

Europe, July to September 2026

September 6, Amsterdam Day 2, etc.

This is my last posting. Tomorrow is a day to relax and pack during our last day, then flying home the next. Before I start, I would like to thank everyone who congratulated me on not losing my key card once during the second cruise. I did not really think anyone would notice.

Today we opted for a trip to Leiden. Only a half-hour on the train and we were told it would be worth the trip. Leiden is home to one of the renowned universities in the world (Leiden University), founded in 1575. One of the renowned visiting professors was Albert Einstein who had a visiting professor assignment here in the 1920s and 1930s. It was reported that Einstein applied for an assistantship when he was starting out in 1901 and was turned down. Not the best of moves. Kind of like Houston and Portland bypassing Michael Jordan in the 1984 NBA draft before he finally went to Chicago. Einstein/Jordan would have made a great team.



We didn't see the university, but we did see an observatory used by it. This is the oldest existing university observatory in the world (1633). I said last time that every town seems to have the oldest of something. This is the claim to fame for Leiden.

If you remove the word "university" from the oldest claim, it is still almost the oldest. Only the Vatican has an older observatory.

This building was on the grounds of the Hortus botanical gardens, which are also university property. I guess when I said we did not see the university, that statement was not 100% accurate. This garden we visited was large, approaching on huge. It has a planter box holding samples from each plant family, order, genus, or something like that. I never advertised this to be an accurate scientific report. They had many planter boxes with each containing a related set of plants. Let's just say they were all second cousins and let it go at that.



Here are some interesting ones. First, normal flowers.

And flowers with funny shapes. I thought this one looked like a cow. Vicki didn't.



Then we got the carnivorous plants.



And a tree with funny things growing near the base.



OK, the gardens were more interesting than the writing. How can you make writing about walking through a garden exciting? Maybe present some religious stones, but that's been done before. Even so, they were there.



Running out of ideas. It's been a long trip. I will leave you with a quintessential picture of a small Dutch town. This was taken in Leiden.

