

Day 1 - 25.08.2022

The first trip in 2 years

It was 1:20 o'clock when we arrived at the Berlin airport (BER).

We quickly got our suitcases from the car. Tara, Arthur, Jesco and I made sure they were secured while Ralf parked the car where it could stay for the next two weeks. The night air was pleasantly fresh and the night brightly lit. At first, I was astonished by the airport. Especially because I had not seen one for 2 years. There were still 3 hours until check-in. Tara, Arthur, Jesco and I used this time to explore the newly opened airport. I was surprised by the modernity of the general layout, especially because the construction of the airport had been delayed very often.

Jesco was able to get some sleep, which was unfortunately no longer possible after 4:30, because the check-in opened. The big suitcases were given to the airline, while we went to the security check together with our hand luggage. There, everything went well and only 10 min later we sat in a café and ate some breakfast. I chose a chocolate croissant. Since Ralf had taken a plane earlier, we had to say a quick goodbye.

We still had an hour, during which we slowly made our way to our gate. I used this time window to record the first part of the video blog.

At 8, boarding finally began. It felt like déjà vu as we walked along the plane's jet bridge. I can't even count many times I've done this before anymore. The pilot and co-pilot stood politely at the cockpit greeting each passenger. The pilot of our first



flight introduced himself as Matthias, he was a very nice man. Following down the long corridor, Tara, Jesco and I made our way to row 16, with Arthur and Yvonne sitting directly behind us.

After 30 minutes, the plane began to move and just as it positioned itself to the flight path, it was silent. The turbines started and the plane slowly began to move. The engines became louder and louder, and the plane began to vibrate. At that moment Jesco turned to me, looked at me and said: "Here we go!" Seconds later after reaching the required speed we slowly took off. A glow spread across Jesco's face, and he wasn't the only one. So, the AIRBUS A320NEO JET had taken off and was flying towards Munich. The flight lasted less than 55 minutes. However, we were still able to use it to get some sleep. Next stop: Munich

After Arriving in Munich, we first went through passport control. This also went very fast.

However, it got a little trickier after that, because Munich airport is much larger than the one in Berlin. Nevertheless, we found our gate, H14, without any problems. Now it was time to wait once again. We used the time to get some sleep, use the restrooms and to look around.

Eventually, our flight documents were checked again, until finally 11:55 the boarding for the flight UA-160 began.

We boarded the Boeing 767-300/300ER. A large aircraft with 2 outside and 3 middle seats per row. This time Jesco and I stopped in row 24 and stowed our carry-on luggage. By now we have already remembered how that works 😊 Arthur and Tara were right behind us.

At, 12:35 the pilot pushed the throttle slowly forward. It rattled, we accelerated and faster and faster. This time everyone felt the vibrations going through the plane. And before we knew it, we were once again 11,000 meters above the ground. From now on, the only thing that interested Jesco was, of course, the small TV that was embedded in the back of the seat in front. Thus, everyone made themselves comfortable and started to watch their first film. Excerpt:

The plane is filled and the climate relatively cool, but comfortable. I have missed this feeling of sitting in a plane that I first experienced as a little child. The feeling of carelessness, freedom, security and infinity. The noise of the rotating turbines, which many find disturbing or loud, has never bothered me. All the more, I am fascinated by the constantly recurring phenomenon, where you learn new things about what is directly in front of your eyes. This happens to me again and again. For example, the perceived sounds of a turbine are composed exactly of its functioning and the sounds that are created by it (explanation of a turbine at Hugo Junkers). This is comparable to a few dots that connect each other, until it results in a net.

After 11.5 hours, 2 movies, 2 hours of sleep and some paperwork, the flight was already coming to an end. This flight had some turbulence yet was still quite pleasant. In the meantime, there has been a time shift of 7 hours, after an 11.5 hour flight. After going through the passport check, we walked quickly to the next gate, since the next plane was already taking off in an hour.

Houston Airport is very cool, especially with the international areas you walk through.

At 6pm, our last flight to Orlando took off. This time the plane was a little smaller and older, but still very comfortable. I took the chance to sleep one more time, but towards the end I was the plane was shaking so much that I woke up. As the weather got warmer towards the equator, it also created a lot more thunderstorms. Additionally, our plane hit some turbulence. While other guests clung to their chairs, Jesco laughed and said that we were sitting in a weird trampoline. As we touched down for the last time, we got a magical view of Orlando. Every little light was visible in the night and together these little lights made a beautiful view. In addition, lots of lightning lit up the night sky, making the landing even more spectacular.



After a flight of 2 hours, we arrived at Orlando Airport and immediately headed to check out our bags. Afterwards, we went to the internal city train, which brought us directly to the exit. There, Ralf was already waiting. He had arrived two hours earlier and had prepared everything. Therefore, we were immediately taken to our rental car, a 16-passenger bus.

So, we drove in the direction of Cocoa Beach, with a short stop to buy some food, since we had to supply ourselves in the vacation home. Once we had arrived, we unloaded everything and looked around. The construction was typical for America, but the interior was very modern.

I was going to look around a bit when I stepped out the door and spotted a possum on the fence. It looked a bit puzzled, probably because it was expecting something to eat, but after just 1 minute, it went on its way. The weather in Cocoa Beach is very warm and humid. You notice that especially when you come out of cool, air-conditioned rooms. That's why the quote „When I stepped outside the door, the air hit me like a wet sack"(Jesco v. Puttkamer) fits pretty well.

Finally, we ended our trip after 30 hours (including 15h. flight) and went straight to bed.