

A Heidelberg Daytrip

There are places and periods of time in our lives in which we enter one way... and exit another. The years spent in Heidelberg, Germany were just that for me. In reflection, I remember the pains to be equally as intense as the joys, with this period serving as an awakening to experience both. Each high note and every deep low vibration served to bring awareness to the fact that there was an incredible strength within, that I had not even begun to access, along with a force far more powerful than I could even imagine, that could serve as my guide.



Oh Heidelberg, where I walked the banks of the Neckar and the terraced vineyards, soul searching for answers and breaking down barriers that no longer served me. Heidelberg, where I navigated the complexities of divorce and child custody, lost the only community I had come to know, faced a fear-rendering diagnosis of melanoma, let go of all of the pharmaceuticals that held me together for years, experienced bullying and harassment in the workplace for the first and last time, and finally came to the realization that I had everything it would take to stand up for myself in the face of each and every circumstance.

And then, Heidelberg, the years in which I gave birth to my third child, a son who would teach me it was time to learn new ways to do things, where I made the first connections with my biological family and found answers to questions I had carried for 40+ years, the place I discovered the healing power of my own body through Homeopathic treatment, and discovered the joy in being my own best friend.

In returning and walking the same streets and paths as I did in those times of fear, self-doubt, and mistrust, I could not help but marvel at the transformations I had allowed to occur. Just as in *The Alchemist*, the years that would follow provided the perfect setting to experience true healing and personal growth.

“...when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.”

And so, on a typical Heidelberg summer day with mixed skies full of showers and sunshine, Sebastian and I set out to see what memories would join us. Upon arriving at Heidelberg HBF, we hopped upon the Strassenbahn heading to Bismarkplatz. Halfway to our destination, we decided to forego S-bahn and walk, given the weather and the fact we could wander as we like. After some discussion, we decided to make our way into the Altstadt and for a snack at one of the new vegan restaurants. (Something completely unheard of ten years ago!)



Along the way we passed Sebastian's favorite playground as a child and I couldn't help but share a story. Always an early riser (and I do mean early), preschool aged Sebastian and I would often head out as early as 7am on Saturday mornings in search of the first bakery that opened and a playground. Feeling adventuresome one Saturday, we made it all the way into the Altstadt and he was thrilled to have the entire playground to himself. I secured a tea for myself and settled onto a bench only to be startled by a loud and emphatic "schimpfen" from the man who lived in a flat directly above the playground. Clearly our good fortune conflicted with his attempt to sleep in on a Saturday morning.



We carried on our walk down Maerzgasse, making our way over the aged cobblestones deep into the alstadt. I marveled at how quickly a 15 year old can cover the distance that might have taken hours just a few short years ago! With luck on our side, we approached the café of our choice just at the moment that the sunny skies turned black and quickly dropped enormous amounts of rain. What a delight to sit in the cozy café, sip some tea, and watch the storm wash through the alleyways, as eventually the skies returned to sparking sunshine. We made quick work of our shared plate of gluten free pasta and gorgeous lemon basil sauce and were soon ready to head out once again.

In giving Sebastian the choice of walking though the hauptstrasse full of shops or along the river, I must say I was not surprised at all with his decision. We wove our way through the narrow streets until we came upon the Alte **Brücke**, a classic symbol of Heidelberg with the picturesque schloss in the background. Having taken the obligatory photos, ones we never captured as residents, we set on our way along the river's edge. Everything fresh and sparkly from the rain, with the warmth of the sun on our backs, it could not have been a lovelier walk together as we shared clips of memories that spontaneously popped into our heads.



Once we came to Neuenheim, the village just across the river from central Heidelberg we caught the S-Bahn towards Dossenheim where we would be meeting up with a dear friend and

former neighbor.

Dossenheim, a village just outside of Heidelberg, is nestled into the picturesque terraced vineyards and was our home for our final three years in Germany. The walks we took in those hills, rain, shine, or snow, taught me the healing power of spending time with nature. It was here that I began to reconnect with my creative spirit and intuition that would guide my coming years. (A remnant of those sometimes unconventional ideas still lives on and it's a little known fact that I once started a goat farm. It's a great story requiring more space than this, but here is the short version: About a year prior to our moving to the U.S., I was inspired to begin a small farm co-op with five local families, all with young children. It was quite the endeavor and believe it or not eleven years later it's still going! One original family remains as well as these two crazy goats! What a treat for Sebastian to see them once again and to see the stunning area in its entire summer splendor.)



The day was over all too soon and as we entered the train station heading home to Oehringen, I was thrilled to hear Sebastian suggest a return trip in order to see what we had not been able to fit into our day.