

# 2004 BALTIC CRUISE



Grand Princess



I, Yvonne, flew from DETROIT to TORONTO where I met Frieda. Together we flew overnight to COPENHAGEN, DENMARK.

From the airport we took a taxi to the Port. The taxi took us through the city of Copenhagen.

Our taxi ride took about 30 minutes and cost about \$60 USA.

At the port, we met Helmuth and Olga Schroeder who had arrived by train after visiting relatives and friends in Germany for six weeks.

Check-in took a total of about an hour. Once we checked out our stateroom, we headed for Lido deck to get some food. Afterwards, back to our room to find that our luggage had arrived, breathed a sigh of relief and unpacked and settled in for the 10-day cruise.



## DAY 1 & 2 – DTW TO TORONTO OVERNIGHT TO COPENHAGEN

COPENHAGEN is the largest city of Denmark and has been its capital for more than 600 years.

More than 300 Cruise vessels visit Copenhagen every year and is the Port off Call for over 600,000 Cruise passengers - on their voyage to the Baltic and Scandinavian countries - as Copenhagen is the main gateway to the Baltic Sea.





From Copenhagen, we sailed overnight to Oslo, Norway.

After breakfast, we left the ship and took a tour down Karl Johan Street from the Royal Palace to the Central Railway Station. Along the way we saw City Hall and Vigeland Park (where we left behind a couple of our tour members when they didn't come back to the van on time. They had left their travel bags on the van. We never found out what happened to them.) In the distance we saw the famous Holmenkollen ski jump.

Parliament Building in downtown Oslo

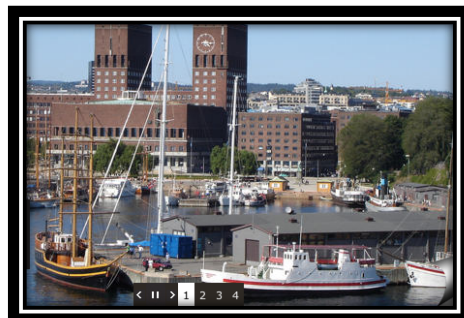


## DAY 3 – OSLO, NORWAY

OSLO is the largest city and capital of Norway.

Because of the city's northern latitude, daylight varies greatly, from more than 18 hours in midsummer, when it never gets completely dark at night, to around 6 hours in midwinter its northerly location, the climate is relatively mild throughout the year because of the Gulf Stream.

Akershus Fortress



Once again, we sailed overnight and awoke the next morning in Stockholm, Sweden. After breakfast, Frieda and I left the ship and did a walking tour of the main part of the city of Stockholm. You can get to just about all of Stockholm's many wondrous sites on foot. We were told this is the perfect way to see the city, and they were right.

We had to be back to the ship by 4pm. Our feet were tired but we got a feel for the beautiful city.



## DAY 4— STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Stockholm, as a city, is over 700 years old and spreads across 14 islands as it faces proudly out to the Baltic Sea. You can get to just about all of Stockholm's many wondrous sites on foot, which is the perfect way to see the city.





The ship arrived around noon in Helsinki, Finland. We had lunch then left the ship and boarded a city tour bus.

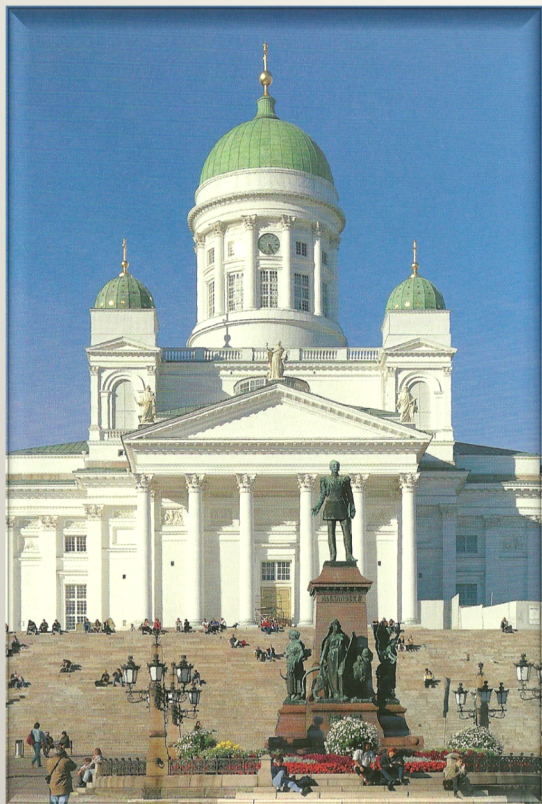
Oh my, I had to go to the rest room so bad. When we finally got to our first stop, I ran down the hill to a restaurant and made it to the rest room. Back up the hill then up the steps to the Helsinki Cathedral (Lutheran) – the most prominent building of the city of Helsinki. It seats 1300 and still has weekly and holiday services.



## DAY 5– HELSINKI, FINLAND

Helsinki is located some 250 mi east of Stockholm, Sweden, 190 mi west of St. Petersburg, Russia and 80 mi north of Tallinn, Estonia. Helsinki has close historical connections with these three cities.

Aleksanterinkatu in Central Helsinki.





One of the most famous sights in Helsinki is the Temppeliaukio Kirkko or Rock Church. This very untraditional Lutheran church was constructed between 1968 & 1969 and is one circular dome design, and hewn out of solid rock reaching down far below ground level. Temppeliaukion is somewhat of an engineering marvel but at first it was considered controversial because of its "spaceship" looking design. The concave glass and copper roof appears to be emerging from the ground and that is virtually the only part of the building that can be viewed from the outside. The landscape around the outside of the church is stark and lunar in appearance. Our tour guide told us that 2 young architects, brothers Timo & Tuomo Suomalainen, won a competition for its design and I feel pretty certain you will never see anything like it anywhere elsewhere in the world.

Inside, the acoustics are said to be superb which obviously why it is a marvelous place for concerts, even though it is still a functioning place of worship. The inside design lines are clean and unadorned---there is no altar, pews are made of light birchwood, and of course, the walls are jagged rock. Glass panels perfectly placed in the copper roof allow for extremely good natural lighting on sunny, clear days.

They have regular services for worshippers including a 2pm Sunday service in English.

## DAY 5, CON'T

### HELSINKI, FINLAND

#### Rock Church



Temppeliaukion  
kirkko  
HELSINKI



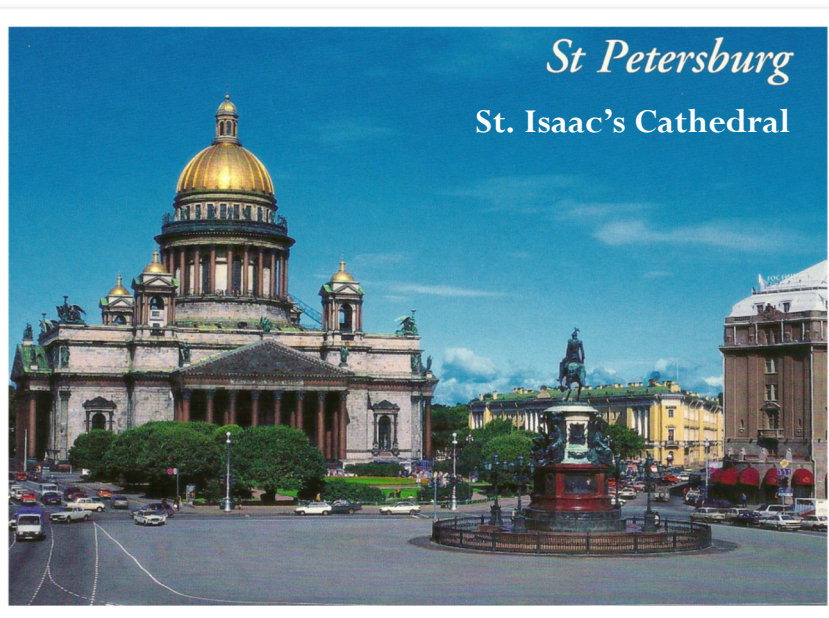


We arrived in Russia overnight and after breakfast left the ship and boarded a bus to begin two days of sight-seeing in St. Petersburg.

Picture Right - The dome of St. Isaac's Cathedral dominates the skyline of St. Petersburg and its gilded cupola can be seen glistening from all over the city. You can climb up the 300 or so steps to the observation walkway at the base of the cathedral's dome and enjoy the breathtaking views over the city.

The church itself is an architectural marvel. Built by the French-born architect Auguste Montferrand to be the main church of the Russian Empire, the cathedral was under construction for 40 years (1818-1858), and was decorated in the most elaborate way possible. When you enter the cathedral you pass through one of the porticos - note that the columns are made of single pieces of red granite and weight 80 tons (about 177,770 pounds) each.

Inside the church many of the icons were created using moaic techniques and the iconostasis (the icon wall that separates the altar from the rest of the church) is decorated with 8 malachite and 2 lapis lazuli columns. The cathedral, which can accommodate 14,000 worshipers, now serves as a museum and services are held only on significant ecclesiastical holidays.



## DAY 6 & 7 – ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

Saint Petersburg was founded by Tsar Peter the Great in 1703. From 1713 to 1728 and from 1732 to 1918, Saint Petersburg was the capital of Russia. In 1918 the central government bodies moved from Saint Petersburg (then named Petrograd) to Moscow. It is Russia's second largest city after Moscow with 4.8 million inhabitants. Saint Petersburg is a major European cultural centre, and an important Russian port on the Baltic Sea.



Church of the Resurrection of Christ, also called "The Savior on the Spilled Blood." This Church was built on the site where Tsar Alexander II was assassinated and was dedicated in his memory. It does not function as a place of worship but rather it is a Museum of Mosaic. (See photo on far left)





DAY 6 & 7 con't

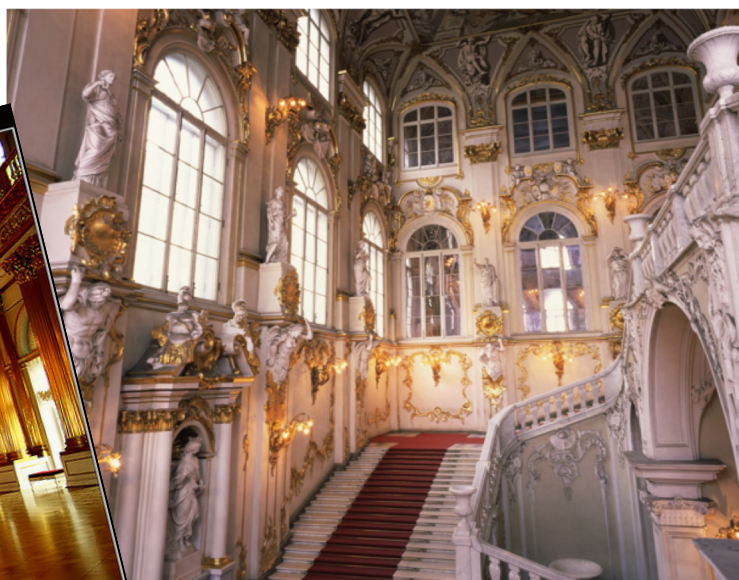
## ST. PETERSBURG - PETERHOF

Peter the Great built the magnificent gold-gilded palace. His granddaughter Elizabeth expanded it and added the gardens. Catherine the Great and Nicholas I also lived there. The latter ordered the building of a modest cottage on the grounds. It was ravaged during WW2 but restored by 1947.



Left-Drawbridge at Peterhof. Above the back of the Peterhof Palace leading to the gardens.





## DAY 6 & 7 con't

### ST. PETERSBURG - HERMITAGE

The collection of the State Hermitage includes more than three million works of art and artefacts of the world culture. Among them are paintings, graphic works, sculptures and works of applied art, archaeological finds and numismatic material.

The main architectural ensemble of the Hermitage situated in the centre of St Petersburg consists of the Winter Palace, the former state residence of the Russian emperors, the buildings of the Small, Old (Great) and New Hermitages, the Hermitage Theatre and the Auxiliary House. The museum complex also includes the Menshikov Palace and the Eastern Wing of the General Staff building, the Staraya Derevnnya Restoration and Storage Centre and the Museum of the Imperial Porcelain Factory. Construction took place from 1764 to 1857 and has been renovated several times since.





When we awakened this morning in at the port in Tallinn, Estonia, it was pouring rain. Frieda decided to stay on the ship today and rest. I determined to go see Tallinn, rain and all. As I stood in line to pick up my tour ticket, I saw Helmuth and Olga there. The rain slacked a bit as we walked off the ship and found our bus. When we arrived at Tallinn city center, the rain was coming down in heavy sheets. I had a water repellent jacket with a hood, so I loaned Helmuth my umbrella (otherwise he was going to sit on the bus all day while we toured). I left them on their own and went on by foot to see Tallinn.

We didn't see all the popular street activity with the arts and crafts because of the rain, but we were given a tour and short mass at one of the many churches. I also visited the shops along the street and in one jewelry store, I purchased a matching ring and bracelet and earrings of Baltic Amber.

The warmth of the bus welcomed us as we traveled back to the ship.



## DAY 8 – Tallin, Estonia

Estonia over the centuries has been a territory of Russia, Germany, Sweden, and Russia again. In 1991, after the USSR was disintegrated, Estonia once again was given independence and Tallinn established as its capital.



We got back on the ship early yesterday evening and had time to freshen up before dinner. The shower felt great after that rainy day in Tallinn. We enjoyed an evening concert on the ship and a good night's rest.

Today after breakfast, we left the ship and boarded buses to go into Gdansk (Danzig). And the rain began. As we arrived in the city, the driver pulled off to the side and showed us a door leading below the road. He said we would find rest rooms there and suggested that after one person paid with a coin in the slot, the rest of us just hold the door open for the next person in line. Everyone obliged.

From there we drove to a hall where lunch was provided including herring and a nice size shot of Vodka. After lunch, the rain stopped but the day continued to be overcast.



Blocks of apartment buildings—once forced housing for communists. Now citizens may purchase to own an apartment in these high rises.

## DAY 9 – POLAND

### GDANSK, GDYNIA, SOPOT

**Gdansk** (Danzig in German) is a port city on the Baltic Sea. It was the birthplace of the Solidarity movement which, under the leadership of political activist Lech Wałęsa, played a major role in bringing an end to Communist rule across Central Europe. Most tourist attractions are located along or near Ulica Długa (*Long Street*) and Długi Targ (*Long Market*), a pedestrian thoroughfare surrounded by buildings reconstructed in historical (primarily 17th century) style and flanked at both ends by elaborate city gates.

**Gdynia** was born out of Poland's necessity to access the sea. In the middle of the Square is a monument to all the Polish sailors who lost their lives during World War 2.

**Sopot** is a town on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea home in northern Poland. With Gdynia and Gdansk, Sopot makes up what is known as the Tri-city area. Sopot Poland is famous for its health and spa tourist appeal but is also home to the festival, Sopot International Song Festival.





St. Catherine church in  
Gdańsk



Gdynia Port - Poland



Gdańsk  
(Danzig)

The Town Hall spire, with a gilded statue of King [Sigismund II Augustus](#) of [Poland](#) on its pinnacle (installed in 1561), dominates Long Market skyline.<sup>[29]</sup>

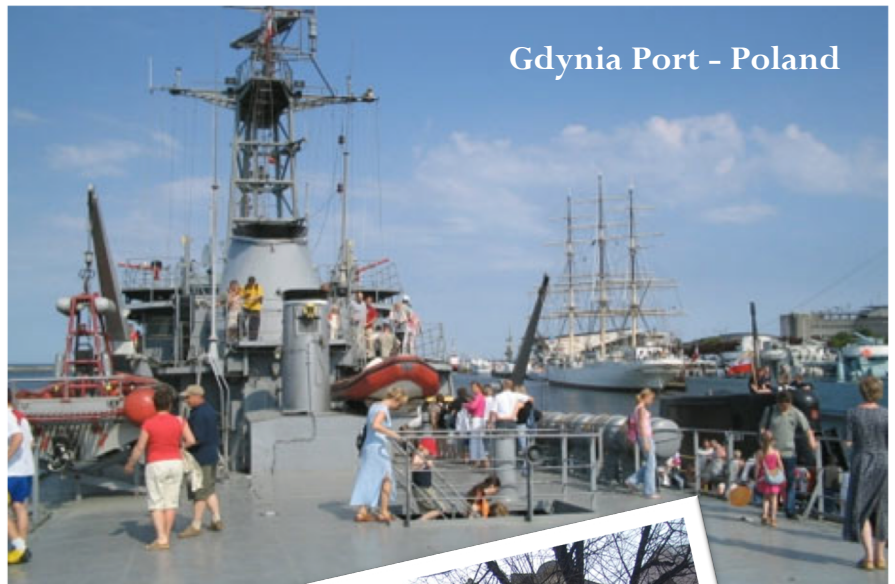


The broad steps in front of each house claim part of the street, pronouncing the house is more important than the street and the people walking here.





St. Catherine church in  
Gdańsk



Gdynia Port - Poland



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(Danzig)

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Again we sailed overnight and awakened at the **port in Copenhagen**. We had packed our bags last night and put them out for the stewards to pick up and take to holding area.

We went up to Lido deck for breakfast and to say good-bye to Helmuth and Olga, then back to our stateroom for one last check and to brush our teeth.

In the solarium, **we checked out** and waited for our group to be called to disembark. We found our luggage and our bus to take us to the airport—a 30-minute drive through the city.

## TO TORONTO & DETROIT

I flew with Frieda to Toronto where we said good-bye. I then went through US customs and by the hair of my chinny chin chin, made my flight to Detroit where Caroline picked me up and took me back home—the place where I belong. But oh,

WHAT A WONDERFUL TRIP IT WAS...AND DEFINITELY ONE I WOULD LOVE TO DO AGAIN.

## DAY 10 BACK TO COPENHAGEN

Copenhagen Cruise Terminal is not so much a terminal, more a long quay with shops and an information centre operated by the Copenhagen Tourist Office.

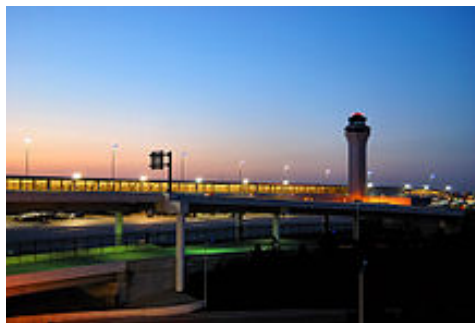


**Lufthansa**

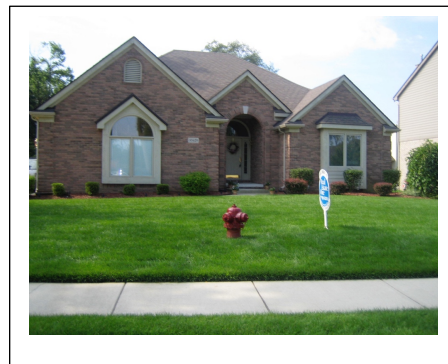
From the ship to the Copenhagen Airport, to Lufthansa to Toronto Pearson Airport (below)



From Toronto via AA to Detroit Metropolitan Airport.  
McNamara Terminal



Back home at 33429 Fargo,  
Livonia, MI 48152







Helmut, Yvonne, Olga, Frieda



2004



## ENDNOTE

I, Yvonne, went on this Baltic cruise in 2004 and assembled this report in October 2011 – seven years later! I have located only a very few photos I took on the cruise. All the others are scanned post cards or even pictures from the internet of places we visited. Thanks to Frieda for helping me clarify some of the places and details. Note to self: ALWAYS journal on such trips. Many years later, you'll be glad you did! (P.S. It was my first cruise and I didn't want to miss anything!)

# *Baltic Cruise 2004*

DETROIT

TORONTO

COPENHAGEN

NORWAY

SWEDEN

FINLAND

RUSSIA

ESTONIA

POLAND

COPENHAGEN

TORONTO —→ DETROIT