



**Ed & Rob's
REALLY big
circle
mancation..**

**Scandinavia
and Baltic
states June
27 – July 10,
2012**

**Here we go again!
Mancation 2012.**

Woo hoo!! Following the butt-kicking circle of 2010 and Mid-Atlantic 2011, travel buds Ed & Rob carefully planned and embarked on one of the longest, smoothest journeys of them all.

Scandinavia and the Baltic States, with some England, Poland, and Germany thrown in for good measure.



Date:	27 JUN 12 - WEDNESDAY				
Flight :	American Airlines	368		MD-80	
Departure:	AUSTIN	8:55 AM			2HR 40MIN
Arrival:	CHICAGO OHARE	11:35 AM		TERMINAL 3 REF: DTULDR	NON-STOP
Name:	STEIN/EDWARD	SEAT 11F	ECONOMY	FF#: AA-7MH3086	FOOD FOR PURCHASE
	GERLACH/ROBIN	SEAT 9E	ECONOMY		FOOD FOR PURCHASE
Date:	27 JUN 12 - WEDNESDAY				
Flight :	American Airlines	54		BOEING 767 300	
Departure:	CHICAGO OHARE	6:05 PM		TERMINAL 3	7HR 45MIN
Arrival:	MANCHESTER UK	7:50 AM		TERMINAL 3 REF: DTULDR	NON-STOP
	28 JUN 12 - THURSDAY				
Name:	STEIN/EDWARD	SEAT 37A	ECONOMY	FF#: AA-7MH3086	MULTI MEALS
	GERLACH/ROBIN	SEAT 37B	ECONOMY		MULTI MEALS
Date:	10 JUL 12 - TUESDAY				
Flight :	American Airlines	55		BOEING 767 300	
Departure:	MANCHESTER UK	10:40 AM		TERMINAL 3	8HR 15MIN
Arrival:	CHICAGO OHARE	12:55 PM		TERMINAL 5 INTERNATIONAL REF: DTULDR	NON-STOP
Name:	STEIN/EDWARD	SEAT 40A	ECONOMY	FF#: AA-7MH3086	MULTI MEALS
	GERLACH/ROBIN	SEAT 40B	ECONOMY		MULTI MEALS
Date:	10 JUL 12 - TUESDAY				
Flight :	American Airlines	2491		MD-80	
Departure:	CHICAGO OHARE	8:40 PM		TERMINAL 3	2HR 30MIN
Arrival:	AUSTIN	11:10 PM			NON-STOP
Name:	STEIN/EDWARD	SEAT 19A	ECONOMY	FF#: AA-7MH3086	FOOD FOR PURCHASE
	GERLACH/ROBIN	SEAT 19B	ECONOMY		FOOD FOR PURCHASE



A good deal of planning this trip occurred in February during TMEA here at Blue Star Brewing in San Antonio.



This is when our itinerary really took shape. Travel books, computer, maps. This is when Rob emailed organist at Uppsala requesting time on organ at Lutheran cathedral.



Ed works his travel magic on the computer

**More planning at
Keese's in Medina
on Sat. Mar 3.**



Mary Kay opted to drop us off at airport, Joan would pick us up at the end. We had several hours to kill in Chicago before the overseas hop on Wednesday, June 27.





Got to this new pavilion in Chicago where a CARMINA BURANA rehearsal was ending.

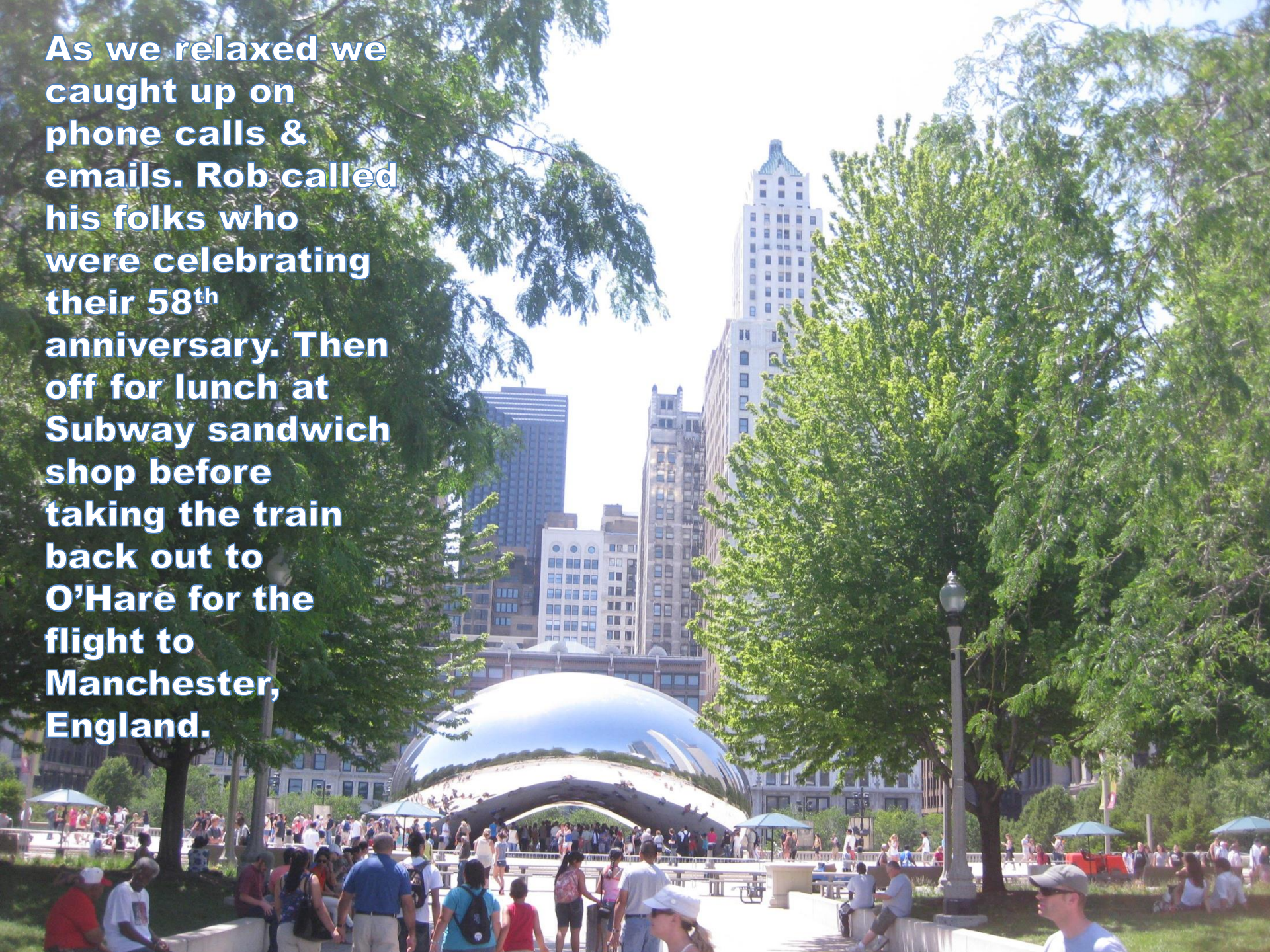


CLOUD GATE is the name of this sculpture also called “the bean.” Made up of 168 stainless steel plates. A highlight of Millennium Park.

A man with short grey hair, wearing a green t-shirt, blue jeans, and sunglasses, is sitting on the grass. He is leaning back on his right arm, looking towards the right. A large black backpack is on the grass next to him. To his right is a metal railing with a diamond-patterned top. In the background, a city street is visible with several people walking. A man in a red shirt is sitting on a concrete block to the left. A woman in a black top and shorts is taking a photo. The scene is outdoors with trees and a building in the background.

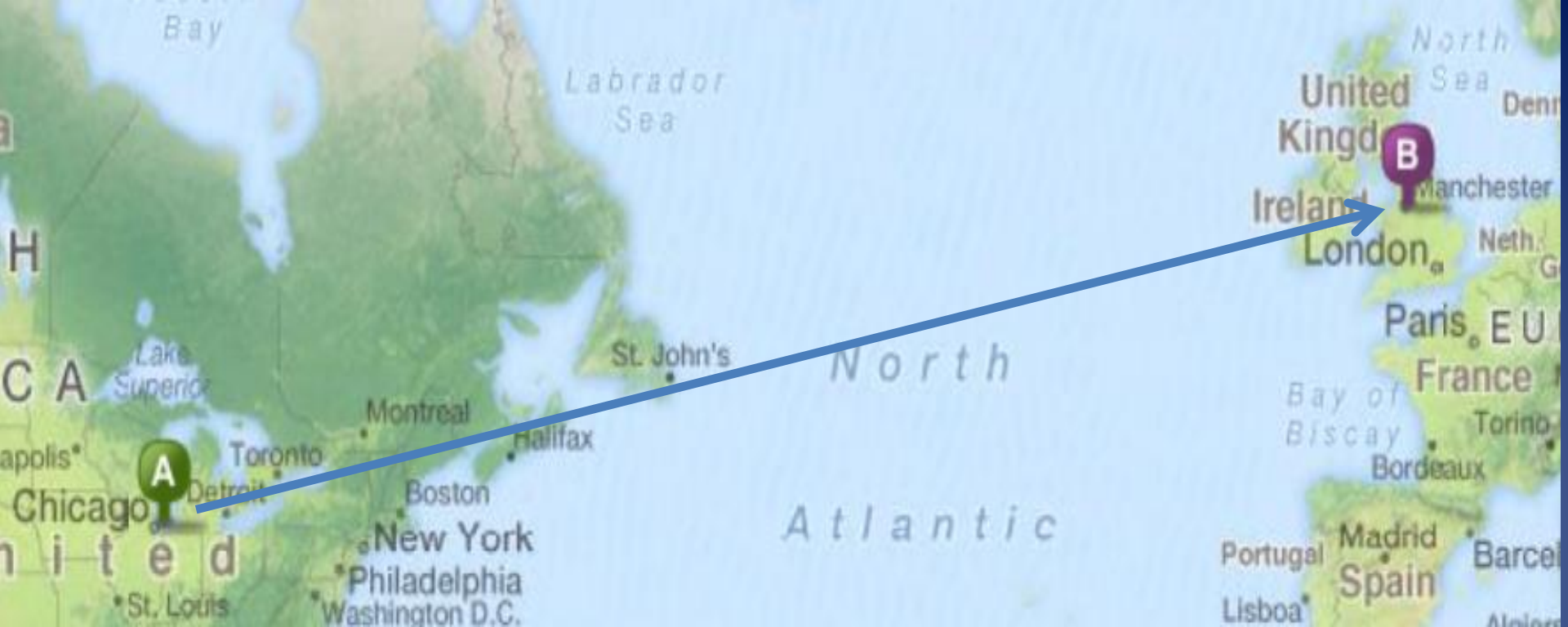
This recent retiree soaking in the sights and sounds of Chicago.

As we relaxed we caught up on phone calls & emails. Rob called his folks who were celebrating their 58th anniversary. Then off for lunch at Subway sandwich shop before taking the train back out to O'Hare for the flight to Manchester, England.





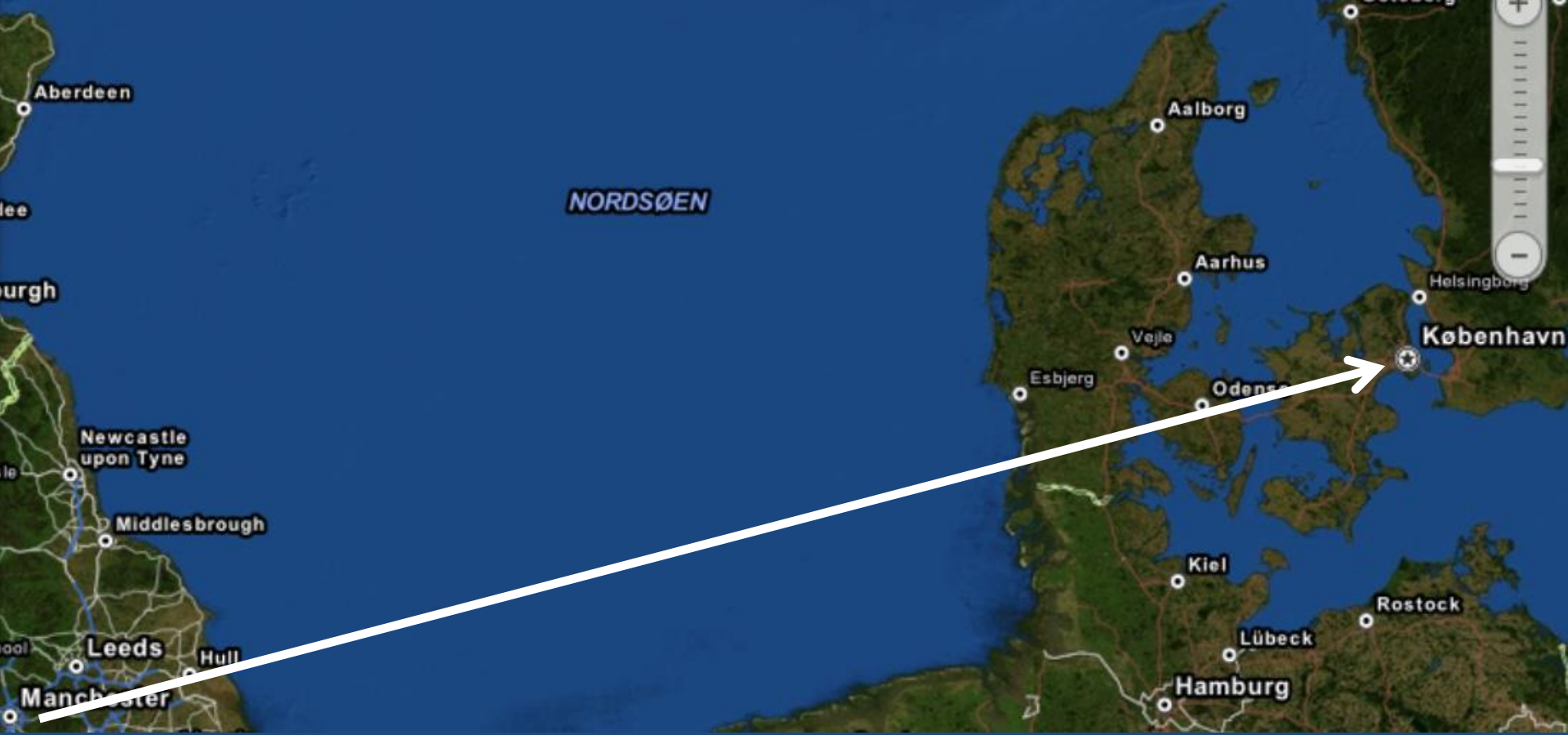
**First official
beer of the trip:
Sam Adams at
5:05pm.
What travel
studs!**



Chicago to Manchester, England

Day #2, 28 June 2012. After a good flight to Manchester, a shuttle ride, long line at customs, and lunch, we board our EASY JET flight to Copenhagen, Denmark.





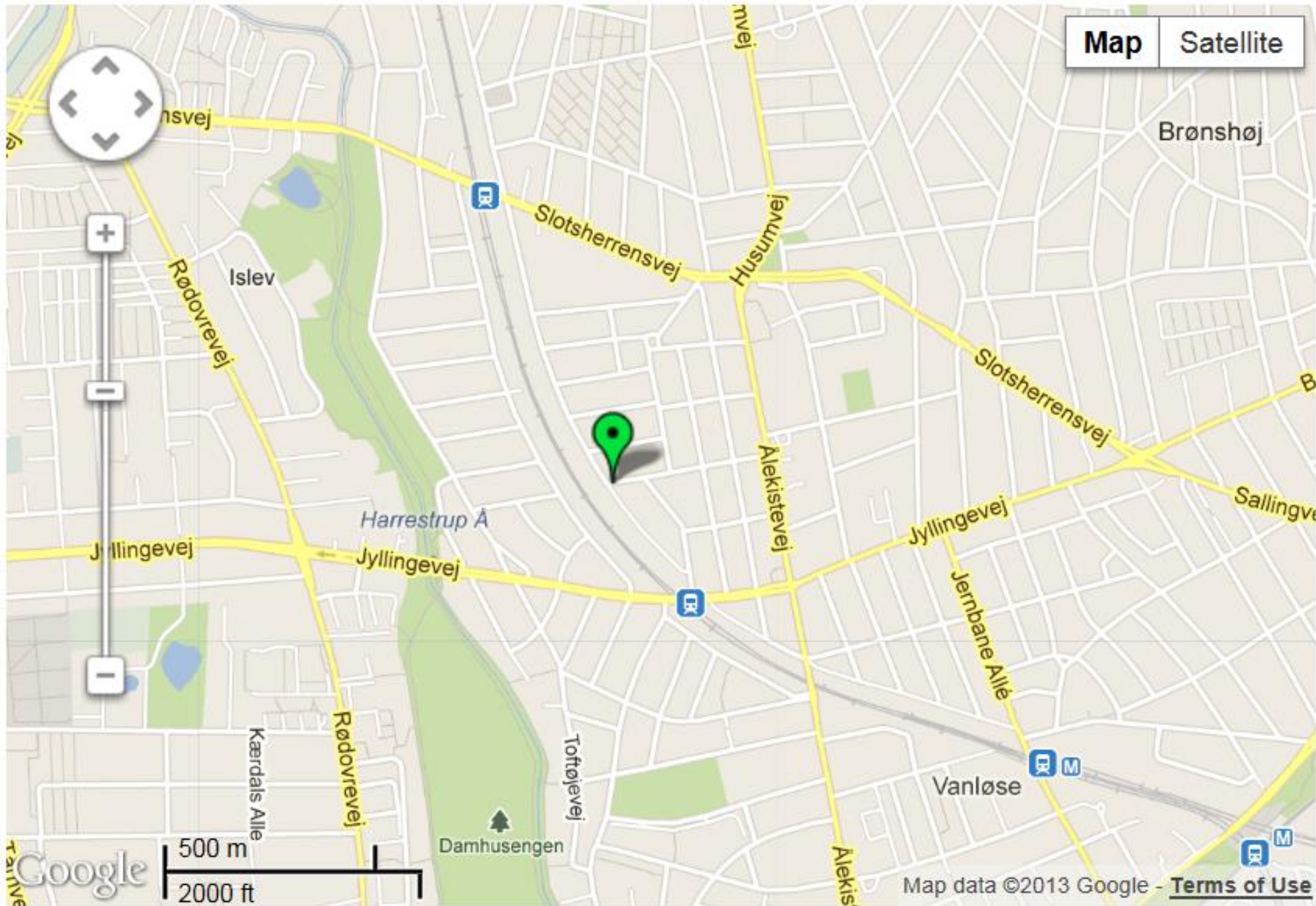
About an hour flight on EASYJET from Manchester to Copenhagen more time for reading Lucas Davenport books.

After the flight came the shuttle ride into Copenhagen. Took us awhile to figure out the ticketing system to get into town.





The 20 minute walk to our lodging for the night felt pretty good after sitting on planes and in the airport. Not sure why, but we weren't as tired as usual at this stage of a trip.



Eriksholmvej 28, Copenhagen, Denmark 2720

The basement of this single-family residence would be where we spent the night. There were several basement rooms that shared a bath, but we were the only patrons that night.



After checking into the room, we regrouped and planned our next strategy with the help of some local travel brochures. Tivoli Gardens would be our goal for the evening.





We consider this a typical “heart-warming” kind of picture. At a Copenhagen metro stop.

Ed had been here on a family trip years earlier. Tivoli Gardens is an amusement park that opened in 1843.



A perfect afternoon at Tivoli.





Food and official first beer in Denmark: a Toburg Classic. Later had a Paulaner Oktoberfest



By now we were beginning to fade. A closing beer(s) across the street to end the day.

We each had 2 Tuborgs at the Stovlen Bar here in Copenhagen. Naturally, a drunk guy sitting by us tried to strike up conversation. We've had our share of those in our travels.





Day #3, 29 June 2012. Our day began with a metro ride and walk to get the rent car.

Downtown Copenhagen



02/28/2012 14:14



**This little
Honda
served us
well on our
journey.**



To avoid “advertising” that this was a rent car to potential thieves - particularly in the Baltic States - we scraped stickers off of windshield and bumper.

**About an hour after leaving
Copenhagen, we boarded a ferry
taking us from Denmark to Sweden.
Kind of brisk out on the open water.**



Farewell Denmark... for a week or so





**It was a nice drive after the ferry ride to Gothenburg
(Göteborg), Sweden**



**Once again the Biotch (Garmin) took us directly to our destination.
This hostel would be our stop for this leg of the trip.**



This is where we checked into our hostel....

**... but this building
across the street is
where we actually
stayed**



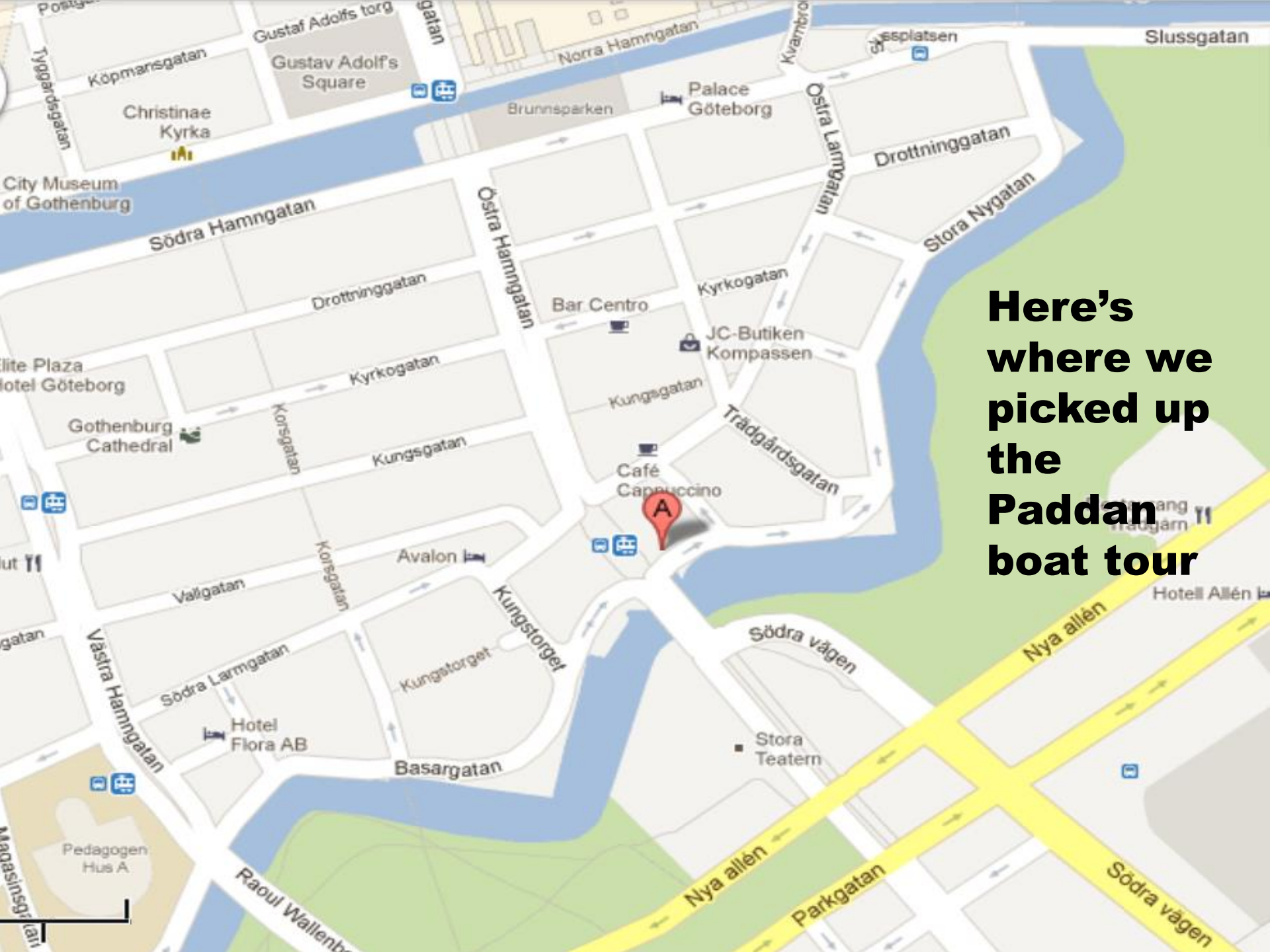
A boat ride around town is a good way to get an overview of a city. While we waited for our 3:30 launch, we walked to Viva Café to for a Carlsberg. Meanwhile... back at the car, we were getting a parking ticket.





**This was one
of the more
unusual bars
we've visited**

02/28/2012 21:20



**Here's
where we
picked up
the
Paddan
boat tour**



02/28/2012 21:00

Our vessel for the water tour

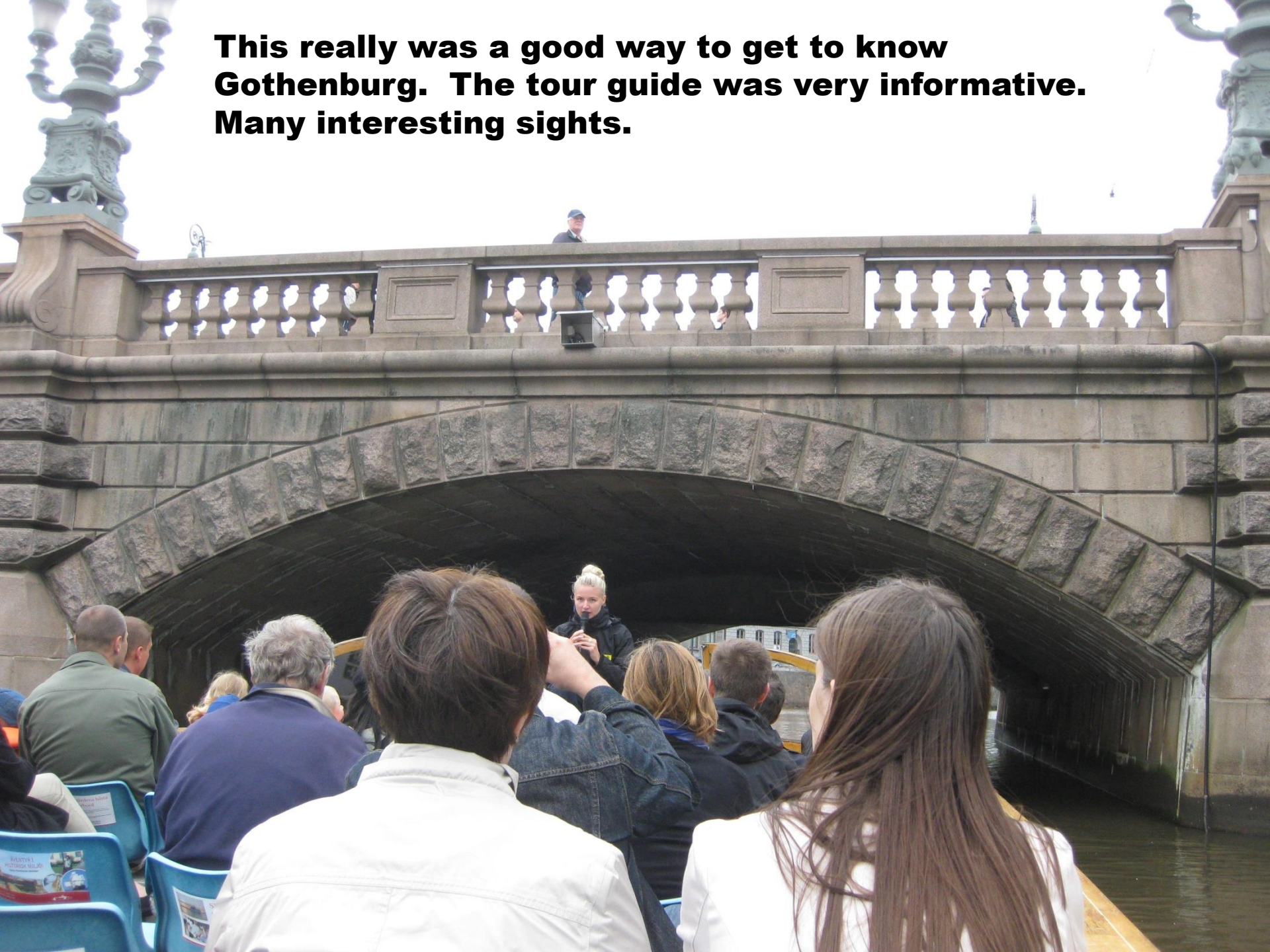
**Awaiting our departure
for boat tour**





**These are some serious, hardcore
travelers**

This really was a good way to get to know Gothenburg. The tour guide was very informative. Many interesting sights.



At two different times we had to get out of our seats and sit on the floor to avoid decapitation. That was different.



Under the bridge




Many interesting sights on this ride





The down side to having a car in Europe... where to park it safely - where it won't get ticketed, towed, or stolen. Found this garage about a 7 minute walk from the hostel.

02/28/2012 22:57



This was our room. Having tucked the car in for the night, we got settled in, then did something unusual for dinner. Went to nearby grocery store for a baked, whole chicken; deli tater salad; and cans of mystery beer.

02/28/2012 23:54

**Purddy
simple. Just
pull up a
“floor” and
begin
gnawing at
the yardbird
& trimmings**



02/29/2012 00:01



We have “beer & rain” stories from travels past, and here’s another. We wandered several blocks from the hostel and found this place. A typical Friday night crowd - very full. We found a couple of seats under the canopies in the front patio. But those canopies were not 100% leak proof.

**Nice website pics.
Imagine this place packed
with people and rain
dripping through at
numerous places. We
were seated here.**



**All-in-all... it was fun!
Another situation to
recall months & years
later. The beer
selection was quite
good. We had a
Brooklyn IPA and a
Sitting Bull IPA**





**We scientifically named
these interesting marks
on the beer glass, “sip
lines.”**

02/29/2012 03:53



Day #4, 30 June 2012. After a good night's sleep we went for a walk before eating breakfast at the hostel cafeteria. We had purchased the breakfast option when we checked in. A good way to start the day.

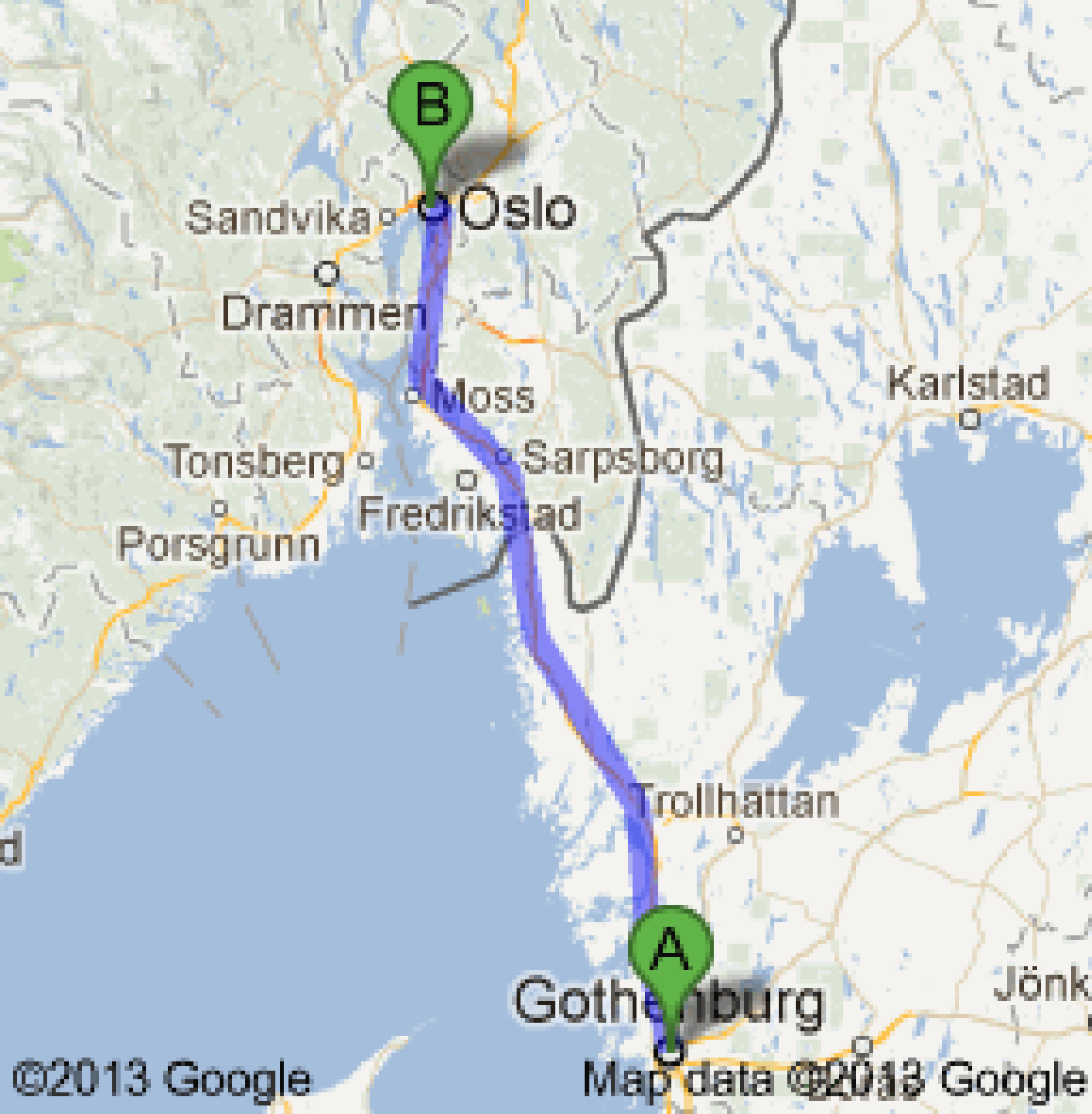
02/29/2012 13:02



**A brief and mild
panic attack
occurred when
we couldn't find
the car keys.
Found em under
Ed's bed**



A quick pic of Temple Bar without the rain



Our goal for this leg would be Oslo, Norway, about a 180 mile drive.

Another scenic drive





New highway opened, old blocked off, but nobody told the biotch. With a little creativity and old fashioned map reading, we were soon back on track



Rick Steves did us right by recommending the *Norwegian Folk Museum* a.k.a. *Norsk Folkemuseum*. In a nutshell: *The exhibits are located in the Open-Air Museum and in the exhibit halls. They feature daily life and living conditions in Norway from the 16th century to present time*

**Started our visit
with a
Norwegian
lunch: bread,
fried egg,
salmon,
cucumber and
dill**



**Another
opportunity
to use
camera
timers**



VENNLIGST SKYLL NED

PLEASE FLUSH



Now we know what *vennligst skyll ned* means



A variety of buildings are found in this open-air museum that represent various regions and time periods of Norway



The Gol Stave Church is a full-size replica of the original church built in about 1250. Not all is the same though, as in 1884, when the original disassembled, it was found to have been altered and remodeled both in 1664 and 1802. When it was re-erected at the Museum, only the basic interior structure was re-used. The exterior was modeled after Borgund Stavkirke in Sogn on the Norwegian west coast.





The Norwegian folk dance demonstration began with the blowing of this horn. Then the couple on the right “cut a rug.”





02/29/2012 18:40

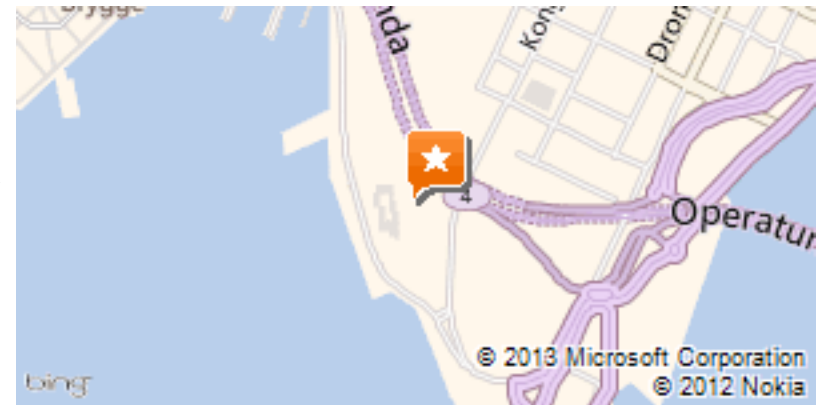


After the dance and the pic on the left, we met this lady from Norway and her daughter-in-law from AUSTIN, TEXAS!



Music of Norway





It was about a 15 minute drive from the Norsk Folkesmuseum (Norwegian Folk Museum) to our next destination: Norges Hjemmefrontmuseum (Norwegian Resistance Museum)



For us history buffs this was a real treat. The Norwegian Resistance Museum has stories and artifacts about the Nazi takeover and the Norwegians resistance.













02/29/2012 20:45



**Just plug in
your electric
car anywhere**

02/29/2012 20:51



We checked into our hostel before going to the home of an exchange student Ed had in the 80's, Vegard Lien. This is the entrance to their town home.

02/29/2012 23:46

Quite an international group. Vegard (holding child) with his wife (who he met on a business trip to Korea) with their two kids; and their friends, he from Croatia and she, Indonesia



02/29/2012 23:44

After a traditional Norwegian dinner, Vegard led us on a walking tour of downtown Oslo.



03/01/2012 02:35



BIENVENUTI

BIENVENIDOS

BIENVENIDOS

MUSEUM

03/01/2012 03:10



03/01/2012 03:18

Vegard opted to take the metro system home. We grabbed some local beer before heading back to the hostel.



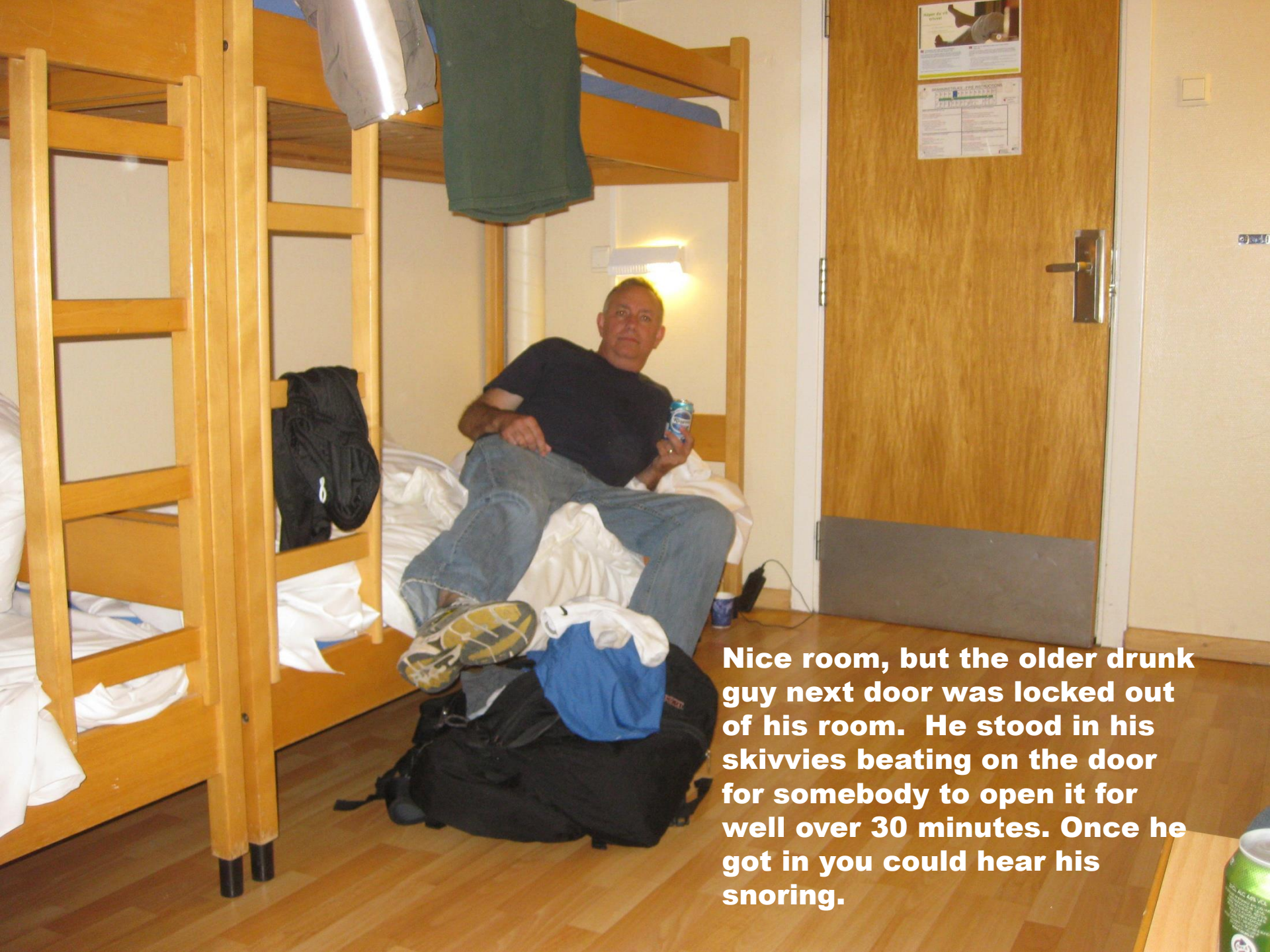
03/01/2012 02:46

This is the website photo of our Oslo hostel. It was a good place.



NORWAY

**Oslo Vandrerhjem
Haraldsheim**



Nice room, but the older drunk guy next door was locked out of his room. He stood in his skivvies beating on the door for someboddy to open it for well over 30 minutes. Once he got in you could hear his snoring.



We had enjoyed a Brooklyn IPA with dinner, then these night caps.

03/01/2012 04:51

Day #5: 01 July 2012. After a good breakfast at the hostel cafeteria, we started the 311 mile journey toward Uppsala, Sweden. Rob had a 4 pm date with the pipe organ at Uppsala's Lutheran cathedral. Lunch at a Pizza Hut along the way.




**A nice day for driving.
Overcast, little if any
rain**





**Construction
on *Uppsala
Domkyrka
(Uppsala
Cathedral)*
began in 1287
and took over
a century to
build**

A scenic view of a river in Uppsala, Sweden. The river flows from the foreground towards the background, where a suspension bridge with a red metal structure spans across it. The left bank is lined with a stone wall and a metal railing, with several cars parked nearby. The right bank features a wooden pier where a few people are sitting. The water is dark and reflects the surrounding greenery and buildings. In the foreground, there are vibrant purple and pink flowers. The sky is bright and clear.

**We had time to walk
around Uppsala before the
4p organ appointment.
Even a grocery store for a
cold drink**





Difficult to get a close-up shot that encompasses the magnitude of the whole structure

**The
stunning
organ in the
loft was
built by Per
Ackerman
in 1871**




**Rob got to play
the new (2008)
Ruffati instrument**






03/01/2012 20:24

A man in a dark shirt and jeans is seated on a wooden bench, playing a large pipe organ in a grand cathedral. The organ is illuminated with warm yellow lights. A large, ornate chandelier hangs from the ceiling above the organ. The cathedral's interior features high, vaulted ceilings, stone columns, and rows of wooden pews. In the background, a large pipe organ is visible on a raised platform. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the organ's lights and the chandelier.

**“Even a
buffalo fart
would sound
good in this
room.” Frank
Speller**

03/01/2012 21:02

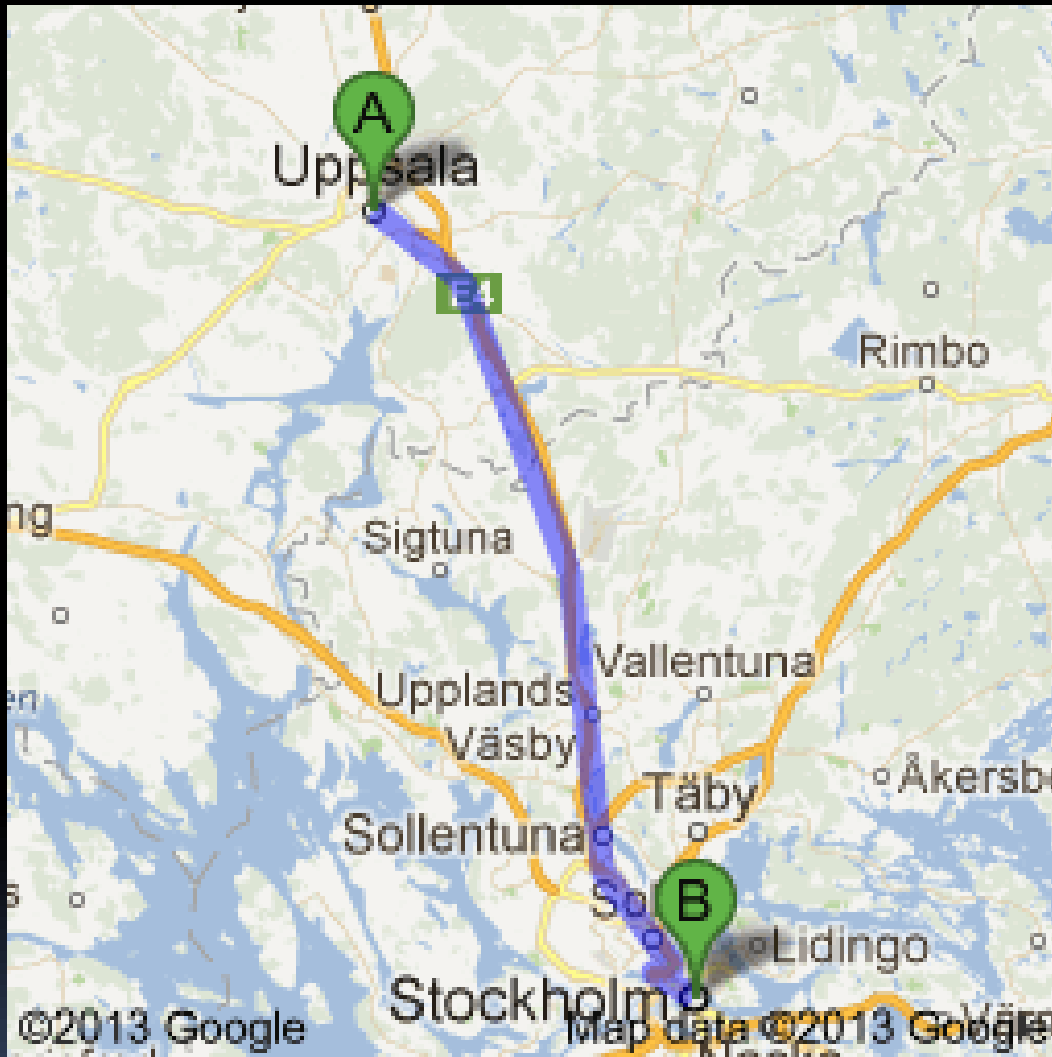
A photograph taken from the perspective of someone sitting in a church pew. In the center, a man in a dark t-shirt is seated at a large, ornate pipe organ, playing. The organ is illuminated with a warm yellow light. To the left, a man in a red jacket stands near a wooden podium. The church interior features high, arched stone columns and a large window in the background. In the foreground, the backs of several people's heads and shoulders are visible as they sit in wooden pews, watching the organist. The overall atmosphere is quiet and focused.

Unbeknownst to Rob, people sat down to listen & watch. Getting to play here was quite a “life” moment for Rob

03/01/2012 21:03



Our “farewell to Uppsala” shots



A beer in Uppsala after the organ experience would have been perfect, but better judgment prevailed and we started the 42 mile trek to Stockholm.



Welcome to
The Red Boat
Hotel & Hostel in the heart of Stockholm
Tel: 08 6444 385
www.theredboat.com

03/01/2012 23:43

We pulled into Stockholm around 7pm and checked in at the RED BOAT hostel. Truly a unique experience.

First order of business... hike up the hill for beer/food. Italian food and a 22 oz Spendrups beer.





Spendrups
BRYGMÅS & JORÅKERI
Johan Johansson

03/02/2012 01:32



**Sidewalk restaurant
“Stora Vikingen”
where we dined**



We stumbled onto a “flash mob” of sorts on our way back to the boat hostel. Looked like fun.

Getting about 11p. Some nice sights from the boat.





We closed the evening with an Eriksburg or two on the bow of the boat

Day #6, 02 July 2012

**We've been in
some small
places... and
this was one of
em.**



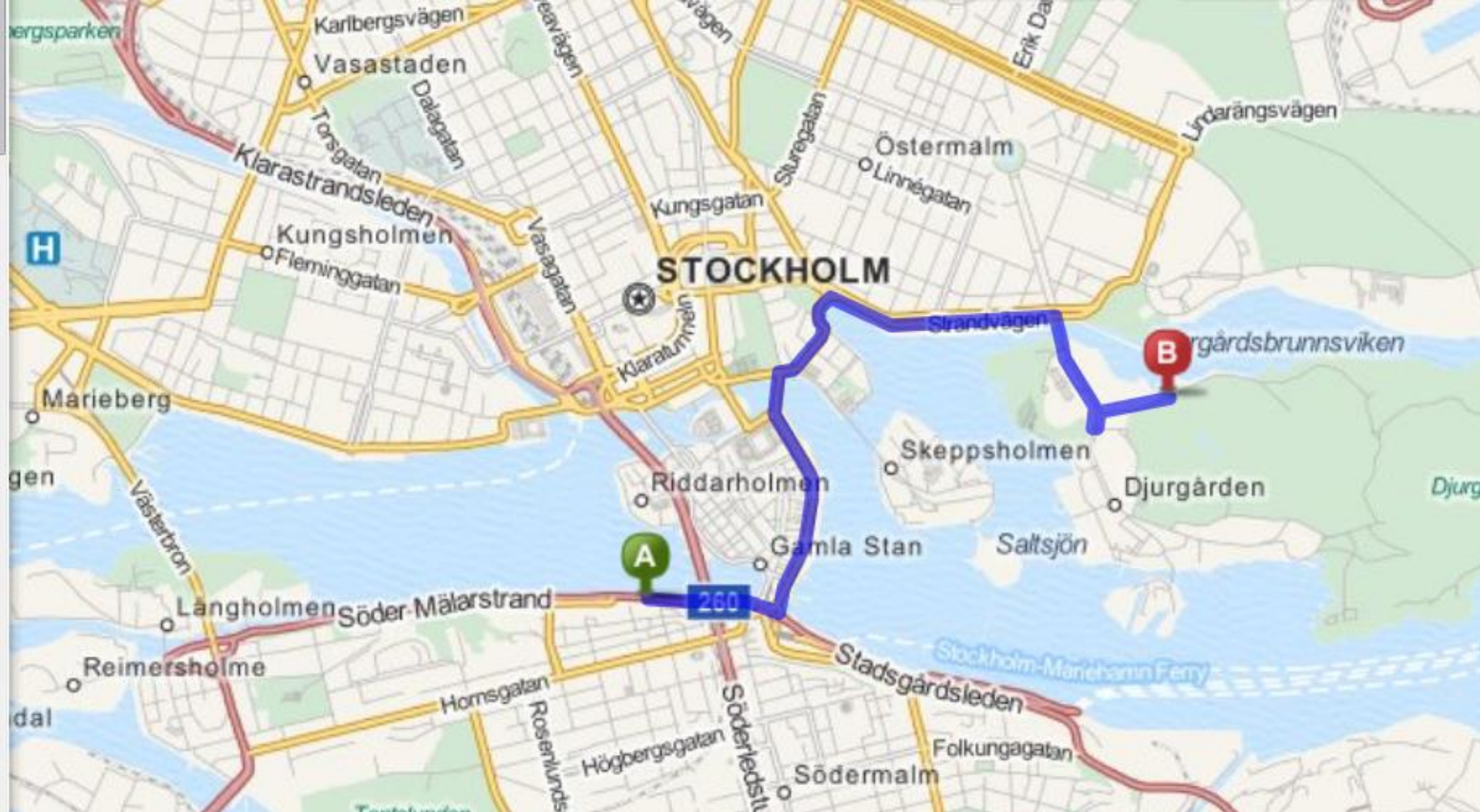


03/02/2012 13:54

Quite a breakfast spread



It was a beautiful morning in Stockholm. After breakfast we got the car and prepared for some serious sight-seeing



Our first stop of the day turned out to be one of the most interesting of the whole trip. From the boat we drove to the museum housing the VASA. Only a 2.45 mile trip taking 10 minutes to drive.



The 2-year building project on the VASA was completed in 1628. It was the finest of its day. It barely went 1,300 meters when it sank. It was raised in 1961 – an 8-year project.



More of beautiful Stockholm







**We found this building
which houses MONO
MUSIC – where some
of the members of the
1970's group ABBA
have offices**



Our next stop was to the Gamla stan area where the Royal Palace is located. Also found there is Old town square and other sights.

Off to the distance, across the water is the National Museum



03/02/2012 19:02





Part of the Royal Palace



**In the midst of old town square.
Went in the red building for
lunch and asked to be seated by
an electrical outlet so we could
charge camera bat'ries.**

03/02/2012 18:57

**Located near
the palace is
the Royal
Armoury**



03/02/2012 19:34



Informational text on a red sign, partially visible on the right side of the image.



ALARM

03/02/2012 19:53

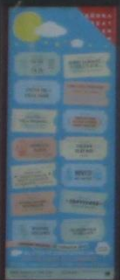
Travel info suggested we try *Mosebacke Etablissement*, a bar with a scenic outdoor terrace. One website described the place, “A definite winner among musicians and underground types.”



MOSEBACKE

DAG

Södra Teatern
Kägelbanan



Södra Teatern
Kägelbanan





SJUAN-ÖPPE!

SÖDRA BAR • TIS - LÖR - SÖN



**Even small beers
were pricey here**



03/02/2012 21:15



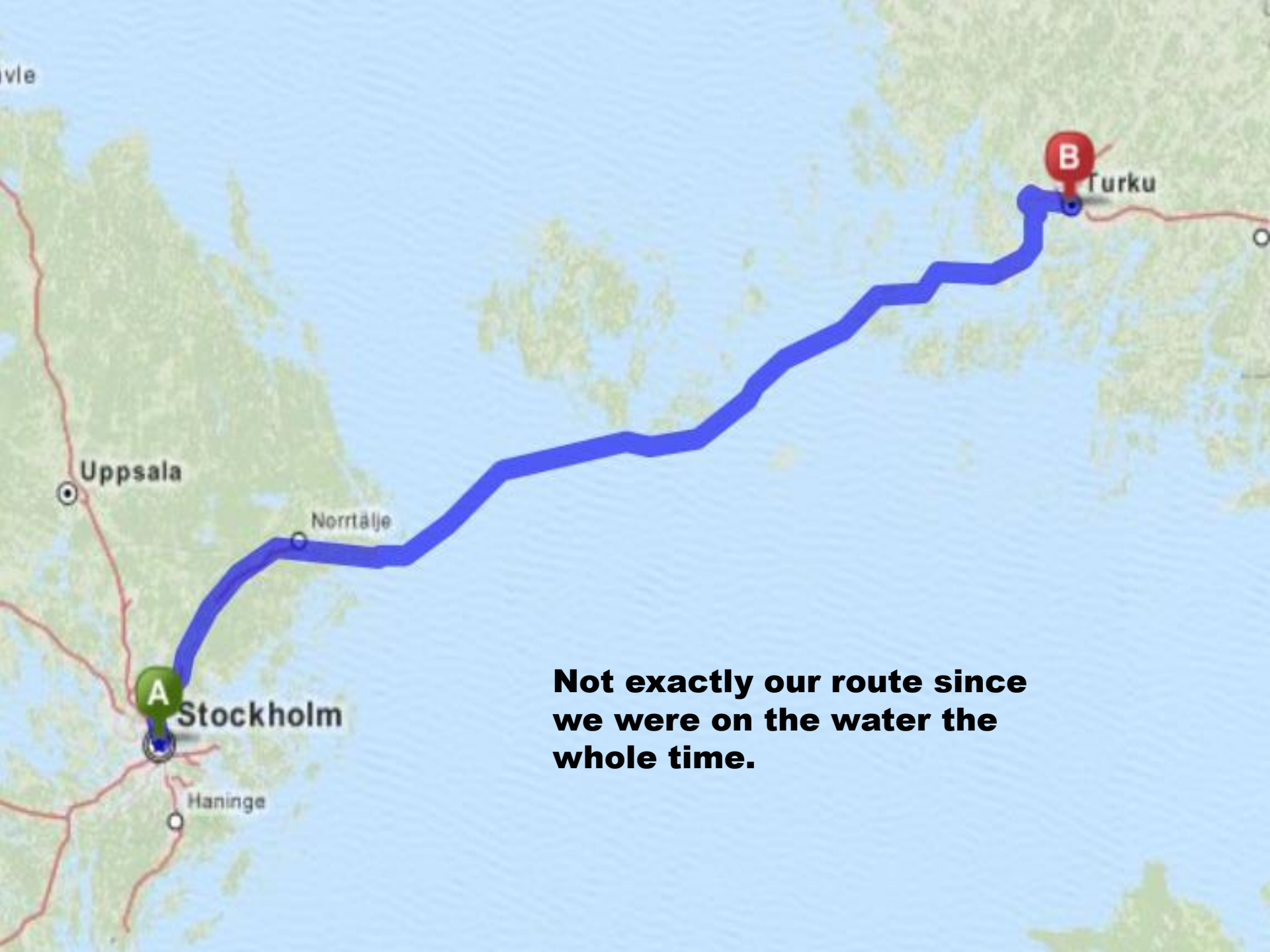
**We sat outside the bar
awhile and watched old
cars drive up for an antique
car show in that area.**



We drove the cobblestone streets looking for a place Rob's cousin Keith recommended. He said, "You must go into Sophie's on Biblioteksgatan, and go into their men's room (the one in the basement, if I recall correctly) and tell me what you think of the urinal (trust me, this is a must-see)." We never found it.

Our next endeavor was to get on the overnight ferry from Stockholm to Turku, Finland. The Baltic Queen would be the vessel to take us.





Not exactly our route since we were on the water the whole time.



**Would have to call this a combination of a
ferry and a cruise ship.**

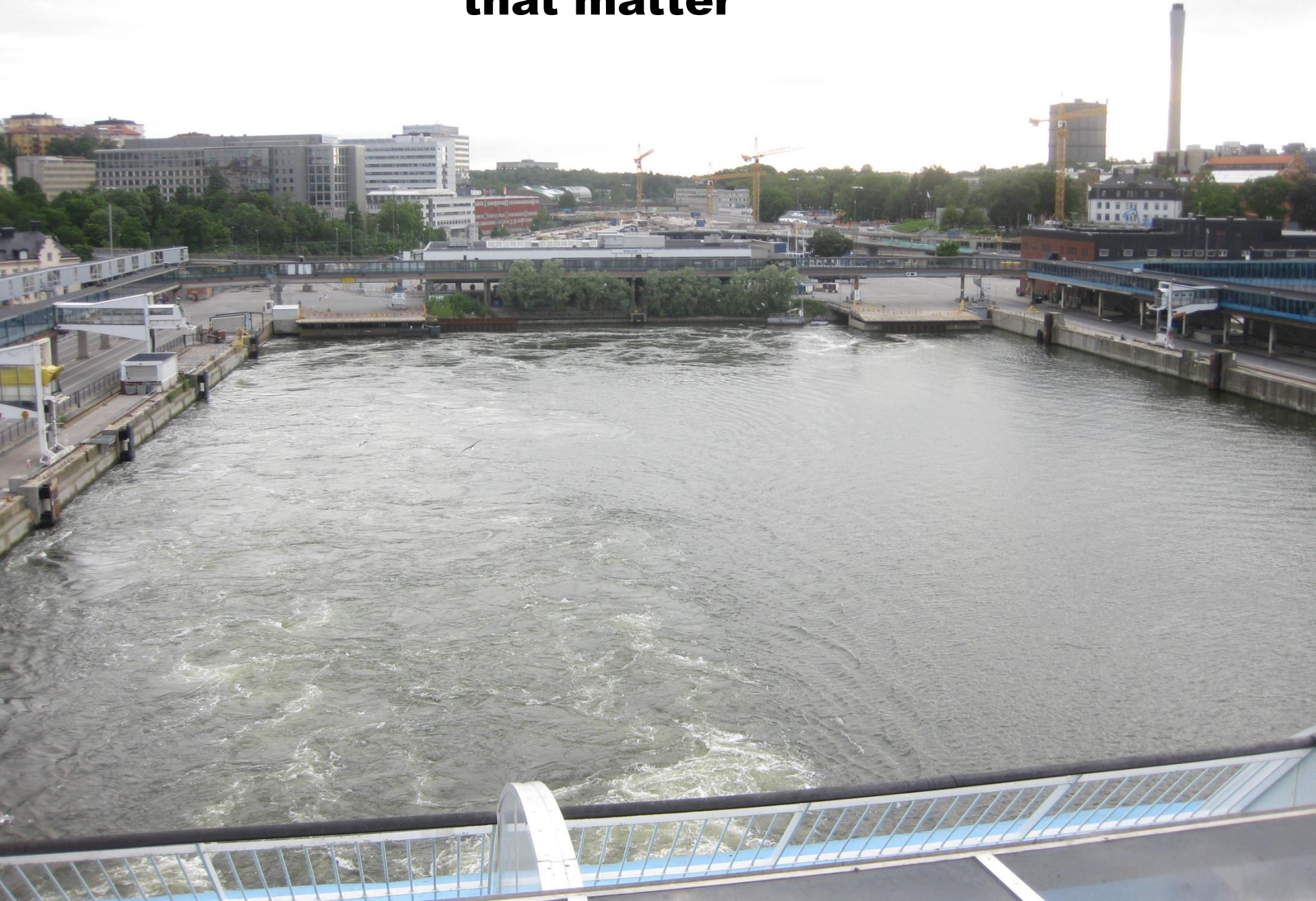
03/02/2012 23:59



GHE-479

← EXIT →

**Farewell to Stockholm, and all of Sweden for
that matter**



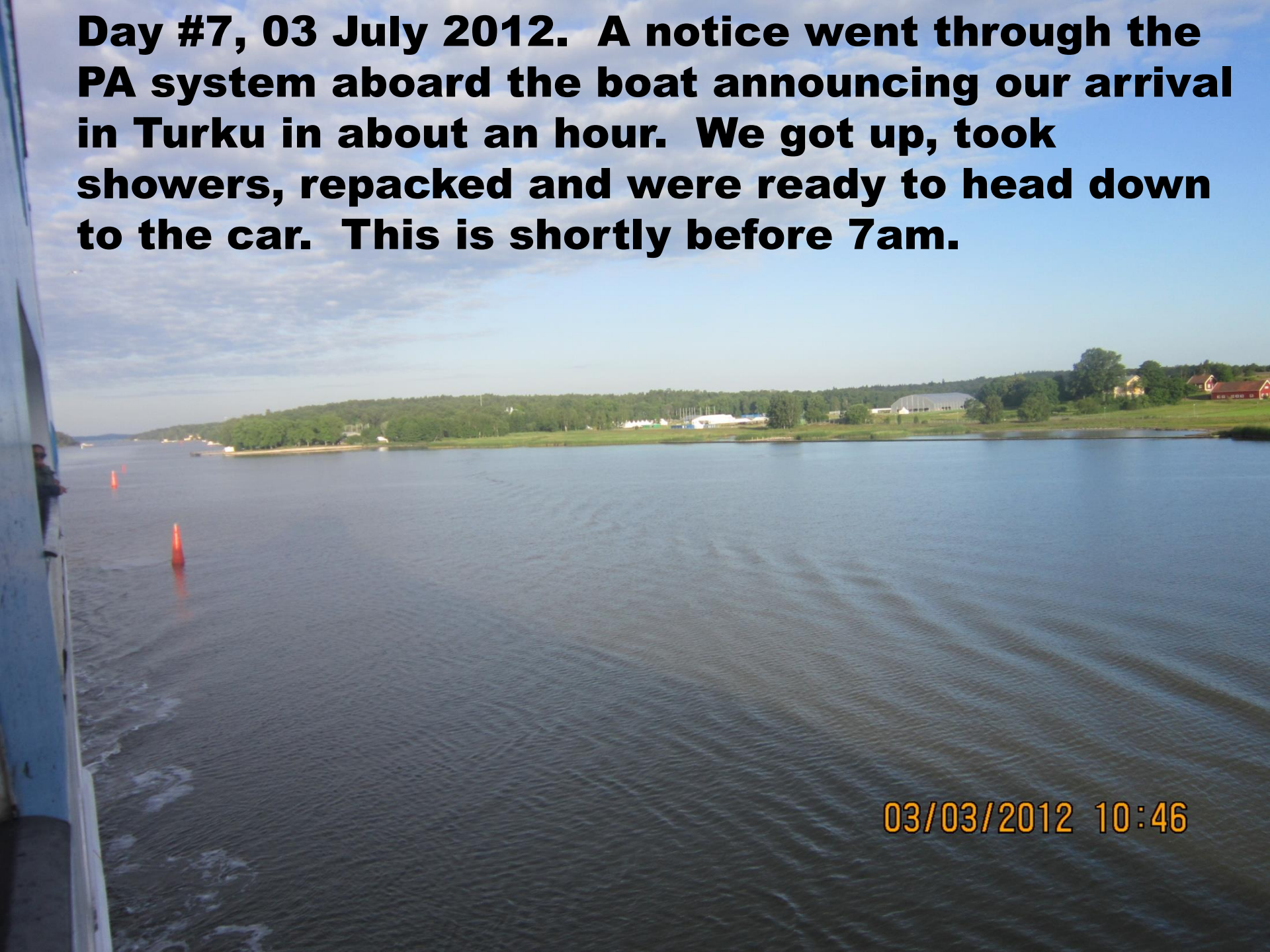


This was about 10p. We had a beer, then a tasty, but unhealthy buffet. Over the course of the evening we each had 2 Fuller's IPA's, and a Fullers ESB



**An Akvivat
(loosely defined –
Brandy) night cap
before
retiring to
our small
but
adequate
quarters.**

Day #7, 03 July 2012. A notice went through the PA system aboard the boat announcing our arrival in Turku in about an hour. We got up, took showers, repacked and were ready to head down to the car. This is shortly before 7am.



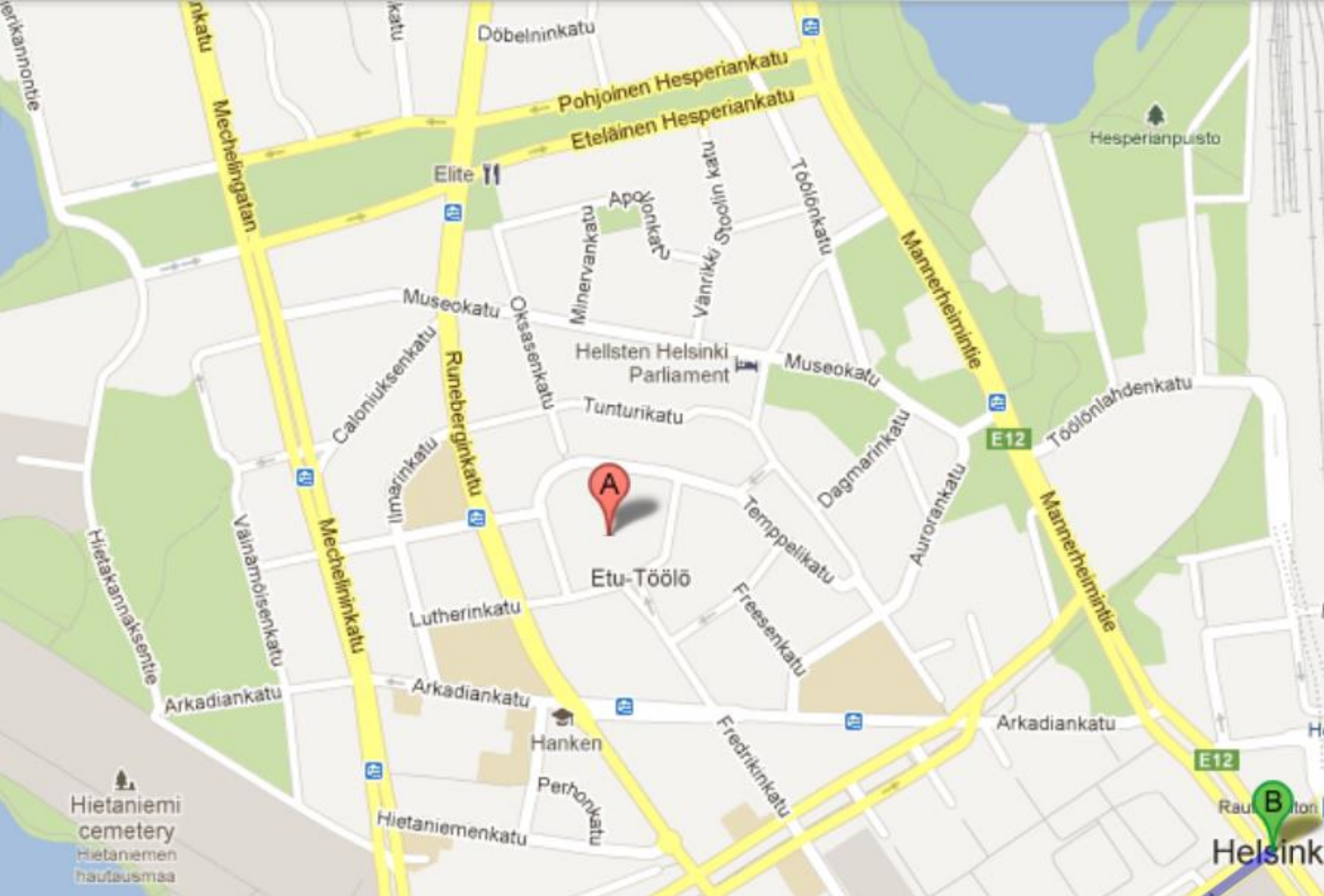
03/03/2012 10:46



Once we docked in Turku, we needed to find gas and some breakfast. Stopped at two places where credit cards would not work. Finally found a place as well as a place to eat breakfast. This stretch was 105 miles – about 2.25 hours without stops.

**Good place for
breakfast AND
wifi**

03/03/2012 12:47



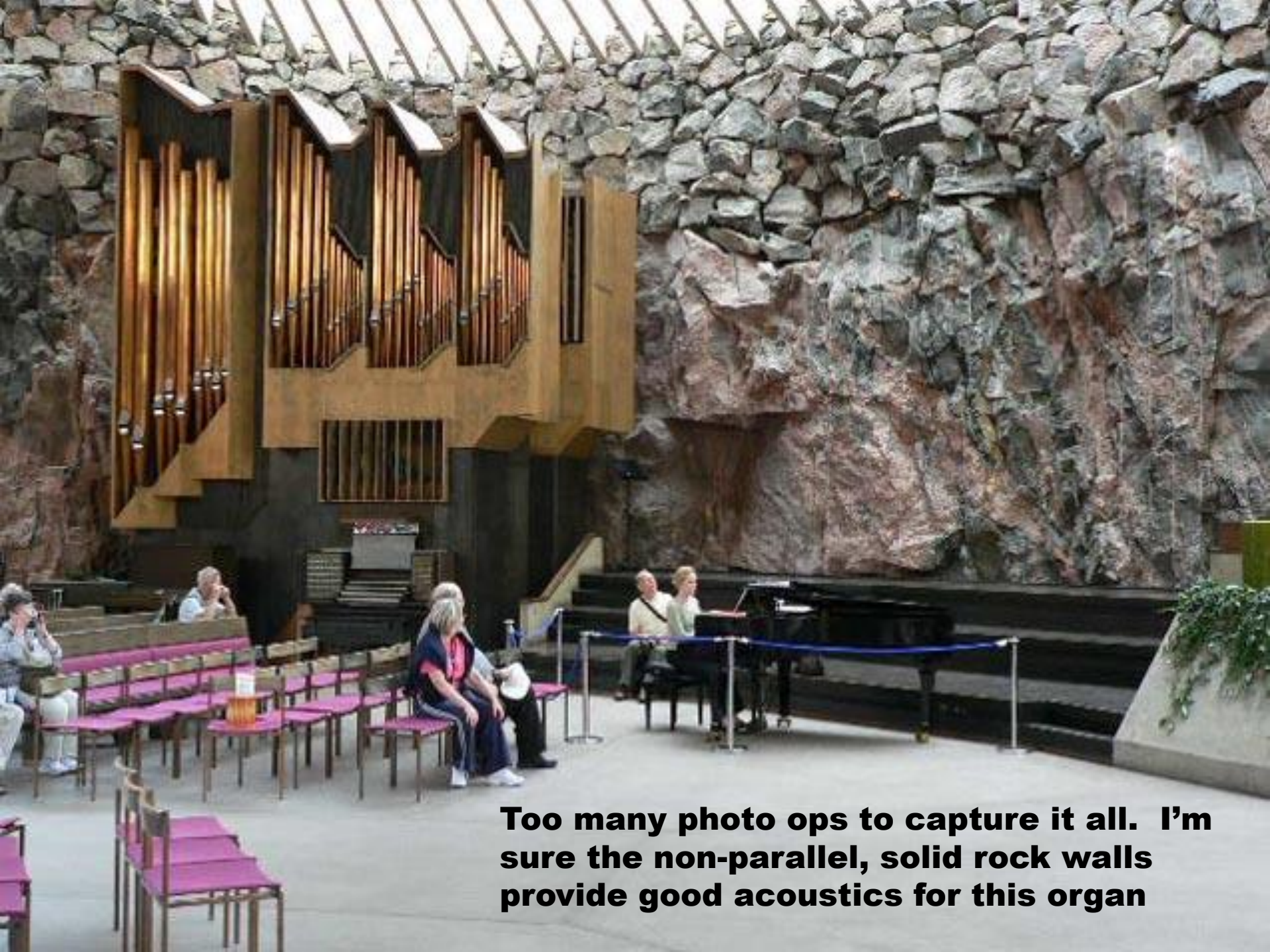
First stop: Tempelikaupunki Kirkko (Rock Church), Helsinki (A)



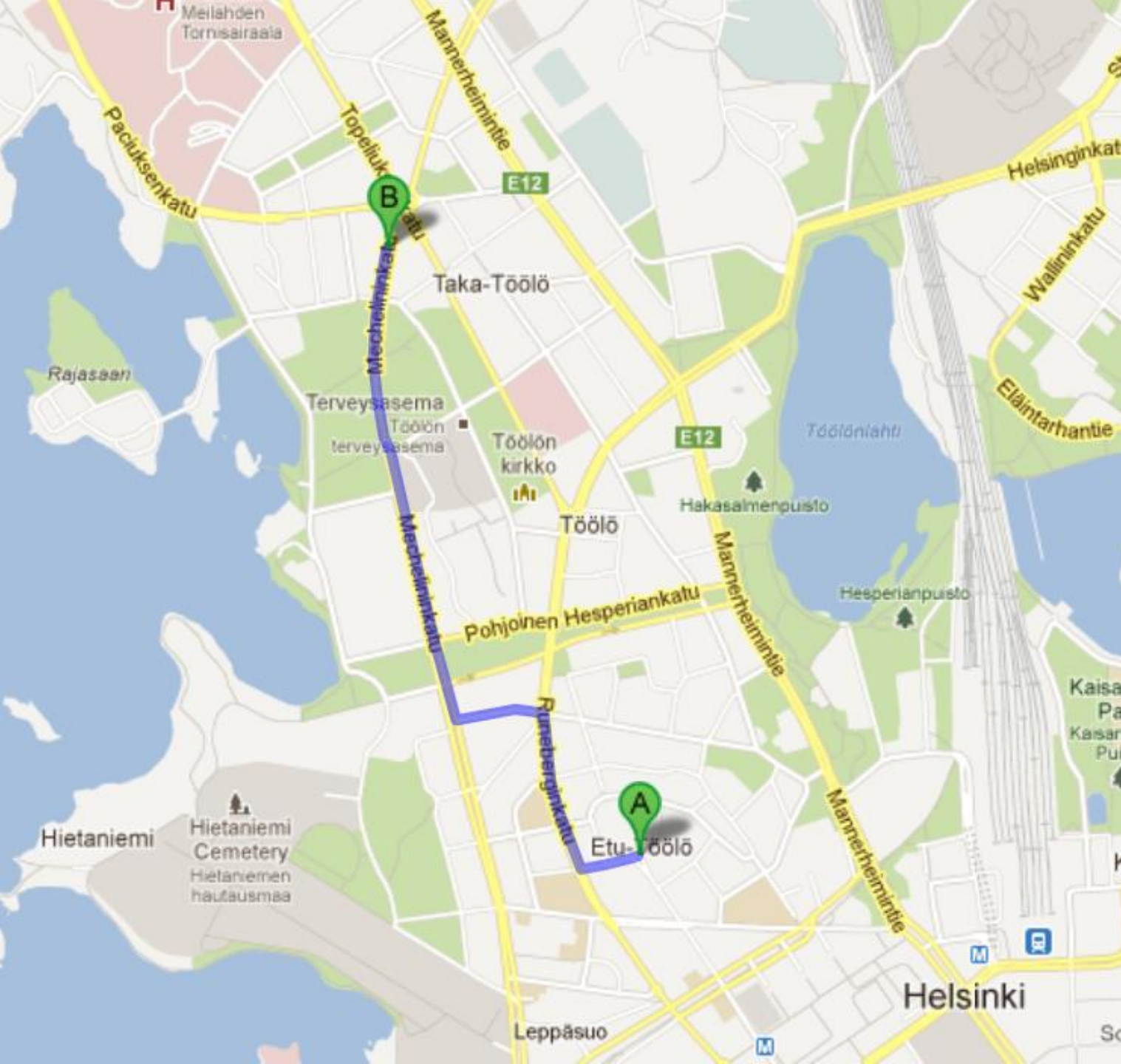


The idea for this church began in the 1930's. Construction began in 1968 and completed in 1969. It is only a quarter of the size it was originally planned to be.

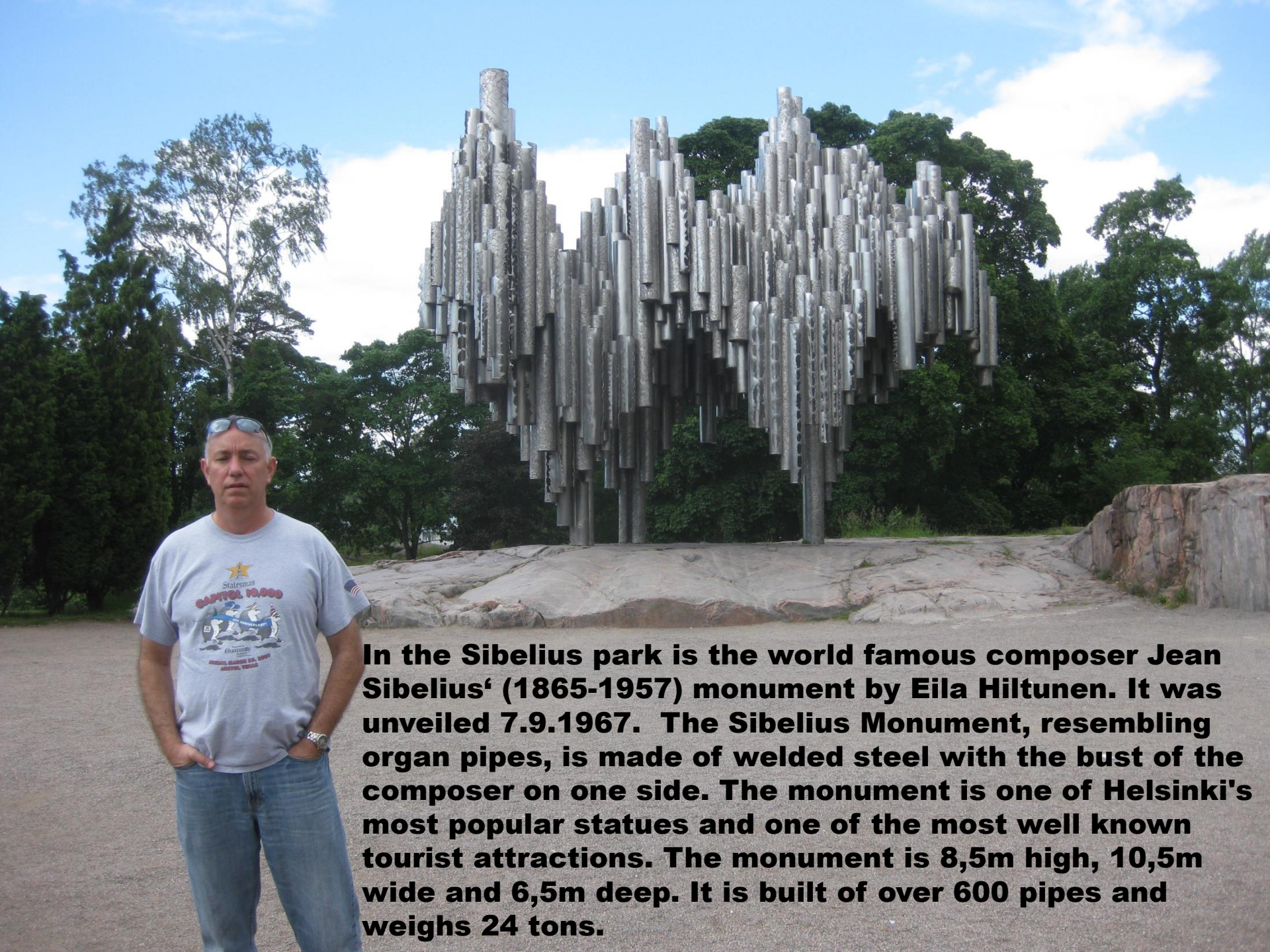




Too many photo ops to capture it all. I'm sure the non-parallel, solid rock walls provide good acoustics for this organ



Next stop was the Sibelius Park. Being good and faithful musicians we had to honor Finland's most noted composer: Jean Sibelius



In the Sibelius park is the world famous composer Jean Sibelius' (1865-1957) monument by Eila Hiltunen. It was unveiled 7.9.1967. The Sibelius Monument, resembling organ pipes, is made of welded steel with the bust of the composer on one side. The monument is one of Helsinki's most popular statues and one of the most well known tourist attractions. The monument is 8,5m high, 10,5m wide and 6,5m deep. It is built of over 600 pipes and weighs 24 tons.



Sibelius bust

03/03/2012 16:05

**After lunch we visited this
Russian Orthodox church**







**This
neoclassical
Lutheran
cathedral built
1840-1852
was our next
stop. A must-
see in
Helsinki.**



03/03/2012 17:44



03/03/2012 17:45

From the cathedral steps looking down



03/03/2012 17:59

**After moving the car to
another parking spot we
roamed this market
place and bought bottle
openers**

03/03/2012 18:39



A 30-minute ride on this JT-Line boat will take you to the Suomenlinna Sveaborg, an early Finnish fortress



**SUOMENLINNA
SVEABORG**



03/03/2012 19:19



03/03/2012 20:06

K
K
KIR
Ison
kirk
tak
Kru
laa
et
ke
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st
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la
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h



After walking the grounds, we picked a corner of this deck to have our official Finnish beer

03/03/2012 20:20



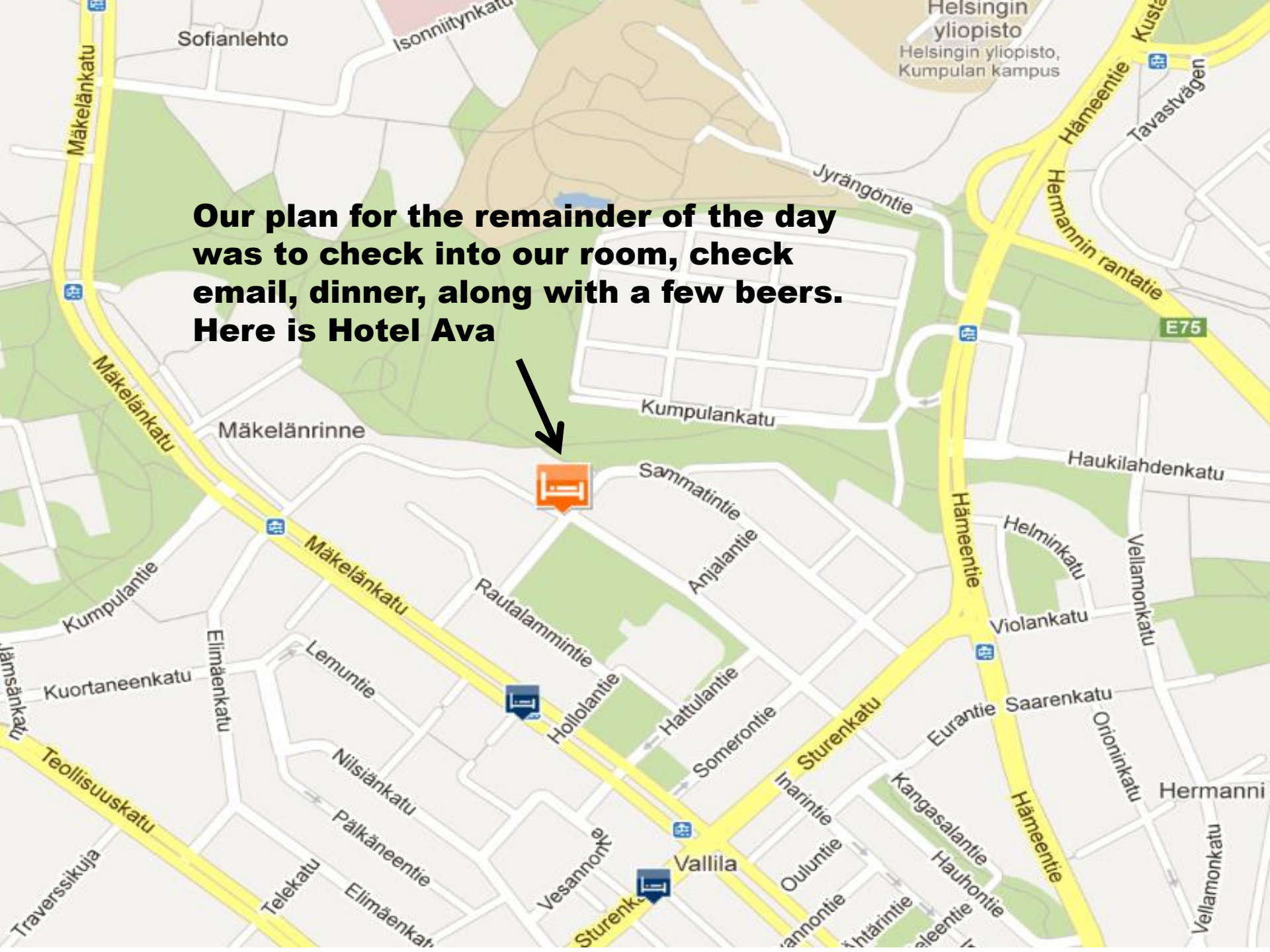
**Some kind of
microbrew at
4:15 pm. Official
beer in Finland**

Statesman
CAPITOL 10,000
10th ANNIVERSARY!
Quality
Brewery
EST. 1997
NORTH, TEXAS

An older part of the fortress



Our plan for the remainder of the day was to check into our room, check email, dinner, along with a few beers. Here is Hotel Ava



**Nice
grounds
around Hotel
Ava**

03/04/2012 13:18

We've been "accosted" by some characters in our travels: "Bear" in Ohio in 2008 and a Nicholas Cage-looking guy in Indiana the very next night. Also the guy in Copenhagen a few nights earlier. This is another for the record books. An older, extremely drunk couple came in and sat at the table next to where we were having dinner. They spoke German only – or so they said. The story was that her husband had recently died and he was comforting her. He tried to buy us a round of drinks and we refused. Did I say they were *really* drunk? Rob was trying to be discreet in taking this photo. We politely excused ourselves to the sidewalk tables for our second of two Fuller IPA's.



**Out to
the
sidewalk**



03/04/2012 01:15



A mystery beer nightcap at this place before back to the room for the night.

03/04/2012 02:43



Day #8, 04 July 2012. Breakfast at Ava Hotel before catching ferry to Estonia. This was the park across the street from the hotel.

03/04/2012 13:18



The biotch did not know there was road construction going on, so we had to navigate ourselves to find the ferry to Tallinn. A little too close for comfort on time this morning

03/04/2012 13:57

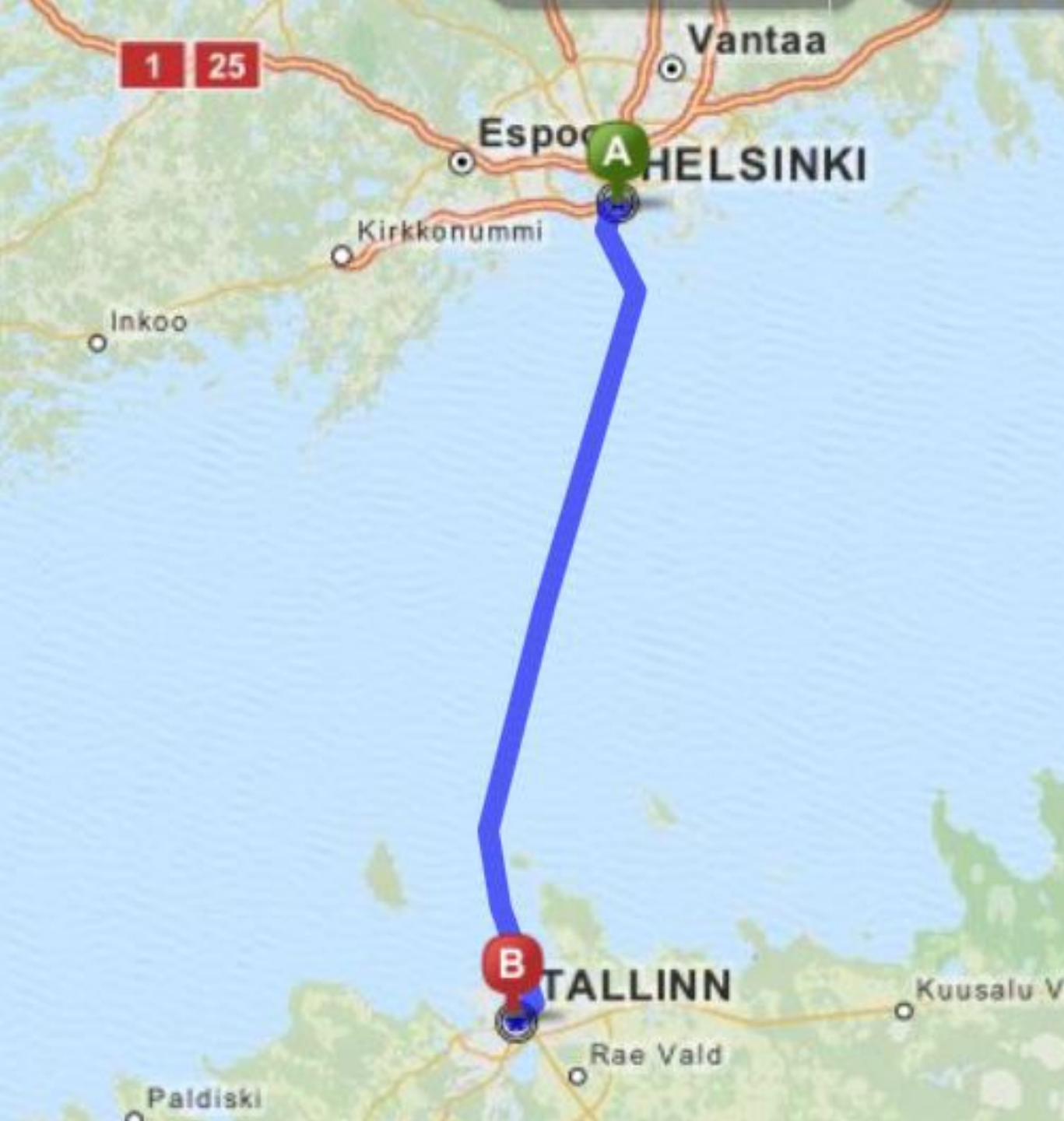


**Again we parked in the belly of
the great vessel**

03/04/2012 14:08

Farewell to Helsinki, here we come Tallinn!





It was a 2-2.5 hour ferry ride from Helsinki to Tallinn. Was interesting... even at 9a this was a party boat





03/04/2012 14:23

A little cool up on top side at first, but a beautiful day



**You get the impression that clear,
sunny days are a rare commodity in
Scandinavia**



03/04/2012 15:41



**Another hair color
not found in nature**



Ferry dock

Old House Hostel



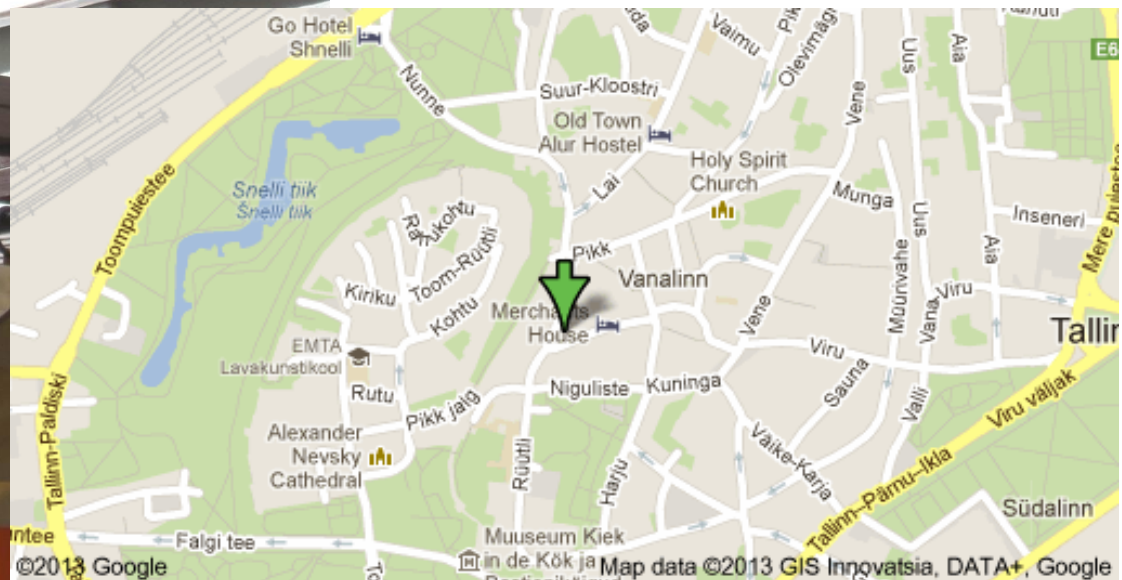
Here's our place for the night. Swanky, aye? Not bad though for about \$15 a night for each of us. Our first floor room is the one behind the car.



**As old as Tallinn is,
it is also in the top
ten of *digital* cities
in the world.**



Once we checked into our room, we headed up through Old Town and had lunch at Kulde Notsu Korts: *Three Little Pigs.*





The beautiful Old Town Square of Tallinn

Tallinn city gates





**Our next stop
would be St.
Mary's
Lutheran
Cathedral to
walk through
and climb up
to the
steeple for
the great
view.**






What is missing compared to Chicago segway riding? Two things: a helmet and a tour guide. Here they just turn you loose to ride wherever you want.





RENT
ME!
😊

A street scene in a European town, likely Tallinn, Estonia. A white and blue police car with "POLITSEI" and "110" markings is parked on a cobblestone street. To the left, a cafe with "saku" umbrellas is visible. On the right, a woman in a floral dress and a man in a colorful Hawaiian shirt are walking. A yellow wheelchair accessibility sign is on a pole in the foreground. The background shows traditional European architecture with red-tiled roofs and stone walls.

It would have certainly been within our rights (perhaps duty) to pull over and issue a fashion citation to the woman on the right. What about the guy in front of her? He just needs to be shot!

03/04/2012 20:50

Former student of Ed's, Tom Thompson picked us up for dinner outside of town somewhere for a great smoked fish dinner.







Another great meal

Tom is a teacher and missionary for the Baptist church in Tallinn



03/04/2012 23:39



Tom drove us to the Ruins of Pirita Convent built in the early 1400's and lasted until a Russian invasion in 1575. For many years this housed the largest choir in the area.

PIRITA KLOOSTRI VAREMED

AVATUD IGA PÄEV

9-19

THE RUINS OF PIRITA CONVENT

OPEN DAILY

9-19

Pirita klooster convent ruins



KASSA
TULOSTA & HOUSTOYMA

Tom took us on a quick spin through an area of Tallinn where the residents still live in the Soviet lifestyle.





**Tom
dropped us
off and we
got a night-
cap at this
German
style place
in Old Town
Tallin**

**German
style
dishwater
beer.**



03/05/2012 01:44



On the way back to the hostel we encountered something like never before. A group of intoxicated young folk doing some kind of dance/mating ritual in their underwear. To top it all off, one of the girls came over and asked us for condoms!

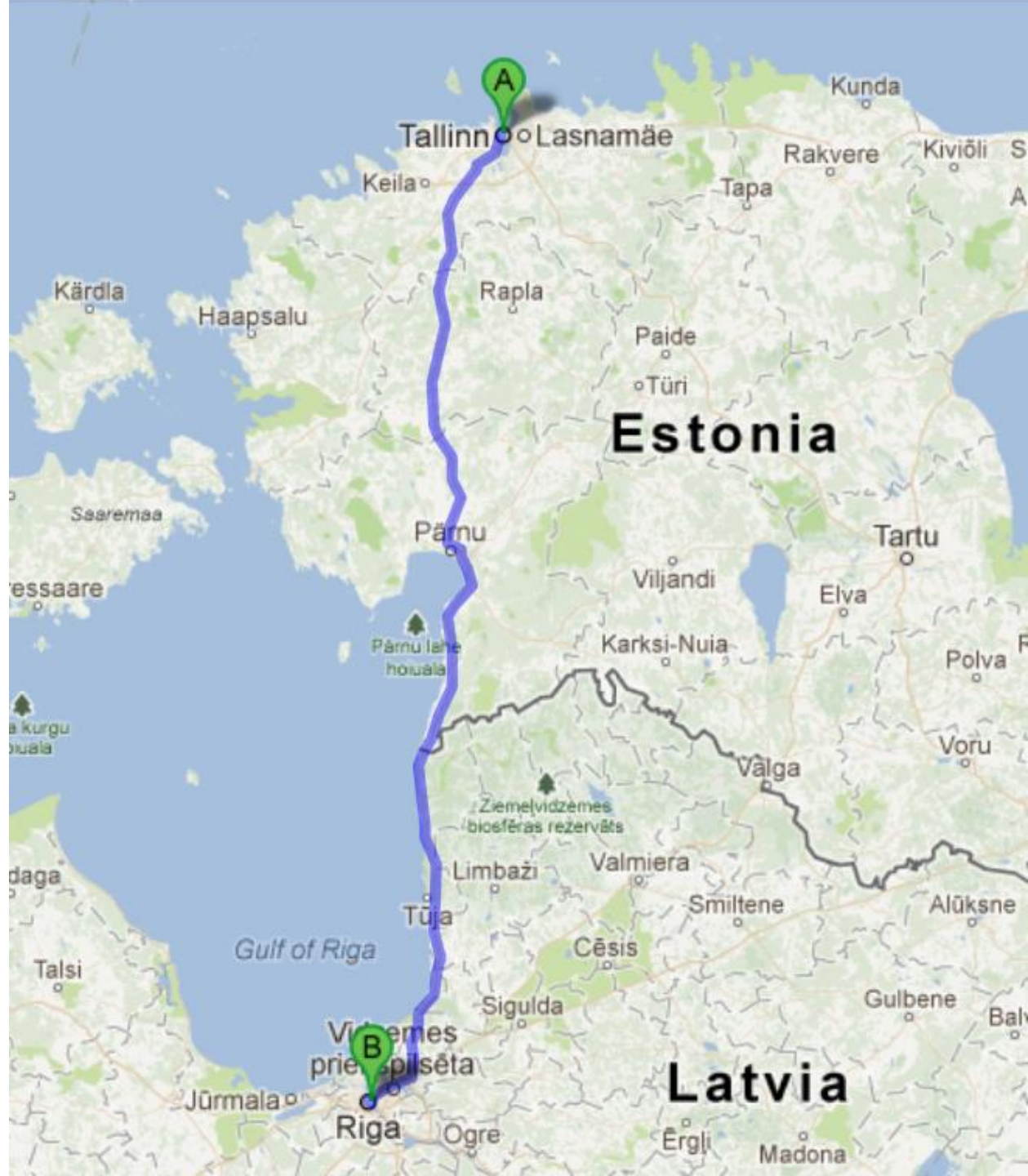
03/05/2012 03:09

Day #9: 05 July 2012



We got an early start since we had a long stretch of road ahead of us today. After an hour or two we crossed into Latvia. Didn't even have to stop.

It's 191 miles, about 4 hours even, from Tallinn to Riga, the capital city of Latvia. Our goal was the official beer, lunch, and some looking around before the drive to the destination for the day, Vilnius, Lithuania.



**Truck stop
for coffee &
breakfast.
All truck
stops along
this route
had free wi-fi**



03/05/2012 12:06



**Beautiful streets
of Riga. Bought
inexpensive bottle
openers before
lunch**

03/05/2012 16:09

**A MEMBER OF THE
HANSEATIC LEAGUE,
THIS CITY WITH
A 4-LETTER NAME
WAS ONCE KNOWN AS
THE "PARIS OF
THE BALTIC"**

Shortly after returning, Rob saw this clue on Jeopardy!





Valmiermuiza was our official Latvian beer, and noted it was the best of the trip so far. Free wi-fi again along the streets.

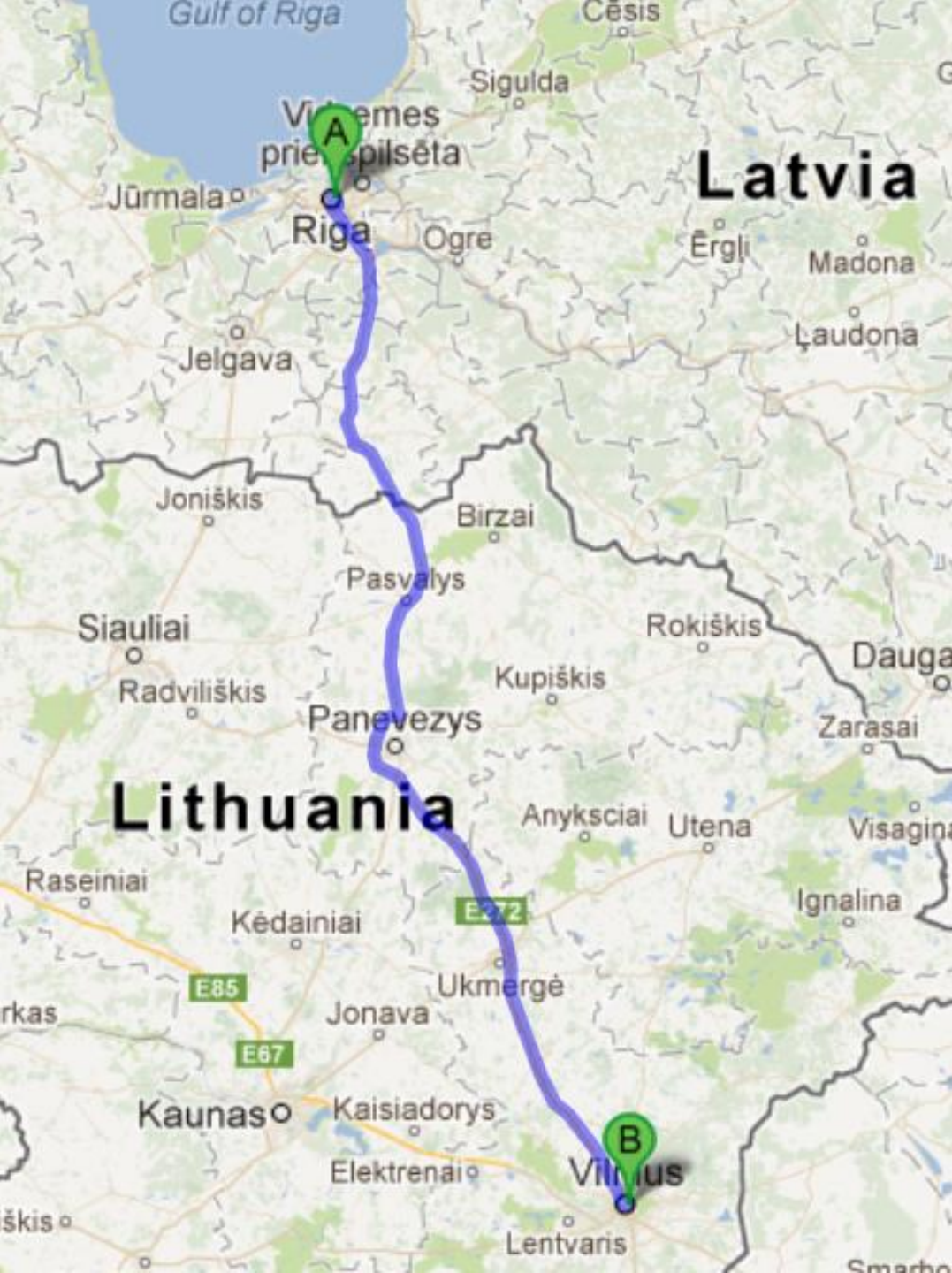
03/05/2012 16:24

**This mother-daughter
combo made for some nice
street entertainment.**





St. Peter Church, Riga



The next leg of the trip was the 182 mile, 3.5 hour trip to Vilnius, Lithuania. The car rental people were particularly concerned about us going here.



03/05/2012 17:26

Crossing the border from Latvia to Lithuania going 49 km/hour.



Having driven a good chunk of this leg and getting road-weary, Rob without paying much attention went into the wrong door-symbol at this truck stop. Who uses these kinds of symbols anyway??



03/05/2012 20:42

We were getting into Vilnius around 5pm traffic



Our lodging for the night, and the car in a lot behind big, iron gate.

Our room windows





Old Town Hostel, Vilnius. We got a room for 4 for just the two of us. Spacious and again, inexpensive!





**Our official
Lithuanian beer.
This and another
Svytury's
accompanied
dinner**

03/06/2012 01:12

Su ČILI visada



ŽAIDIMAS

Kalnapiilis



**Luthuanian
dinner**



03/06/2012 01:06



Rob found the beet soup, a Lithuanian favorite, to be tasty.

**We spoke with a young man next to our table who told us the traditional beer toast, which with practice, we have gotten down pretty good:
*Esveikata***

As we toured the party area of Vilnius, we saw this group of revellers. Dig the mini keg on the table.





One final beer for the evening, then a nightcap of Akvavit on the way back to the room to conclude our festivities



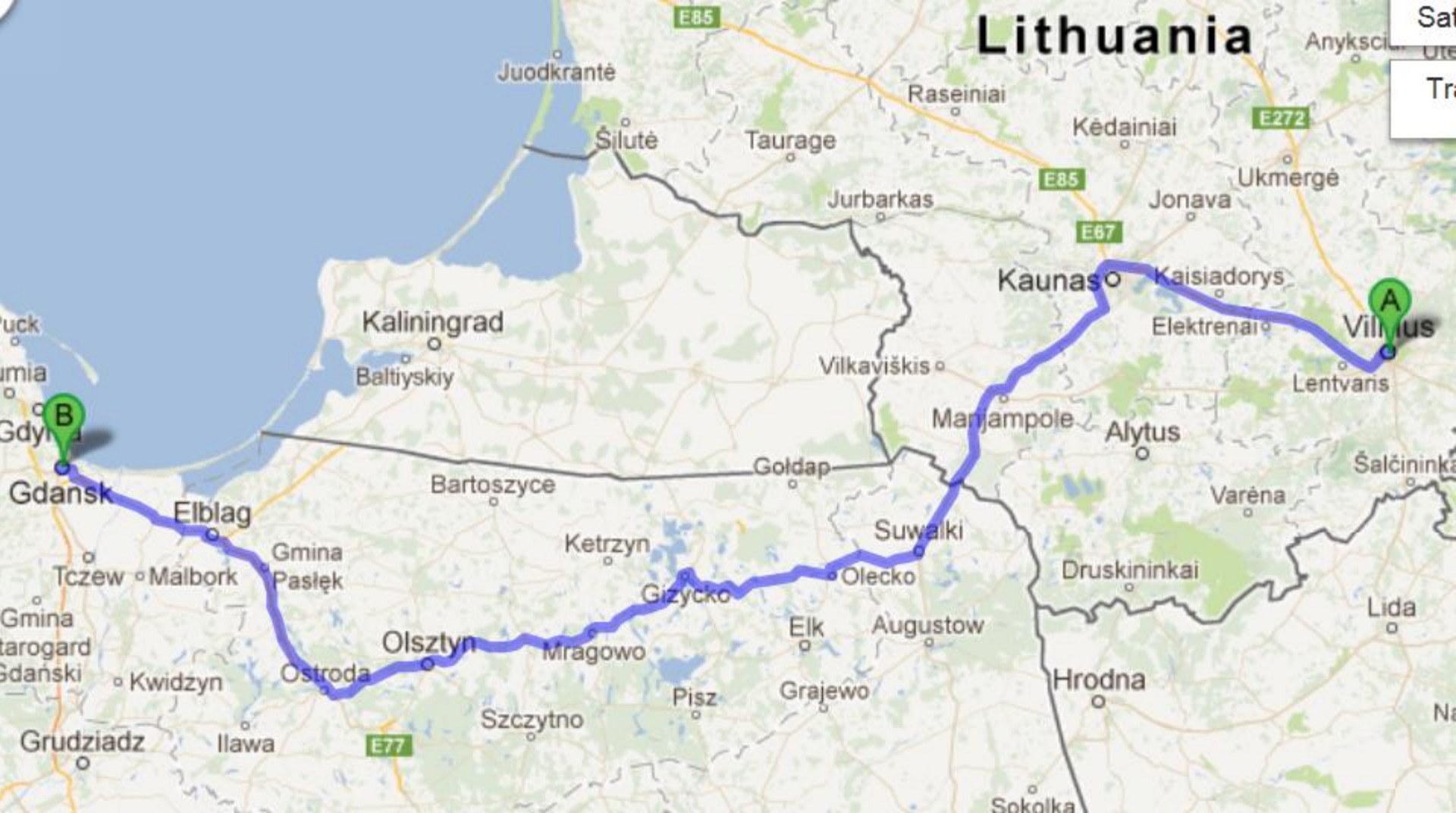
FISH

THE PORTOBELLO

BE51007

Day #10; 06 July 2012. Got up and out the door at a good hour. Stopped for gas and some gas station breakfast and juice. Today would be the longest drive of any thus far.



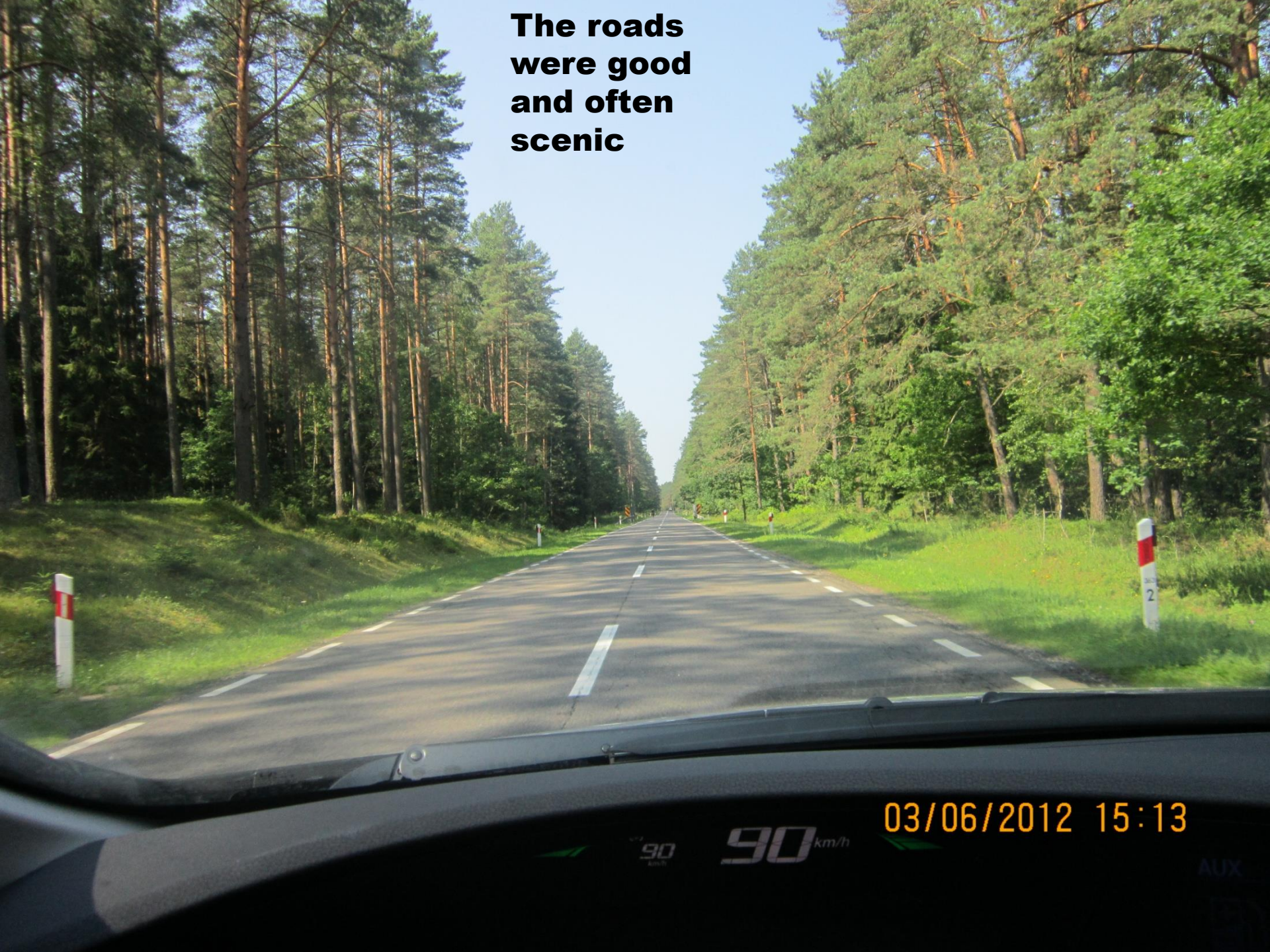


This 365 mile trip was gonna be a butt-kicker. All narrow, two-lane roads used by farm vehicle and commercial truck alike. No interstate highways here. It would take every bit of the predicted 8 hours of drive time.

**Another uneventful
border crossing:
Lithuania to Poland**



**The roads
were good
and often
scenic**



03/06/2012 15:13

90

90 km/h

AUX

Eating places were few and far-between. Found this beautiful resort area for a late lunch. \$36 per person gave us each a bowl of soup, and a shared cold cut plate. By this time we had picked up our lost hour.





03/06/2012 17:51



**Enough R & R. Time to
get on the road again.**

03/06/2012 17:49

We must have gone through a gazillion little Polish towns like this.





Gdansk is Poland's principal port. On the Baltic Sea, its history, like most cities in Europe stretches back in excess of 1,000 years.



Mamas & Papas

These folks were the proprietors of the Mama's & Papas hostel. A couple who were about our age. He was a GRATEFUL DEAD fan.

We are...

As you would expect the lounge area to look



03/07/2012 12:49



After checking into the room, we went down town and discovered this cathedral. A service was going on.



This cathedral is supposedly the oldest red brick cathedral in all of Europe, built just prior to 1500. The white sign advertises an organ recital for this very evening.



**We had our official Polish beer back in 2010
but that didn't stop us from enjoying another
with dinner at this place.**

03/07/2012 00:54

Dinner & beer



03/07/2012 00:54

**A beautiful
baroque
organ built
in the 1700s**



The organ recital was good, but what happened after was an unexpected surprise for Rob. He asked one of the ticket-takers if he could go up and see the organ console, being an organist in Texas. They agreed, and took us in a side entrance, up a winding stair case, through thick & thin until finally reaching the console. A student was getting ready to practice. We took a few pictures and were ready to go when the student insisted Rob sit down and play. The surprise of the moment brought only tidbits of Gigout *Grand Choeur Dialogue* and Bach's *Fugue in g minor (Little)*.





03/07/2012 02:45



**This was a
fabulous
instrument
matched
with a great
acoustic**

03/07/2012 02:45

**Rob and the
nice young
man who took
us to the loft
via the BA
door behind us
in this photo.**



03/07/2012 02:51



Backyard of Mama's/Papa's where we bought a couple of cans o beer each from them and sat here late at night and drank em. (Pic taken the next morning)

03/07/2012 12:37



Day #11; 07 July 2012. Our gourmet breakfast. Usual European fare. Got a 7.75 hour drive ahead of us today. Fatigue starting to set in, but not bad at all.



Bitte beachten!
Die gesamte Küche ist ein gemeinsames
Nutzungsraum.
Bitte beachten!
Die Küche ist von 12 bis 18 Uhr
geschlossen.

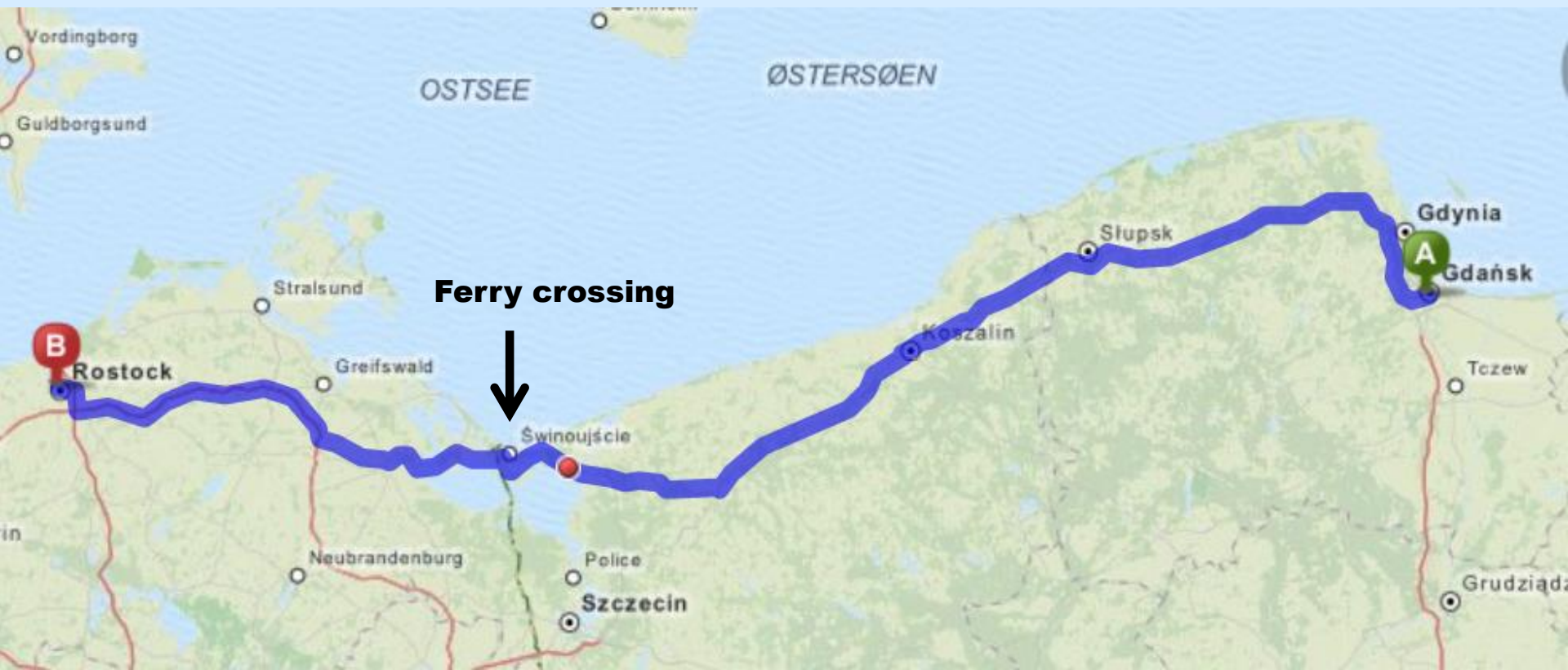
**Hostel kitchen.
Use stuff, wash it
and put it away.**



**The hostel had a gated area
where they let us park to
keep the car safe.... and glad
of it.**

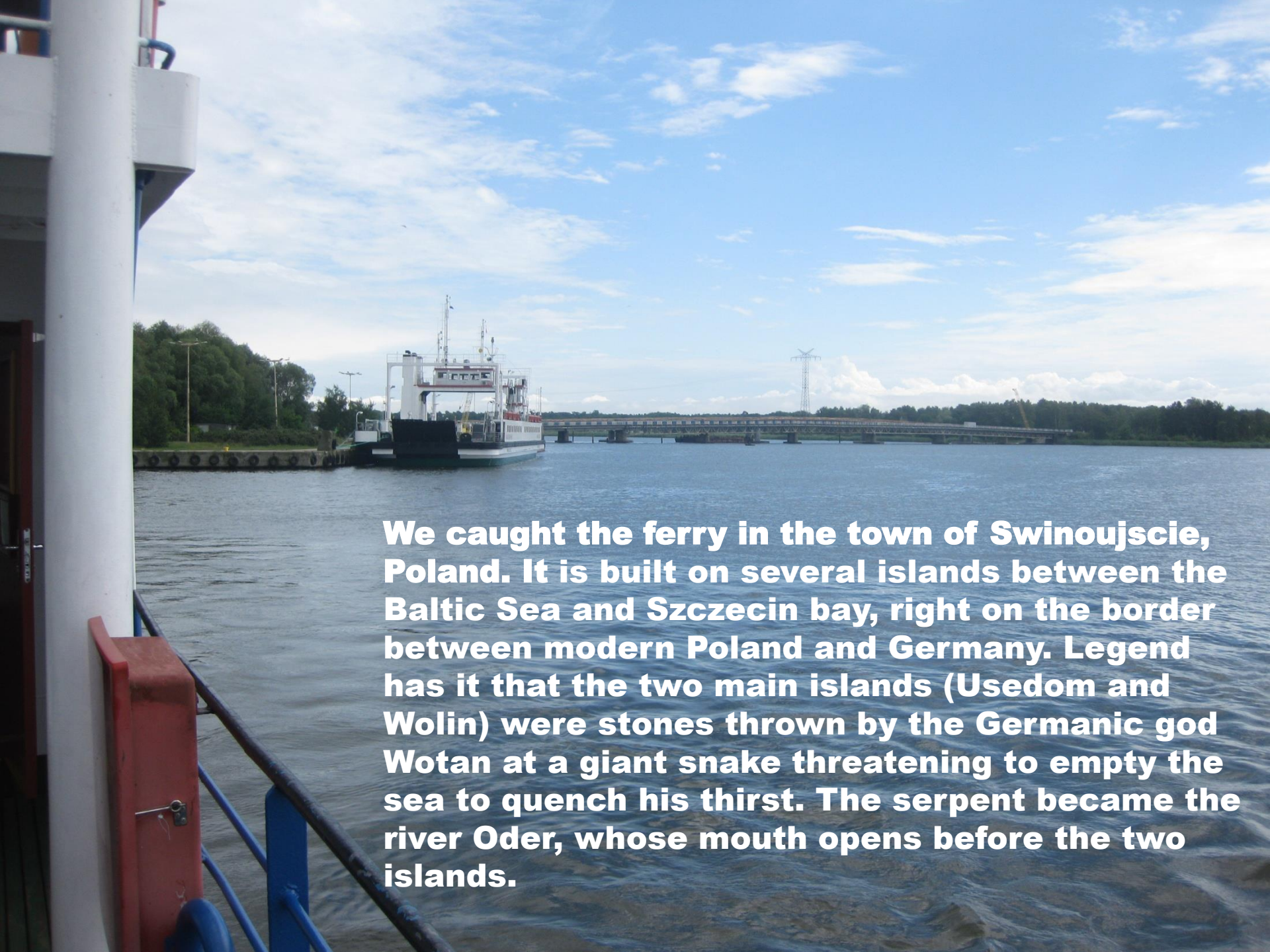
03/07/2012 12:37

A 330 mile trip. Took us a good chunk of the day to travel.



A 30 minute ferry ride



A photograph taken from the deck of a ferry boat, looking across a wide river. In the foreground, the white railing and a red fire extinguisher are visible. In the middle ground, a large white ferry with a black hull is docked at a pier on the left. In the background, a long bridge spans the river, and a power line tower stands on the right. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

We caught the ferry in the town of Swinoujscie, Poland. It is built on several islands between the Baltic Sea and Szczecin bay, right on the border between modern Poland and Germany. Legend has it that the two main islands (Usedom and Wolin) were stones thrown by the Germanic god Wotan at a giant snake threatening to empty the sea to quench his thirst. The serpent became the river Oder, whose mouth opens before the two islands.



Once we crossed the ferry into Germany we had a couple more hours to drive before arriving in Rostock. We stopped here for a late lunch.

Schnitzel	3,50 €	Pommes	2,00 €
Boulette	1,50 €	Bratkartoffeln	2,00 €
Franz. Bratwurst	2,00 €	Maroffelsalat	2,00 €
Bratwurst / Currywurst	2,00 €		
Bockwurst			

Frühstücksangebot	
3 Rühr- oder Spiegeleier mit Brötchen, Butter und 1 Port. Kaffee	5,00 €
1/2 belegtes Brötchen	1,00 €
Port. Kaffee	1,00 €
Tee nach Angebot	1,00 €



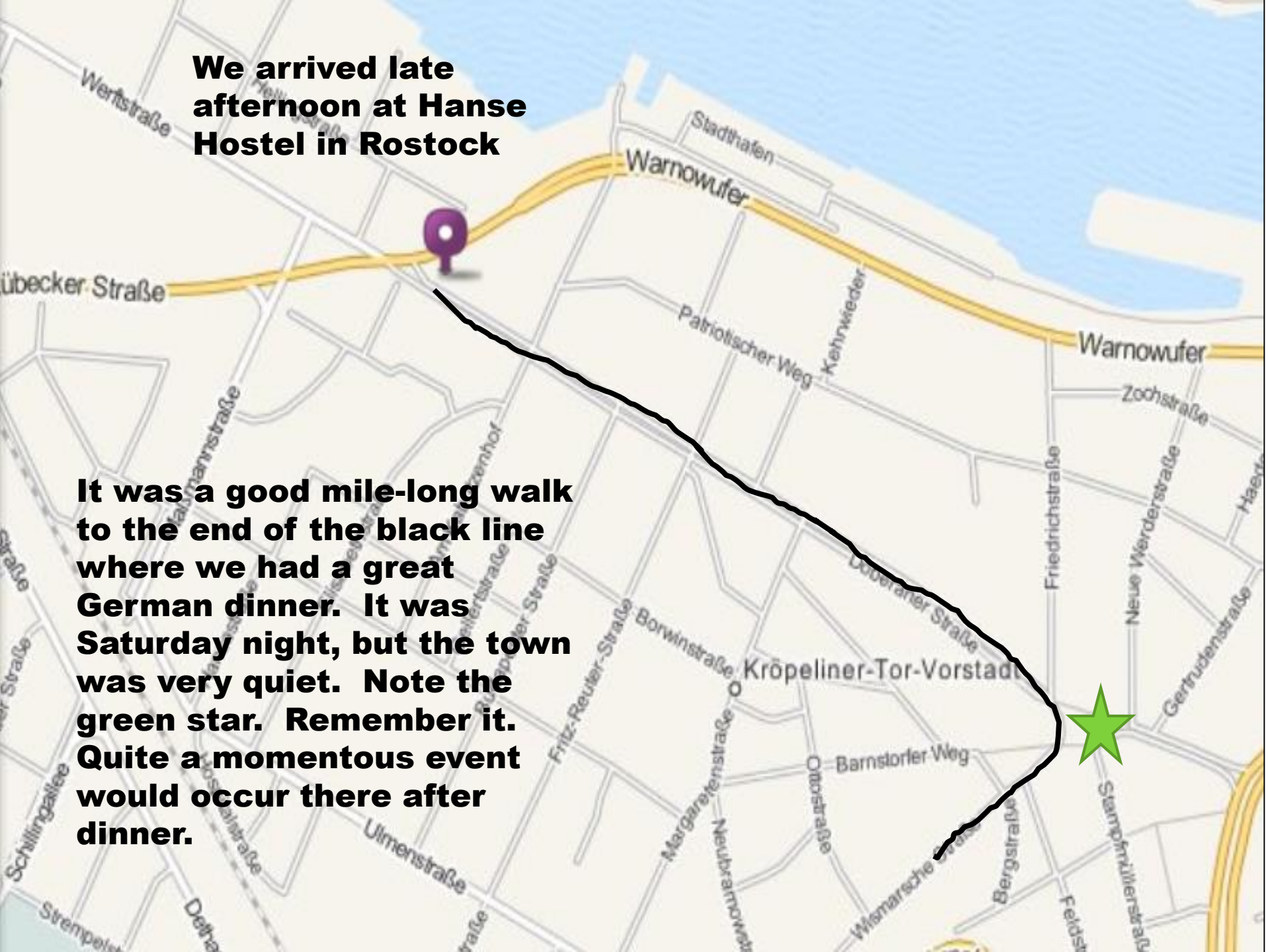
Selbstbedienung
Wir freuen uns über das zurückgebrachte Geschirr!

Other patrons at the grill

03/07/2012 20:20

We arrived late afternoon at Hanse Hostel in Rostock

It was a good mile-long walk to the end of the black line where we had a great German dinner. It was Saturday night, but the town was very quiet. Note the green star. Remember it. Quite a momentous event would occur there after dinner.





**We each enjoyed two (2) of
these Rostocker Pilsners**

03/08/2012 00:29



**Rob's ham &
trimmings
plate**

03/08/2012 00:41


Pifferlingers
Heute im An



Pflauringersuppe
0,95
Heute im Angebot

03/08/2012 00:41

**Ed's culinary
delight**



**Complimentary
after-dinner
schnapps shots**

What happened at the green star, you ask? There was this dude, the groom-to-be and his buddies. His buddies – according to their tradition – fling water balloons at him. Passers-by may buy a balloon for €1.00 to throw at him too. A great deal of beer is involved.





MVI_9856.AVI

A first for these presentations. Click the icon to see a video clip of the balloon flinging... if it works.



We ended the evening with a local Mahn & Ohlerich beer.

Day #12; July 8. On our way to catch the ferry to Denmark. One quick shot of our hostel.



Waiting in line for the Germany to Denmark ferry.





Route across the sea to Denmark

Another beautiful day at sea.



More sun lovers



On the boat with the buds... have a beer! True anywhere you go.

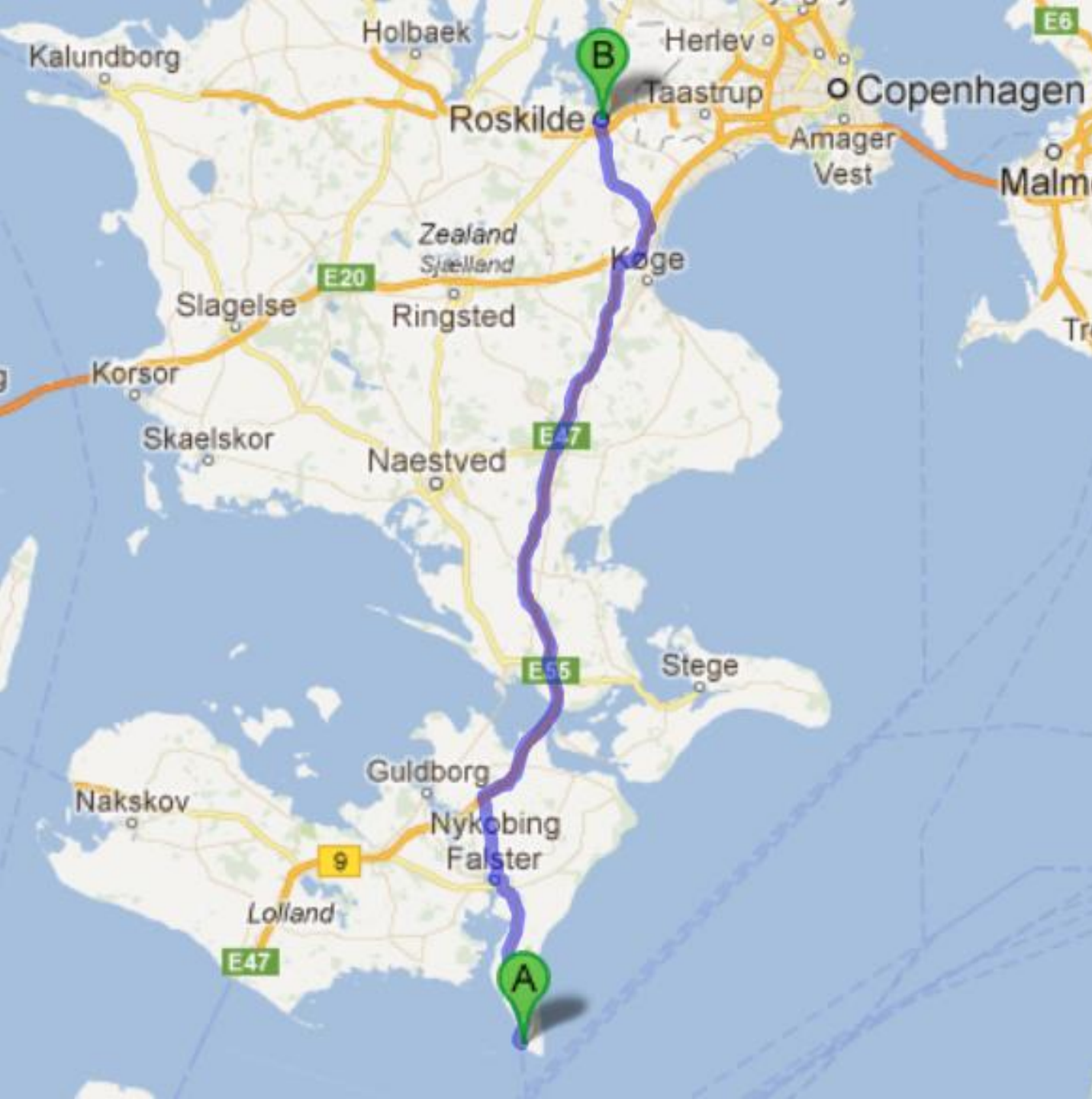


**What a great idea!
Bathrooms with a
view!**



Interesting Danish bridge





About 83 miles once we got off the boat to Roskilde, Denmark. A must-see in travel lit.

We had driven a good distance when the traffic came to a complete halt in some small town where a folk-music festival of some sort was going on. Kind of a combination of Kerrville Folklife and Woodstock.







Roskilde Cathedral (Danish: Roskilde Domkirke), in the city of Roskilde on the island of Zealand (*Sjælland*) in eastern Denmark, is a cathedral of the Lutheran Church of Denmark. The first Gothic cathedral to be built of brick, it encouraged the spread of the Brick Gothic style throughout Northern Europe.

Constructed during the 12th and 13th centuries, the cathedral incorporates both Gothic and Romanesque architectural features in its design. Until the 20th century, it was Zealand's only cathedral. Its twin spires dominate the skyline of the town.



ANNO

IVM HILFMPA IO ET CHOROLA

TEVINCYBVAIS

IBLATIONIS



**Cathedral
burial site
of many
monarchs**

03/08/2012 18:45





Nice little chapel organ

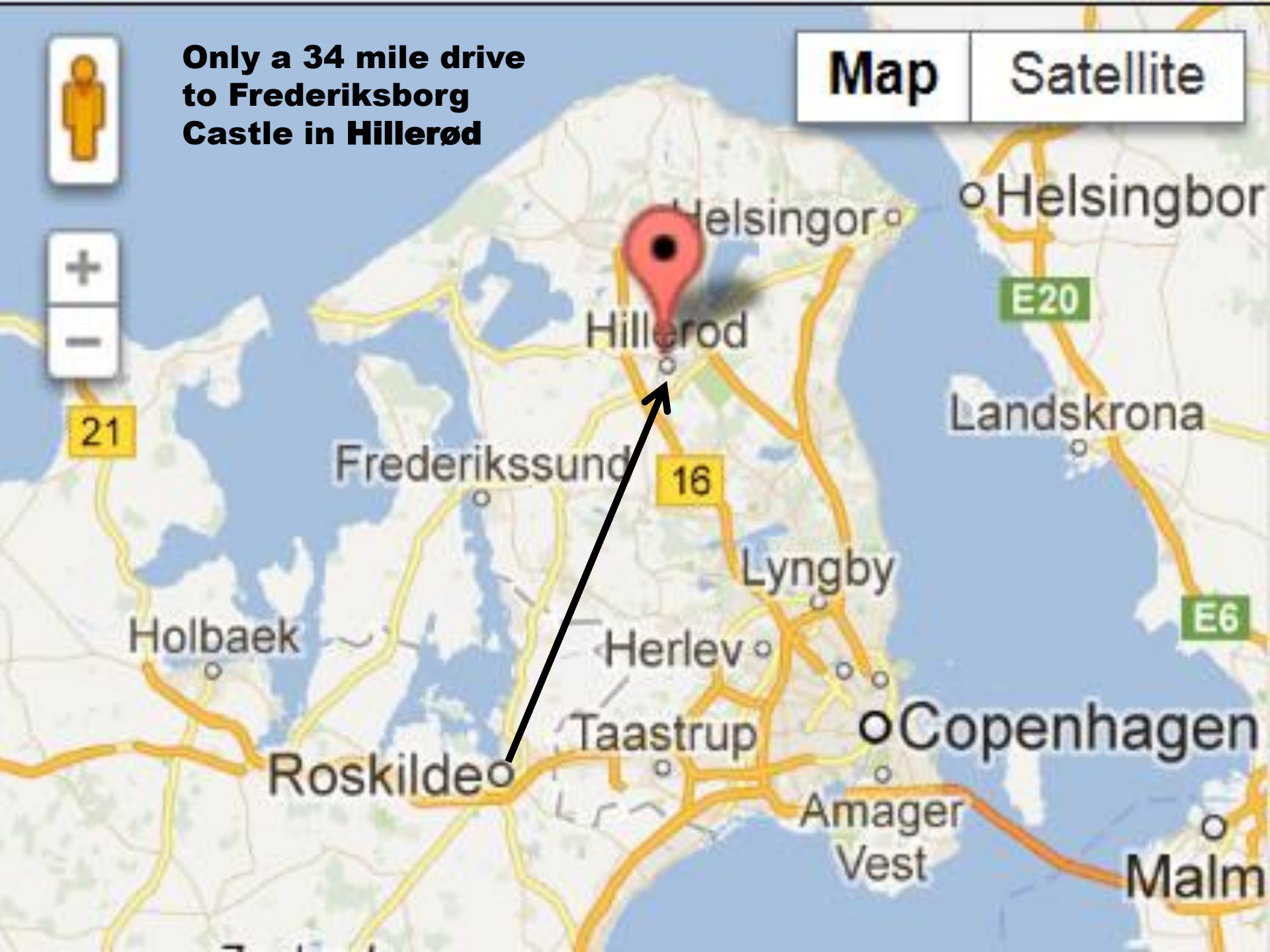


**Had a late lunch at a sidewalk café
just across the street from this one.
The Danish eat well....**



**Only a 34 mile drive
to Frederiksborg
Castle in Hillerød**

Map **Satellite**



21

16

E20

E6

**Nice countryside, beautiful day between Roskilde
and Hillerød.**







The history of Frederiksborg Castle really began in the 16th. century. In 1560 King Frederik II took over the manor "Hillerødsholm", and turned it into a hunting seat. This stimulated the growth of the neighbouring village of Hillerød, not least when King Christian IV in 1599 began the construction of Frederiksborg Castle. The castle - now in Dutch renaissance style - was finished in 1615.

Fredriksborg Castle, nicknamed *The Danish Versailles*



03/08/2012 21:21





**Didn't get to tour the whole place,
but walked this beautiful courtyard.**

03/08/2012 21:28



Once again, we happened to stumble into an organ recital that was to start in 10-15 minutes – 5p. The organ dates back to the early 1600’s.



03/08/2012 23:05




After the recital we started to the final place for the night – Copenhagen. Only 2 nights left of mancation 2012. ☹

After checking into the SAGA Hotel in Copenhagen we ate at a Chinese restaurant with this waving cat.



03/09/2012 01:41



Closed out the night here on the sidewalk a few blocks from the hotel with a few beers and a near-domestic fight of sorts just in front of us. Beer choices included Leffe, Carlsburg Special, and Argangsol

**Day #13; 09
July 2012
After a filling
breakfast we
officially began
the trip back
home. Farewell
to Saga Hotel.
Soon also to say
farewell to a
dear friend of
this trip... Our
little Honda.**



**This faithful little machine
took us a walloping....
drum roll please....**

3,502.4 kilometers

**That would be 2,176 miles
plus an extra 511.20 yards**



03/04/2012 16:30

The image shows the interior of a train. In the foreground, the back of a person's head and shoulders is visible, wearing a dark jacket and looking at a smartphone. The train seats are blue with a patterned fabric. A bicycle is parked in the aisle. Other passengers are seated further down the train. Large windows on the right side show a blurred outdoor scene. The text "Soon we were on the train out to the airport" is overlaid in the lower right area.

**Soon we
were on
the train
out to the
airport**

03/09/2012 14:23

Then boarding the EasyJet flight back to Manchester, England. We had some good reading time in the airport here and on the hour flight as well.



03/09/2012 19:33

Got to the Bull's Head & Lodge late afternoon. This is in Hale Barns, an affluent village in Altrincham, 2 miles from Manchester airport.



Checked into room then walked to nearby grocery store for ATM, water, and last-night-of-the-trip appetizer: Kipper, mini toasts, and akvavit.



Had dinner and a couple of beers (Robinson's Bitter) at the restaurant next to Bull's Head before retiring for the night. As we ate we half-heartedly watched the soccer (I mean "football") game on the tv.





Day #14; 10 July 2012. Had the nice hotel breakfast before catching 8a shuttle back to Manchester airport for return flight to Chicago.



**A good flight
back to Chicago.
Had a few hours
to kill again.
Back in 09 Rob
saw an episode
of Diners, Drive-
ins, and Dives
that was
interesting.
Remembering no
more than the
address: 29th &
Belmont, we
went there by
train and bus.**

KUMA'S

KUMA'S CORNER
2900 W. BELMONT AVE.
CHICAGO, IL 60618
(773) 604-8769

KUMA'S TOO
666 W. DIVERSEY PKWY
CHICAGO, IL 60614
(773) 472-2666

NEW SITE COMING SOON



KUMA'S

CORNER

Kuma's
Corner

2900



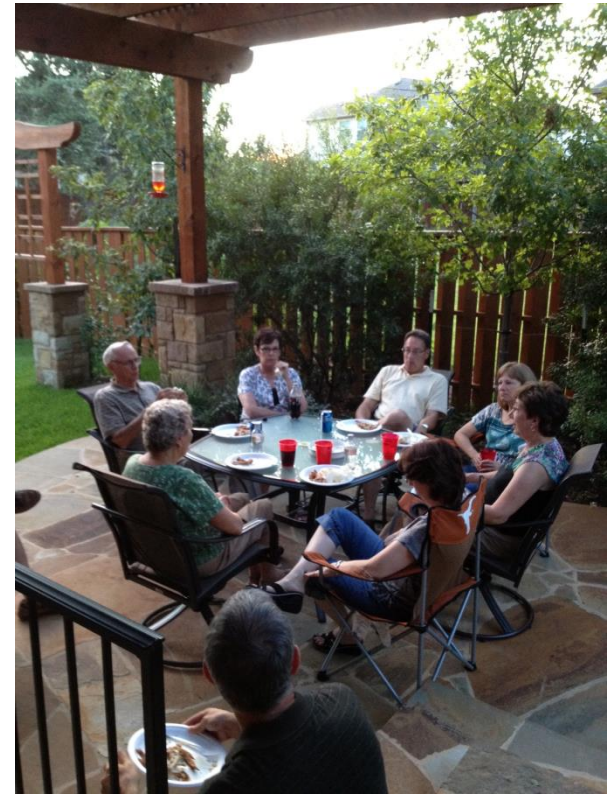
Had a huge burger of some sort and an All Day Founders IPA. Note the blue sign in the window that says:

HIPPIES

USE

BACKDOOR





Within a month after our return we: A) took the Austin metro downtown for coffee, B) celebrated Ed & MK's 30th anniversary, C and more: Rob/J moved into house, Daniel got married, Ed/MK hosted a nice dinner party for leftover wedding guests.



This hereby ends the little recap of SCANDINAVIA 2012. Once again, thanks to our lovely brides Mary Kay & Joan for giving their blessing on our sweaty, smelly, disgusting testosterone-laden adventures.

Other trips these guys have made





Great Lakes 2008



Euro 2010



Northeast 2009



Mid-Atlantic 2011

State & Country Count

1999 – band trip, England, Wales, Texas, USA

2000 – Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, France

2002 – Missouri, Illinois, Arkansas, Georgia

2003 – England & Scotland

band trip to Hawaii

2004 – Oregon & Washington

2005 – Austria & Luxemborg

band trip to Florida

2006 – NYC

2007 – Ireland, Czech Republic

2008 – Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Canada, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana

2009 – Massachussets, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine

2010 – Washington DC, Switzerland, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy, Leichtenstein

2011 – Maryland, New Jersey, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina

2012 – Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

More to come!! Western States in 2013

HMMc

Productions