

暑假在欧洲 若琦的旅行故事

My Summer Vacation in Europe *Seraphina's Travel Stories*

张若琦 · 著

作者张若琦自幼跟随家人出国旅行
十年间漫游了三十多个国家
有八个暑假在欧洲度过
2013年,若琦自己设计行程
从瑞典、法国,到奥地利、意大利、希腊

张若琦 游历欧洲

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序

读万卷书，行万里路。

十年，从一个牙牙学语的孩童蜕变成一位文质彬彬的少年。岁月带给她的，不仅仅是书本上的之乎者也、公式定理，更有挪威奥斯陆“拦路抢劫”的松鼠、斯德哥尔摩诺贝尔甜美的冰淇淋、诺曼底清爽的苹果酒、雅典国家考古博物馆的精华……文化的差异与共存、思想的交汇与碰撞，给了一名行将毕业的初中优秀学子一片更为湛蓝的天空、更为宽广的大海。“海阔凭鱼跃，天高任鸟飞”，无数的火热与激情、静观与审视，留下的，是丝丝缕缕与众不同的风华正茂。

让课本成为世界，让世界成为课本。

简单的文字变换，隐含的却是更深层次的教育理念。素质教育、与国际接轨……需要更多的思考、更深的比较、更多的见识、更多的引导——努力的不仅是教师，学生的参与，往往带给我们更多的安慰与感怀。

厚厚的一本游记，是一段青葱岁月的点滴，一曲无疆行者的回报。带给我们的，不仅是异国异乡的风土人情，也有成长成熟的挥斥方遒。淡淡的幽默，悠悠的文情，可能稍显稚嫩，也许微露轻狂，但无论风和日丽还是云卷雨扬，试飞的心灵一直在路上。

兹为序。

田君力

厦门一中校长

2014年11月

CONTENTS

目录

My Tenth Year and First Time / 001

The Travel Finally Begins / 003

Poor Swedes / 009

Impressions of Stockholm (I)

Fun at Skansen Park / 017

Impressions of Stockholm (II)

The Sun that Refused to Sleep / 025

Impressions of Stockholm (III)

The Legendary Normandy / 033

Tales of Normandy (I)

The Beautiful Min / 040

Tales of Normandy (II)

The Disappointing Mont-Saint-Michel / 048

Tales of Normandy (III)

Being "Rich" in Deauville / 054

Tales of Normandy (IV)

Roaming Paris / 063

Why, Milan? Why? / 069

Florence / 078

Home of the Gods / 083

Athens (I)

Greek Mythology in the Museum / 090

Athens (II)

Looking Through Athens / 097

Athens (III)

A Juicy Small Town / 106

The Pastoral Stay in Vienna (I)

Tales of the Vienna Woods / 114

The Pastoral Stay in Vienna (II)

The Joyful Life in a Small Town / 129

The Pastoral Stay in Vienna (III)

Tips on European Train Stations / 137

Lonely Elders / 145

Happy Children / 151

第十年和第一次 / 155

终于启程了 / 157

可怜的瑞典人 / 161

——斯德哥尔摩印象（一）

斯堪森公园趣事 / 166

——斯德哥尔摩印象（二）

老城日不落 / 173

——斯德哥尔摩印象（三）

充满传奇色彩的诺曼底 / 180

——诺曼底故事（一）

美丽的敏姐姐 / 186

——诺曼底故事（二）

不如不去的圣米歇尔山 / 194

——诺曼底故事（三）

在多维尔当“土豪” / 199

——诺曼底故事（四）

走在巴黎 / 209

米兰困惑 / 213

佛罗伦萨 / 220

诸神之家 / 224

——雅典行（一）

国家考古博物馆里的希腊神话 / 230

——雅典行（二）

竖着看雅典 / 236

——雅典行（三）

多汁的小镇 / 243

——维也纳乡居（一）

维也纳森林的故事 / 251

——维也纳乡居（二）

小镇上的幸福生活 / 264

——维也纳乡居（三）

欧洲火车站趣谈 / 273

孤独的老人 / 279

幸福的孩子 / 283

My Tenth Year and First Time



Ever since I was four, my summer vacations have always been spent on travelling with my family. Of the past ten summers, I spent eight in Europe, one in Southeast Asia, and one in America. The durations of those summer vacations ranged from a month to two and a half months (In 2010, Xiamen reinforced her plan of renovating and expanding buildings of primary schools and middle schools, thus the summer vacation of that year was prolonged by half a month). Normally, we would travel to several countries first and then stayed put in one country, a small town or a village, to be exact.

I have always been fascinated by Europe: her long history and colourful culture. From the North Cape of Norway in the furthest north to the Cape Roca of Portugal in the furthest west, including Great Britain and Iceland, I have travelled to almost every part of Europe.

The summer of 2013 was my tenth vacation spent on travelling abroad but it was the first one for which I made a list of all the places we were planning to visit, designed our travel routes, and worked out specific itineraries all by myself. As we had plenty of time during the vacation, we still followed our usual sense of roaming at a leisurely pace this time. The countries I was particularly interested in were Sweden, France, Italy, Greece, and Austria, and I included them all in my overall itinerary. We intended to thoroughly enjoy each place, including each and every unique and breathtaking detail in every tourist



attraction.

For our trip to Sweden, I only made arrangements for a visit to Stockholm; for France, I chose to visit Normandy in the north and Paris; for Italy, I decided on Milan and Florence; for Greece, Athens; and for Austria, we opted, as usual, to stay in our favourite place — the countryside.

When it came to considering the means of transportation, I opted for planes for cross-national journeys. As soon as I settled on the actual dates, I booked our plane tickets online, for I knew that the earlier they were purchased, the lower their prices were. Train tickets were bought for the trip between Paris and Normandy, as well as between Milan and Florence. As we decided to make fewer journeys by train this year, we did not, as we used to, purchase a Eurail Pass; instead, we simply purchased our tickets just a few days before we started our train journeys.

All of our hotel rooms, however, were booked beforehand. Reserving rooms on reputable international hotel chains is the easiest solution. Some places, such as Normandy, do not possess international hotels that we are familiar with, and in that case we would ask our friends to book rooms for us.

And as for detailed travel plans for specific destinations, my approach was to carry guidebooks around and settle on a rough plan just before we arrived there, as I always felt that the many guidebooks I had read in China were somewhat abstract — especially those maps — when read at a place far away from the destinations they described. Moreover, it was impossible to absorb so much information at once. Later, I discovered that I was not alone — many other tourists were also bumping around armed with a guidebook. This was very much like a case of “great minds thinking alike”, so to speak, haha.

The Travel Finally Begins



The much anticipated journey finally began on the very first day of our summer vacation.

Now with the KLM Airlines, we are able to fly directly from Xiamen to Amsterdam, and then to other cities in Europe. In the past troublesome years, however, we had to first fly to cities like Guangzhou, Shanghai or Beijing and then take an intercontinental flight to Frankfurt or elsewhere, before finally reaching our destination. An experience like that was always extremely bothersome and exhausting. Especially during the return flight, due to long hours of flying across two continents, our tiredness was magnified by the pernicious time difference, so it is no surprise that we were always exhausted when we finally set foot on Chinese soil.

But even then, we still had to wait for the flight to Xiamen at another city's airport — that was truly a torturous experience. Every time, my eyes would be bloodshot due to lack of sleep and I would fall into a deep slumber the moment my bottom hit a chair. And when I did, it would be nigh impossible for anyone to wake me up without slapping me on the face.

Intercontinental flights have become quite optional these years. In addition to our own Chinese airlines, airlines of other countries are also increasingly available. By comparison, foreign airlines are often far preferable. It is not that we are crazy about foreign stuff or that the equipment on our planes is



not as good as that on foreign planes, but that the quality of their services is fundamentally different.

Flight attendants of our airlines treat Chinese people and foreigners with bipolar attitudes. When they are serving Chinese people, coldness and indifference are virtually dripping from their faces, but when facing the foreigners, their attitude is much warmer. Such different attitudes can be rather unsettling. The flight attendants of foreign airlines, however, usually make tourists from everywhere feel equally warm and welcomed. Alas, we do not even know how to comment on that!

Though this was already the second time I took KLM flight from Xiamen, the huge improvement of the service standard at Xiamen Airport impressed me greatly.

When we went to the airport in 2011 for our flight to Europe, we asked all around but most members of the airport staff had no idea where the check-in counters of KLM was and eagerly directed us to all the counters except the correct ones. This resulted in us rushing around all over the departure hall, dragging our “indignant” luggage to all the wrong locations. As there were no clear signs near the KLM check-in counters, we wasted quite some time locating the Business Class counter. The check-in process took us a considerable amount of time for nobody offered to help us to lift our luggage up onto the conveyer belts for weighing and inspecting (which meant having our carefully-packed suitcases messed up again). Then the customs, then the airport security... After two hours of running around, we were already panting even before we got on our plane.

When we arrived at the airport this time, however, it was easy for us to find a KLM's business class check-in counter. The most wondrous thing was that the

assistant, upon seeing us, merely asked “How many passengers do you have?” and at our reply promptly handed us our boarding passes that had been printed beforehand — no need for us to wait at all. It was a delightful surprise; even our luggage had been taken good care of. Everything, including the formalities at the customs and the inspections at the airport security, was dealt with within merely an hour’s time. This improvement of efficiency and consideration was commendable and admirable indeed!

In the lounge, we could see our plane through the enormous floor-to-ceiling windows. The plane was a creation of white and blue with an eye-catching sign of a crown painted on it, representing the KLM Royal Dutch Airlines which had the longest history among all the airlines in the world. As long ago as 1920, KLM had opened up the first and longest aerial liner in history —from London to Amsterdam. It appears that KLM’s “first-times” were all extremely ingenious, including the newly-launched direct flight between Xiamen and Amsterdam in 2011.

Before the wondrous Xiamen-Amsterdam flight was brought into operation, we always took Lufthansa Airlines of Germany for our flights to Europe. Lufthansa’s service is impeccable but, unfortunately, it has no flight departing from Xiamen. Why does Lufthansa have flights departing from many cities in China like Nanjing and Qingdao to Europe, but count Xiamen out? I rack my brain but cannot come up with a logical explanation for that.

KLM is indeed a company blessed with the most strategic foresight. Ever since the air route between Xiamen and Europe went into operation, it has not only relieved passengers from Xiamen of troublesome transfer flights, but also bestowed convenience to citizens of other cities within Fujian Province who wished to fly to Europe from Xiamen.



The air route was opened up in the March of 2011 and we enjoyed a flight on this route in June. I wandered to the economy class area after boarding the plane and was astonished to find that it was 70% full. During our return flight to Xiamen two months later, however, the economy class area was almost completely full — testifying to a rapid increase in the popularity of this air route.

I remember that we once flew all the way to Nanjing to catch a Lufthansa's Nanjing-Frankfurt flight. Such inconvenience was responsible for the flight's unpopularity. There were only one third economic class passengers and the business class area had only five or six people in it, including us. When I compared such flights with KLM's flights that enjoyed enviable popularity, I could not help but pity Lufthansa.

The take-off time of our flight from Xiamen to Amsterdam was 12 o'clock at noon. After boarding, we had just begun to relax in the spacious seats of the KLM business class when a smiling flight attendant arrived with our welcome drinks — champagne and fruit juice. Truly, the service standard of KLM was by no means inferior to that of Lufthansa. My most unforgettable experience was that, once, after we got on the plane, a male flight attendant serving the drinks astonished us all by faultlessly addressing us by our names. Needless to say, the word "ZHANG" was virtually impossible for a foreigner to pronounce accurately and we found that most of them, including this one, pronounced it as something like "RANG" (did we look that much like "belles"?). But still, he had managed to call all the business class passengers by their names and that was quite an achievement all the same. I was greatly impressed and could not resist asking him how he had managed to memorise so many names. Holding a piece of paper in his hands, he explained to us with no small amount of pride

that he made it a habit to recite the names and seats of passengers. That was brilliant, truly! Unfortunately, we did not encounter him this time.

As the Airbus 320 soared smoothly in the air, a three-course set menu was delivered to every seat by the courteous flight attendants. Technically, it was more of a “volume” of menu with lunch and dinner included and their names translated into both Chinese and English. I spent a long time concentrating on the lunch menu, pondering on the attractive options “fried salmon” and “roasted beef tenderloin”, for “their qualities were so weighed that curiosity in neither could make choice of either’s moiety”. After a fierce battle between the two options in my mind, I settled on the salmon. Shortly afterwards, a flight attendant carried a set of perfectly ironed white pure cotton tablecloths and laid them on every table. As I was starving by then, I eagerly anticipated my treat.

If it had not been for our unbearably chatty middle-aged male flight attendant who enjoyed talking with the passenger sitting in front of us much more than serving us, it would not have taken such a long time for our meals to arrive. Finally, I saw him standing up straight and taking one step towards us...but he stopped yet again to talk to the passenger. I could not help but sigh loudly.

Fortunately, lunch was at last officially delivered to our tables after a short while and by then I ran out of the strength to even say “thank the gods”. First things first: appetiser. The seafood terrine I ordered tasted absolutely delicious but for some reason it seemed to arouse the “ravenous demon” inside of me and made me feel even hungrier. Then the main course — fried salmon served with mashed potato — arrived in all its glory. The salmon was nothing special actually but the mashed potato cooked in excellent butter was extremely mouth-watering. Then dessert was delivered to us in the shape of a piece of tiramisu. The cake itself was common enough, but the drink that went with it enhanced



the magic of the dessert time — ice wine. Silky and sweet, it tasted of honey with a scent of freshly-plucked fruit, all twined together in a flawless fashion as if it was ambrosia served only to the gods.

After the meal, I spent the rest of my free time engaging myself in my favourite activity: watching films.

Though it was time for sleep, the sky outside was still bright, as I discovered when I peeped out of the porthole. Oh I forgot, we were flying west, chasing after the sun. No wonder it would not turn dark. I shut the porthole, lay down gratefully after repositioning my seat, wrapped myself in a navy blue blanket and closed my eyes, jovially imagining the surprises that our next day would bring to us.

Poor Swedes

Impressions of Stockholm (I)



After several hours' flight, we arrived at Arlanda Airport in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. This was not our first visit to Stockholm. Last time, we got there by train from Oslo which took us straight to the Central Station of the city. This time, however, we travelled there by plane, so the airport of Stockholm was completely alien to us. Before anything else, we must decide how to get to the city centre.

Arlanda Airport had a metro station so we could of course reach the Central Station by metro, but we decided against it after we took the following into consideration: the metro route was underground all the way giving passengers no chance to see anything except advertisements along the way at each station; the metro tickets were rather expensive; Stockholm was by no means a crowded city so the risk of getting stuck in traffic jams on the streets was low; and there was plenty of time. We opted therefore to take an express bus that went directly to the Central Station.

First things first: we must buy tickets for the Flgbussama Express to Stockholm as soon as possible. It was not long before we spotted a ticket machine in the arrival hall. Wasting no time, I switched to the English page and followed the directions on the screen. After selecting our destination, I checked