

THE 100TH COUNTRY!!!!!!

I'm excited to be back in Sweden for many reasons, but the most important is that I have finally hit 100 countries!!!! It has been a crazy past eight months and it is honestly hard to believe that I have made it this far, but here we are! I'm now officially been to 100 countries and am more than halfway to visiting them all. It is an exciting milestone for sure, and I can't wait to keep going!

Sweden seemed like an appropriate country to be number 100 for a few reasons. First and most importantly it fit that way on my schedule. But for more sentimental reasons it was a perfect fit. Sweden is actually the first country that I ever visited on my own. Almost two years exactly to the day I flew from London to Gothenburg, spent a day in Gothenburg, and then flew to Stockholm for a few days before heading to Finland. It was an amazing experience and I like to think it helped to spark all of this!

I only had a few hours to enjoy Stockholm this morning. I wish I had more time but it's unfortunately a Monday so most things would have been closed if I stayed an extra day, and tomorrow I would have to deal with flight connections instead of a direct flight to the US so I made the difficult choice of only one day in Stockholm.

I started my day by getting a great night of sleep and then having a nice breakfast at Hotel Rival. Afterwards I walked just down the street from the hotel to Monteliusvägen, which offers an amazing view out over the entirety of Stockholm. It is a great path to walk along and totally worth it just for the amazing views! I then took the T just two stops to Galma Stan (the Old Town). Gamla Stan is fantastic - it is basically a tiny island in the middle of Stockholm that is home to countless tiny shops and restaurants.

I had about an hour to spare and I spent it walking around Galma Stan. I really enjoyed just walking along the streets and going to the stores, and also got a hot chocolate from a great spot called Kaffekoppen. I got mine to go but I recommend sitting down as it is a cool place inside. To finish up my visit to Galma Stan I headed in a store that I realized was the store that I bought my current hat in last time I was in Stockholm: it was quite the coincidence!

I decided to buy myself a new hat since this one has been through the ringer for the past two years, and also to help celebrate country number 100! The brand is Sätilla and it's pretty cool as it is a Swedish brand that has been around since 1896. I also really love that they include a tiny text on the inside of the hat that tells you who actually knitted it. I also bought a cute Swedish ram stuffed animal (yes, it's for me..) to commemorate my 100th country. I've found over my two trips here that Stockholm is basically an endless money pit. I don't know what it is, maybe all of the cute stores, but money seems to go much quicker in Stockholm than most places I've been!

After my walk around Galma Stan I then headed back to Mariatorget where I stopped in the Sandqvist store. I bought my first Sandqvist backpack two years ago at this store and still absolutely love it. I bought another to use on my trip and it has been great for everything that I have needed. I love the Swedish brand and couldn't leave without stopping by and looking around. I bought a tiny pouch that matches my backpack that I'm going to use to store my extra foreign money keepsakes in.

I then made my way back to Rival Hotel to grab my bags and then took the T back to the central station. I unfortunately missed the first train to the airport by just a few seconds (I would have made it if the signs in the station had been accurate - they listed that it was running seven minutes late but it definitely was not). The next train left fifteen minutes later. I wasn't late to the airport but I definitely wasn't early. The line for security was very short but then the line for passport control was over thirty minutes long. It was not ideal but I eventually made it through! I was totally fine, though, because my flight ended up boarding and departing about thirty minutes late.

I'm flying straight from Stockholm Arlanda Airport (ARN) to LAX. It's a long flight but at only around \$180 is quite the bargain, as all my transatlantic flights with Norwegian tend to be. I'll land around 4pm, and then take a flight from LAX to Dallas. Good news is I have a whole row to myself on the ten-hour flight! When I get back I'll spend the next few weeks in Dallas really working to make the rest of my trip happen. I've gotten it all logistically planned, but I still have to get the financial situation figured out. I know that it's possible, but the next few weeks will be all about making it a reality! After my time in the US I plan on starting the Asian leg of my trip. Asia is the region that I have been most looking forward to since starting my trip, and I am so excited for it!

This past month of travel has been so crazy. It's been stressful but it has also been fantastic. I have met amazing people all along the way; whether it be on a train in Hungary, the airport in Guinea-Bissau, or a hotel in Algeria, I have really enjoyed getting to meet so many people. I have really enjoyed these countries as well. I won't miss the indoor smoking in the Balkans but I will miss learning about such a unique region. I've officially finished up with Europe so I am of course going to miss it, but I know I will be back someday so it is thankfully not too difficult to say goodbye for now. I also began my time in Africa, and along with doing so my level of worry for that part of my trip has decreased as I have only had incredible experiences so far. It's been an amazing month, but I'm excited to go home for a bit and take a nice, long nap!