

# How to Savor the Moments

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I stared out my airplane window and just kept whispering, “thank you, God, thank you!” Hundreds of flights had been delayed or cancelled due to snow and ice storms swarming the skies of New Jersey and hovering over Newark airport. I couldn’t believe my luck or, rather, my grace when I arrived for my ten o’ clock overnight flight on Wednesday. I had been incessantly checking the website for an inevitable change in flight status but it was on-time and ‘smooth sailing’ the whole way! Truly this first-time trip to Austria was meant to be for me.

Arriving in Zurich, Switzerland on Thursday, I traveled the four-hour route over to Austria. The picturesque mountains that I saw along this trip were absolutely breathtaking and it is practically impossible to relay their beauty through words alone. I recommend everyone see such a sight at least once in their life (and don’t stop at once if you can help it)! It was like stepping into a painting- truly God is the greatest artist- and as the endless Alps crossed before my window, I felt like running a finger across their tops like a kid eating frosting (the best part, of course) off the top of a cake. Also, to secure this image, this feeling, and experience into an my memory (and, more so, my soul) forever. I had not even reached my hotel and already I felt so overwhelmed with gratitude and excitement- how would I savor all these moments??

Soon enough, I arrived at the Hotel Grauer Baer which is nestled in the capital city of Innsbruck on the western side of Austria. An extremely cultural and historically-rich town, Innsbruck has long since been a major transportation link, allowing for the easiest travel through the Alps via the nearby Brenner Pass that connects and is halfway between Munich, Germany and Verona, Italy. Also renown as a sports center, Innsbruck hosted the [1964](#) and [1976 Winter Olympics](#) as well as the [1984](#) and [1988 Paralympics](#). An exciting celebration began on January 29<sup>th</sup> of this year, marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the city’s first Olympic hosting.

On Friday (the next morning), I woke up in utter disbelief that I was in Austria! I was so eager to share my preliminary tastes of Austria that I posted some photos to Facebook but nothing could compare to the live feeling of being where I was and seeing what I was so fortunately seeing, especially at the top of a mountain that our group ascended later that day. The scene was, unquestionable, one of the most gorgeous in the world. Called Seegrube, this 6,000-foot high point is reachable by ‘funicular’ which means train and is said to be cloud-free 350 days out of the year! Once there, I visited an igloo and enjoyed lunch over this panoramic view with a couple that I was traveling with. Equally in awe of what we were seeing, the unanimous vote was that this trip was worth every penny but we continued to wonder how we could savor each moment and make it last. To finish off the day, I enjoyed a nightcap at the café und pub- a hot, peach drink that is served with a slice of ginger.

After breakfast bright and early on Saturday morning, a bus took our group from the hotel to northern Germany where we would tour the castles. This two-hour drive was just as glorious and breath-taking as my first commute (from Switzerland). Our tour guide pointed to the forests that gave birth to the stories Hansel and Gretel as well as Little Red Riding Hood! Our route along the Bavarian Alps bordered Austria and Germany, the highest point of which is Germany’s

largest mountain- the snow covered Zugspitze. The base of this mountain also served as home to the winter sports center. We arrived at the castle of Neuschwanstein which was majestically architected by King Ludwig II. On the return trip we stopped at Oberammergau which is a village southwest of Munich, also in the Bavarian Alps, which is well-acclaimed for its Passion Play- a dramatic representation of Jesus Christ's last hours on earth. This ritual that has continued since the 16<sup>th</sup> century and is religiously carried out every 10 years with as many as 2,000 actors. To this day, Oberammergau gains worldwide attention from both loyal and new audiences.

Beyond its theatrical heritage, I was also struck by the intricate displays of wood-carving shops and pastry shops. Stopping for a waffle and the best hot cocoa I've ever tried, I relished in yet another unforgettable moment and scolded myself for waiting this long to get here. I thought about the countless times I had poked my nose through the pictures of my childhood storybook, enamored by legendary characters who lived just steps away from where I was presently sitting. What else had I missed out on, I thought to myself. How long did I think life would last that I had put aside my childish wonder and sense of adventure. I have dreamed of traveling the world for as long as I could remember and here was my chance to see all of God's Creation. I couldn't help but think about my children, too, and their excitement for me to be traveling. But I knew, now, having tasted the first bite of traveler's fever that I had to move them, push them, kick them if need be! to live out their dreams too...and now, not later, while they still had the chance. Turns out that to savor each moment is to forget the word tomorrow and live in today. Tomorrow is never guaranteed to any of us, young or old, and I am so grateful that God could grant me the opportunity to feel and realize what I was missing and what is ours for the taking if we choose to seize and appreciate it.

*"Begin doing what you want to do now. We are not living in eternity. We have only this moment, sparkling like a star in our hand and melting like a snowflake." ~Unknown*

***Phyllis,***

***Born to give myself away***

- See more at: <http://peverette.tateauthor.com/2014/02/11/how-to-savor-the-moments/#sthash.TnLm6vJ0.dpuf>