

EATING IN HAMBURG

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PART I

A very salient factor about Hamburg is the plethora of restaurants of all kinds that abound in this wonderful German city.

Some are very good; some are not very good.

None are really bad, but, at the same time, one would be hard-pressed to state that many were really memorable eating establishments.

TARGET () ate at not less than 11 important restaurants in the city in the fortnight of this medium's stay at Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten.

The one restaurant that **TARGET** will remember more than all of the others was Café Condi of Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten due to:

- a. The consistently very high level of service;
- b. The consistently very high quality of the produce, used in the preparation of dishes;
- c. The elegant and excellent ambiance;
- d. The flexibility of the restaurant's management; and,
- e. The variety of dishes that one may order.

The following is **TARGET**'s brief description of some of the most-important restaurants visited.

Cölln's Restaurant

It would be stupid for any tourist not to eat the cuisine of the country that one is visiting.

It is a must for visitors to a foreign land to sample the food of the country that they determine to visit although many Englishmen and Americans, when they travel, refuse to be adventurous, with Americans, digging into hamburgers (not from Hamburg) from McDonald's Restaurants, along with cups of American coffee, while the Brits go for deep-fried fish and chips where-ever they travel.

As for the Japanese, give me sushi and sashimi, any time, any place!

The first restaurant, chosen by **TARGET** to sample what was hoped would be German food, was Restaurant Cölln's, located in a fashionable area of the city.

TARGET chose the set menu of Cölln's on Saturday, December 13, at about 2 p.m.:

It comprised:

Cölln's Schlemmermenü

Amuse bouche, gebackene Auster nach Johann Cölln's

*Spieß von Jakobsmuscheln und Aprikosen in toskanischem Bauernspeck
Mit Mango-Chillisaucе und Blattsalaten*

*Krautwichel von Heilbutt und Riesengarnelen im Spitzkohlblatt
Mit Limonen-Ingwersauce, Rotweinschalotten und Basmatireis*

Carpaccio von Orangen mit grünem Pfeffer und Joghurt-Honigeis

The price: €36.80 per person

Also, this medium ordered the same salad as that on the set menu, minus the scallops, at the price of €5.80.

The main course, chosen from the a la carte menu, was Gebratene Kalbsleber auf Apfel-Lauchragout, mit gerösteten Zwiebeln und Pellkartoffeln (pan-fried veal liver) at the price of €23.80.

The food was good.

But it was not German food and the waitress, who served **TARGET**'s table, from time to time, had to admit, under interrogation, that the food was, actually, spiced up with Asian flavours.

In short, it was no longer, truly German food.

Regardless, one could not complain about the dishes, other than to state that it was not, strictly, German cuisine.

Lastly about Cölln's, the serving staff should learn to wear a smile; and, Management should let it be known that smiling will not crack one's face.

The service was terrible and, when **TARGET** needed something, the only way to get help was to go into the hallway in order to stop a conversation between various staff members, or to try to grab a passing shadow of one of them as it flew past the room in which this medium's duo was eating.

Eating at Cölln's is not recommended if one wants genuine German cuisine.

However, it was not a completely unpleasant experience if one was willing to disregard the nonchalance of the serving staff.

Fischereihafen Restaurant

The Fischereihafen Restaurant in Hamburg is considered by many to be the best fish restaurant in the city.

By Hongkong standards, it fails, however.

The evening that **TARGET** visited this restaurant, facing The Elbe River, which is replete with copious numbers of cranes and other paraphernalia, used to load and unload sea-going vessels, the food and the service left a lot to be desired.

In spite of the fact that **TARGET** had booked a table, one month ahead of the visit, this medium's duo was

seated in the middle of a small room, in which there was a business meeting of 10 males, taking place at one long table, and another business meeting of 5 men, taking place at a smaller table.

This made it impossible to have a meaningful conversation since sound travels only too well in a room with no soft furnishings and where 17 other people are competing with each other for the exchange of information as well as telling raucous jokes.

The food was, in a word, nothing.

It comprised, naturally, fish dishes.

A bottle of German white wine washed down the food, the wine, having been recommended by the waiter (there is no sommelier).

To describe the 2 different fish dishes that were ordered would be a waste of paper and ink so suffice it to say that, compared with a steamed garoupa in Hongkong, at just about any decent Chinese restaurant, even one in Wanchai or Chaiwan, would have resulted in Hongkong, coming up trumps.

As for the service, forget it.

TARGET was glad to say goodbye to this restaurant.

The dinner lasted less than one hour.

The cost was €104.

Restaurant Tafelhaus

Dinner at Restaurant Tafelhaus was similar to dinner at Fischereihafen Restaurant.

The difference between the 2 restaurants was that the service at Restaurant Tafelhaus was better than that of Fischereihafen Restaurant and the food was, clearly, superior.

At this restaurant, one may only choose from a total of 8 dishes on 2 set menus.

There is no a la carte menu.

The cost of a dinner was €59 for 3 courses or €71 for 4 courses.

The cuisine is something approaching Continental and, in this medium's opinion, many of the dishes were the ad hoc inventions of the cooks, following no real formula and, as such, probably, could not be reproduced at a later date.

There was nothing seriously wrong with any of the dishes, but it is difficult for **TARGET** to remember any of them.

One is seated on a plastic chair and the entire restaurant has the appearance of a worker's canteen.

The service is adequate, but the time between dishes was extraordinarily long.

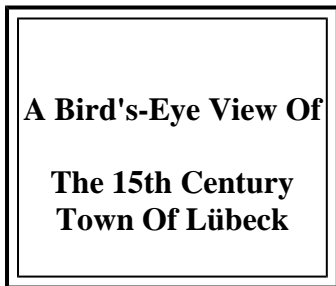
The most memorable thing about this restaurant was the armoured-plated, front door, which was about 5 inches thick and must have weighed more than 2 tonnes.

Nobody seemed to understand the reason for this heavy door, World War II, having been over more than 63 years.

For a fine-dining restaurant, Restaurant Tafelhaus fails.

Eating Lunch at Lübeck, The Historic Town Outside of Hamburg

Lübeck is an historical town about one hour's drive from Hamburg.



No motor vehicles are permitted in the town unless the vehicles belong to one of the 200,000 residents or special permission had been granted for their entry.

TARGET ate typical German food at Restaurant Schiffergesellschaft, a gaststätte in this town, the meal, having been ordered one day earlier.

The main course of the day, as far as this medium was concerned, was sauerbraten, a dish of stewed beef, marinated and then cooked in beer.

Also, **TARGET** ordered Wiener Schnitzel, a veal cutlet, coated with egg and breadcrumbs and, then, pan-fried.

With this luncheon, this medium ordered the desert of the day, 2 glasses of a German red wine, and coffee.

The food is served on oak tables, some of which are more than 100 years old.

The building is more than 300 years old and it appeared that little had changed in this restaurant over the centuries except for the installation of electricity and all of the other modern conveniences.

The food and the service were excellent.

The cost of the luncheon for 3 people was €89.60.

It was well worth a return visit.

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