few steps of the island — which is a hub for punting in the summer — we were in the heart of the Old Town, as we climbed narrow streets and alleyways left unchanged for centuries.

Our destination was Tübingen's castle, Schloss Hohentübingen, which provides a fantastic view over the city.

Soak up the atmosphere

First mentioned in the 11th century, the castle is now part of the university and allows the public access to some of its collections. It was here in the late 19th century that Swiss doctor Friedrich Miescher discovered DNA.

Today, almost a third of Tübingen's 90,000 population are students and the university's buildings are scattered across the city.

We enjoyed a wander across town to soak up the atmosphere of the 19th century uni complex — just watch out for the thousands of cyclists sharing the footpaths!

We saw too how Tübingen's history is tied up with the Reformation, the city being central to its development.

A visit to Tübinger Stift highlights the dramatic changes it brought as it was transformed into a Protestant seminary in 1560 having been constructed as a Catholic Augustinian monastery.

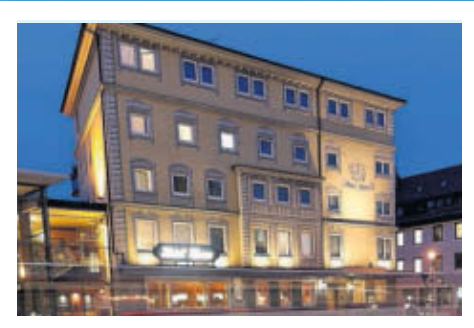
We then headed to the historic, picturesque Market Place, dominated by the colourfully-decorated City Hall, dating from the 15th century. Its astronomical clock is still in working order after 500 years.

And our visit to the Market Place was timed perfectly — as it was staging the annual chocolateART event, Germany's biggest chocolate festival.

Held for the past 13 years in the cobbled square and surrounding streets, it brings together dozens of chocolate sellers. It's difficult to walk past all the free samples on



PLUSH stay at Hotel Krone, top right, and Drei Mohren hotel, top left. Kevin at market in Augsburg & Golden Hall at Town Hall.



RIVER CITY... the heart of stunning Tübingen

GO: AUGSBURG AND TÜBINGEN

GETTING TO AUGSBURG: Fly to Munich direct from Edinburgh and Glasgow. Augsburg is then a 40-minute train ride.

STAYING THERE: Rates start from approx £80 per night for a 3★ hotel (B&B). Hotel recommendation: Steigenberger Hotel Drei Mohren.

MORE INFO: Visit augsborg-tourismus.de

GETTING TO TÜBINGEN: Fly to Stuttgart from direct from Edinburgh. Tübingen is 25 minutes by car, 50 minutes by bus or 55 minutes by train.

STAYING THERE: Rates start from approx £100 per night for a 3★ hotel (B&B). Recommendation: Hotel Krone.

MORE INFO: Visit tuebingen-info.de and historicgermany.travel

offer! A stroll with a warming hot chocolate was the perfect way to soak up the bustling, family-friendly atmosphere as we decided on which of the tasty treats to take home.

Later, we sampled the best of Tübingen's culinary heritage, enjoying some typical Swabian fare at the cosy Wurstküche restaurant.

This was packed with locals — always a good sign. And by tucking into a filled pasta dish called Maultaschen, followed by a decent helping of apple strudel, we couldn't have eaten more traditionally. Charming

grand Maximilian Strasse, which houses several art collections, encompassing almost 100 masterpieces, and features a courtyard and gardens.

However, the palace was worth visiting for its stunning ballroom alone. It took our breath away.

Designed in the late 18th century for a visit by Marie Antoinette, its carved decorations, mirrors, ornate stucco work, chandeliers and ceiling painting are still intact from that period — the building having emerged unscathed from bombing raids.

Visit in the summer and you might get to enjoy a concert in these wonderful surroundings.

One of the delights of Augsburg is that many attractions are within walking distance. So we took a stroll from the Schaezler Palace through cobbled streets to the Fuggerei, which highlights the plight of those at the lower end of the social scale.

The Fuggerei is the oldest social housing settlement in the world — and although it's in the heart of the city it is world away, with its own

church, city wall and gates. Jakob Fugger the Rich — whose family looms large in Augsburg history — created the settlement in 1521 for the poor, with its most famous resident being Franz Mozart, great-grandfather of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (the composer's father Leopold was also born in the city).

Today it fulfils the same purpose for 150 inhabitants, who each pay a nominal rent. We visited a model apartment showing how people live there now, as well as a museum where a recreated home of the past reveals former conditions. Also, a

HISTORIC HIDDEN GEMS

TOP BARGAINS IN THE SAILS

CRUISE the Caribbean for 13 nights from £1,199pp, including flights to join P&O's Azura in Barbados. You sail to beautiful sun-drenched islands like St Lucia, Antigua, St Maarten, and Ponta Delgada in the Azores then head back Southampton. Departs UK on March 9. See pocruires.com or call 03453 555 111.

SAIL on Sapphire Princess to the Norwegian Fjords, below, leaving Southampton on July 6 and calling at Stavanger, Olden, Hellesylt, Geiranger and Bergen. The week-long trip costs from £779pp. See princess.com

JOIN the maiden voyage of MSC Bellissima, sailing from Southampton on March 4 for eight days, visiting La Coruna in Spain, Lisbon, Valencia and Barcelona, from £879pp. The price includes a free package worth £288pp. Upgrade to a balcony stateroom available from £220pp. See icelolly.com

LE Boat's Canal du Midi services will be fully operational from mid-March following autumn flooding last year. You can cover more than 150 miles of scenic waterways along an impressive 17th century network of canals that connect the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. A seven-night rental starts from just over £100pp for Premier cruisers which features the Horizon — the

newest model in the fleet. It offers an impressive top deck and spacious saloon and kitchen areas. See leboat.co.uk or call 023 9280 1630.

EXPLORE Orlando and the Bahamas with Royal Caribbean on a seven-night holiday onboard Mariner Of The Seas from May 21. Prices start from £1,829pp, including flights from Glasgow, a dinner on Royal Caribbean at the Hard Rock cafe in Orlando, VOOM internet and private transfers. Ports of call are Port Canaveral, Nassau, Bahamas and Perfect Day CocoCay. See royalcaribbean.co.uk

P&O Cruises has a 13-night trip to Spain, Portugal and Gibraltar, from £1,199pp on board Azura, leaving Southampton on April 7 and calling at La Coruna, Oporto, Gibraltar, Valencia, Cartagena and Lisbon. See pocruires.com

THOMSON Cruises' Marella Dream has a week-long trip around the Canaries from £635pp, flying from Edinburgh on February 15. It has stop-offs in Tenerife, Gran Canaria, Madeira, Agadir and Lanzarote. See iglucruise.com or call 0203 733 5557.

TAKE in the delights of Spain, Portugal and Guernsey on a seven-night cruise on board P&O's Ventura from £699pp. Departs from Southampton on April 5, calling at Vigo, Lisbon, Oporto and St. Peter Port. See pocruires.com or call 03453 555 111.



cruise news



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THIS IS HOW TO HOLIDAY



TO BOOK, CALL 0344 493 3506 quoting EPMA3

Terms and conditions: Packages are based on two people flying from a London airport and sharing an Interior Stateroom on Mariner of the Seas® departing 2 Sep 2019. Alternative flights from selected other UK airports may be available at a price supplement. Itineraries, dates and pricing are correct at the time of publication, but are subject to availability and change. For up-to-date prices go to royalcaribbean.co.uk/packages prior to booking. This package can be booked by calling our UK call centre on 0344 493 3506 quoting code EPMA3. Calls are free. Additional restrictions apply. See full Cruise & Stay terms and conditions at royalcaribbean.co.uk/packages. Packages are offered by RCL Cruises Limited t/a Royal Caribbean International (company number 07366632) with registered office address at Building 3, The Heights, Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0NY.



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