There was one plan today – to make it eventually down the Danube River to Vienna. The Viking Tir wasn’t able to sail until after 4:00 am, and I woke up when I felt the longship start moving. I looked out our small stateroom windows to see the high waters splashing against the windows. It was going to be a long day on the river, announced our program director after breakfast. Another tour would be canceled – no Melk Abbey.

There was nothing we could do about it, except to go with the flow – literally. The scenic views that we saw along the Rhine River now turned into dull spots along a muddy brown river that colored our perception because of the bad news we had been receiving for the past three days. Our former bright outlook had turned into a present surreal and irrational happening, where we couldn’t comprehend what was happening to us. I was on the verge of an existential despair, sinking into the depths of a watery abyss where I no longer wanted to be on the river cruise. I had looked forward to traveling on the Rhine and Danube Rivers. Now, I didn’t want to have anything to do with the rivers.
A small airfield past the town of Vilshofen made me think of getting on the plane and flying back home. When I checked on the map, Vilshofen was upriver. What in the world? I was totally confused. It seemed like déjà vu on the Danube.

I looked across the drab landscape at a factory. Did we pass this way before?
The towns, with their shoreline buildings and church steeples, no longer seemed interesting to look at. I was still trying to get my bearings.

The large building somehow intrigued my mind – what was that? Georg Doglmaier & Sohne, Landau, Schalding, Donau, according to the internet, was a company in the business of wholesale trade in cereals, animal feed and fertilizers, and other agricultural products and commodities. Schalding was in the district of Passau. My attempt to find out where we were was interrupted by the announcement by Stephen Guy that his presentation on Mozart was about to begin. I hurried to the lounge.
At 10:30 am, our program director, Stephen Guy, sought to distract our minds with a Presentation on Mozart. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in 1756 at the end of the baroque, beginning of the classical period. He was a “Wunderkind” (wonder-child, prodigy), who was able to play chords, intervals, and harmonic thirds at three-years-old.

He wrote his first symphony at the age of eight. [https://youtu.be/b4IXXpTHjok](https://youtu.be/b4IXXpTHjok) His piano concerto no. 9 was a classical masterpiece. [https://youtu.be/VB-bw7WodLY](https://youtu.be/VB-bw7WodLY)

In his early years, Mozart's development was guided by his father Leopold, who wanted him to help support the family. However, Mozart became discontented with his employment as a court musician in his birthplace, Salzburg, and in 1777 he left for Paris, where he wrote his great Paris Symphony (no. 31). [https://youtu.be/s9yRart11vl](https://youtu.be/s9yRart11vl)

In 1779, after his mother's death, he traveled to Munich to pursue opera work. In the meantime, he wrote piano sonatas. [https://youtu.be/qjk-YRuQZDE](https://youtu.be/qjk-YRuQZDE)

In 1786, after getting married in 1782 to Constanze Weber, he collaborated with Lorenzo Da Ponte to write the successful “The Marriage of Figaro”, which premiered in Vienna. [https://youtu.be/8OZCyp-LcGw](https://youtu.be/8OZCyp-LcGw)

Mozart's last year was, until his final illness struck, a time of great productivity. He composed a great deal, including some of his most admired works: the opera “The Magic Flute” ([https://youtu.be/Vwub-9dZLFU](https://youtu.be/Vwub-9dZLFU)), and the unfinished Requiem in D Minor K. 626, about which Mozart said, “I fear I am writing a Requiem for myself.” He died on December 5, 1791. [https://youtu.be/sPlhKP0nZII](https://youtu.be/sPlhKP0nZII)

During his short life of 35 years, he composed more than 600 works, many acknowledged as pinnacles of symphonic, concerto, chamber, operatic, and choral music. He is among the most popular of classical composers. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang_Amadeus_Mozart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang_Amadeus_Mozart)
W.A Mozart :The Magic Flute with English subtitle (complete)

The Magic Flute Die Zauberflöte K 620, is an opera in two acts by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to a German libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder. The work is in the form of a Singspiel, a popular form that included both singing and spoken dialogue. The work premiered on 30 September 1791 at Schikaneder’s theatre, the Freihaus-Theater auf der Wieden in Vienna, just two months before the composer's premature death.

In this opera, the Queen of the Night persuades Prince Tamino to rescue her daughter Pamina from captivity under the high priest Sarastro; instead, he learns the high ideals of Sarastro's community and seeks to join it. Separately, then together, Tamino and Pamina undergo severe trials of initiation, which end in triumph, with the Queen and her cohorts vanquished. The earthy Papageno, who accompanies Tamino on his quest, fails the trials completely but is rewarded anyway with the hand of his ideal female companion Papagena.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Magic_Flute

A short synopsis of the opera The Magic Flute (Die Zauberflöte) story can be done in 1 sentence: The Magic Flute opera is about Prince Tamino and Princess Pamina who overcome the forces of darkness in order that truth and love may reign in the world.

There is an interesting short animated plot summary online (video, 3:04):
https://www.classicalmpr.org/story/2014/01/03/opera-plot-video-mozart-s-the-magic-flute
After the interesting preview of the Mozart & Stauss concert we would see in Vienna, our gaze turned back to the swollen Danube River. Our fingers were crossed as we passed under each bridge, hoping that the high water wasn’t going to damage our Viking longship.

One thing we could always enjoy – rain or shine, high water or low water – was the sumptuous food we had on the long ship.
Instead of receding into despondency, or sleeping my time away, I decided to watch the action on the locks. It was better than watching TV.

There are a total of 18 river power plants on the Danube waterway (from Kelheim to Sulina). These generate energy by utilizing the gradient of the river and the accumulation of water behind the dam.
After the water was drained from the water-tight lock chamber our longship was in, and we were level with the downstream waters, the giant gates slowly opened.
https://www.ursulasweeklywanders.com/travel/through-the-locks-the-main-danube-
canal-and-the-danube-river-europe/ (PhotoBlog, by Ursula in BKK)
Now it was clear sailing to our next destination on the Danube River. There was a high bridge coming into view, which indicated it was probably the place of a major city. Indeed, it was. We were sailing through Passau, again.
There was the St. Stephan Cathedral, again.

And there was the 13th-century fortress Veste Oberhaus, again. It definitely was déjà vu as I realized I had seen all this before.
But that was OK, for this time I was closer to the places that previously I had only seen on the tour of the city of Passau from across the river. The Burg Unterhaus (aka Veste Niederhaus) on the bank of the river with the walls around it was impressive. It was connected to the larger Veste Oberhaus castle by a battlement; this addition, made after 1367, created a double fortress almost 700 meters in length.

Now that I had found my bearings, I was feeling better. It never feels good to be lost or disoriented. I knew now that we were sailing south of Passau, down the Danube River.
And to my satisfaction, I was informed that the longship had to go back up river to Straubing (north of Passau) to pick up people from the bike excursion. That ended the confusion for me. Knowledge gives peace of mind--an awareness I cherish to this day.

A tower and a small castle appeared on a hill above the Danube. It seemed uninhabited. It was right before we came to Obernzell. It was the medieval fortress Krempelstein Castle, built in the 14th century for the bishop of Passau. 
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burg_Krempelstein
Obernzell is a municipality in the district of Passau in Bavaria in Germany. Obernzell is located in the Donau-Wald region at the Danube River. The middle of the Danube River forms the border with Upper Austria. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obernzell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obernzell)

The sign said: “Donauperle Obernzell” (Pearl of the Danube, Obernzell)
We were entering the Danube Power Plant at Jochenstein, a special structure of historic importance. This particular historic structure straddles the German-Austrian border, which here runs down the middle of the River Danube. As a result of this shared border, the hydroelectric plant was developed as a binational project. On the German side, the power plant consists of a powerhouse with its five Kaplan turbines, a double chamber lock, an installation site, and administration and operation buildings with the control room.
The Jochenstein Power Plant spans the Danube at Untergriesbach. The plant was constructed between 1952 and 1956 – which meant that the catastrophic floods of 1954 occurred right in the middle of this major project. In early July, devastating high tides caused the water levels to rise by 20 cm per hour in the area of the building site. The appropriate safety measures were taken in good time, thus avoiding even worse damage. 
https://www.bavaria.by/experiences/city-country-culture/monuments/jochenstein-danube-power-plant/
A shrine to St. Nicholas, patron saint of sailors, was placed at a promontory near the entrance to the locks and the power plant.

The lock, dam, and power plant were behind us now as we continued our journey down the Danube River.
Engelhartszell an der Donau (upper Danube Valley) is a municipality in the district of Schärding in the Austrian state of Upper Austria.

Several longships were docked at Engelhartszell.
Several metal sculptures caught my eye.

Oh, oh. Another low bridge. Everybody down. According to Google Map, this most likely is the Ebenhoch Landestrasse (bridge) at the town of Niederranna.
A taste of Austria – Mozart chocolate cream. And lots of sweets.
Small communities and tourist enterprises nestle in the bends of the river.

“The Wachau” is the name given the narrow gorge where the Danube River runs between the Bohemian Massif on the northwest, and the Dunkelsteiner Woods to the southeast. For roughly forty kilometers between the Lower Austrian cities of Melk and Krems, the hilltops are dotted with castle ruins. Since we missed most of the Wachau castles and towns – our program director did not give a narrated tour like he did in the Rhine Valley – I found a website that covered “The Wachau” pretty well. 
Scenic view of **Burgschloss (Castle) Neuhaus**. Muehlviertel (region). Upper Austria.

http://www.burgenwelt.org/oesterreich/neuhaus/object.php

Google Map allowed me to cruise online from Melk to Krems – and to explore what I missed on the Viking tour because of the flooding on the Danube River, and the disruption the flooding caused to our plans.

https://www.google.com/maps/@48.3067275,15.8250359,50886m/data=!3m1!1e3
Another lock on the Danube River. This one appeared to be a double lock system.
I watched as the lock (left) closed and a gate rose to divide the lock from the river.

The top deck (sun-deck) of our longship featured a small golf putting course, and an herbal garden used by the cooks. Also, there was a small walking path around the golf putting & garden area.
Our program directory, Stephen Guy, dressed up in his lederhosen for the “Taste of Austria” evening.

We had developed close friendships with several other couples on the river cruise: Bill & Sylvia (left side), Susan & Bill (right side), and Dennis and Charlene (middle).
The crew entertained us with some music.

The cooks were glad to be part of the “Taste of Austria” festivities.
Austrian dinner – Taste of Austria.
Resources:


http://www.wmatchet.com/danube/maps/map1.jpg (illustrated map of castles on Danube)
Credit goes to Ginny, a friend who traveled on the same Viking river cruise in April, 2019, a month earlier than I did. She provided me with a few photos of the two places she went to that were cancelled on my trip: Melk Abbey and Salzburg.

I also found a couple of Melk Abbey videos online (You Tube) that provided me with an idea of what I missed:

Melk Abbey
https://youtu.be/OfengyLySAI (14:39, by Hoosier Tim’s Travel Videos)

Stift Melk in HD (Austria) Vacation Travel Video Guide
https://youtu.be/c09aNZ7c4yw (9:30, by Expoza Travel)

Travel video about destination Stift Melk in Austria. The fine buildings of the Benedictine monastery of Melk majestically rise up from a plateau above the fascinating town on the River Danube. The elegant, yellow buildings of the monastery have become well-known far beyond Austria.
**Salzburg** was the place I really wanted to see. And so did my wife, Elsa.


**Salzburg and Surroundings**  

**The Sound of Music Tour - HD All Movie Locations in Austria and Germany Then and Now...**  
[https://youtu.be/VNutlOE0yhQ](https://youtu.be/VNutlOE0yhQ) (36:18)

“The hills are alive with the Sound of Music” ….
Mozart's birthplace (German: Mozarts Geburtshaus or Hagenauerhaus) was the birthplace of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart at No. 9 Getreidegasse in Salzburg, Austria. The Mozart family resided on the third floor from 1747 to 1773. Mozart himself was born here on 27 January 1756. He was the seventh child of Leopold Mozart, who was a musician of the Salzburg Royal Chamber.

Now a museum, Mozart's birthplace introduces visitors to the early life of the composer, his first musical instruments, his friends, and his passionate interest in opera. The third floor exhibits Mozart's childhood violin as well as portraits, documents, and early editions of his music, and the second floor is devoted to Mozart's interest in opera and includes the clavichord on which he composed The Magic Flute. The structure is owned by the Mozart Foundation.
The Mirabellgarten (Mirabell gardens), back of Mirabell Palace. It is one of the most popular tourists' attraction in Salzburg. Several scenes from *The Sound of Music* were filmed here. Maria and the children sing 'Do-Re-Mi' while dancing around the horse fountain and using the steps as a musical scale.  

The **Hohensalzburg Fortress**, overlooking the city of Salzburg.  