

## Locking down in Germany

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My name is Hanna and I live in northern Germany. I came back from a wonderful vacation – a Nile cruise with many visits to Egyptian archaeological sites – to directly enter a quarantine phase at home. No contact with others, besides the absolutely necessary shopping for food. I went from almost constantly being in a group to being all alone.

We had a fast but not complete lock down in Bremen, where I live alone. I could cope quite well, as I am used to working from home. However, not seeing my friends and family and telling them first-hand about my trip, showing and handing over my souvenirs was sad. I was living in my memories for the first weeks. I was happy reliving the trip, as not much else of interest was going on. I was reading the books I had bought, from hard-core archaeology to fictional stories with *Ramses* as the hero, from boy- to manhood, i.e. being tested and then becoming pharaoh.

A friend of mine who returned from her trip in Switzerland slightly later than me had to go into quarantine for 14 days. We were allowed to go around by two persons and without any permit or cap on the duration and as I live close to the river this was my easy way out on sunny evenings. Restrictions were on my job location; all schools and kindergartens were closed, also all other shops, restaurants, cinemas etc.

It took quite a long time until our government agreed on masks, and then only for inside activities. Bremen always has been a liberal city: think of the fairy tale of the *Bremen Town Musicians* in this picture (Stadtluft macht frei = City air gives you freedom), The animal 'musicians' escaped captivity in the hope of reaching Bremen. So, the controls in our city were not very strict and I heard of warnings but not of any fines. For a while I could not visit the beach, 65 km away and for weeks I could not enter the federal state where my father lives without a very good reason.



I found it hard to keep up with the fast changing regulations, they were getting overly strict – in my opinion – for a while. Now I think we have found a good compromise, hygiene concepts everywhere, masks indoors and trying to keep our distance, which I like anyway. So I ride my bike without a mask but put it on before I enter any public building, even if it is just for paying at the fuel station or going to the loo in a café (where you will also find many means of disinfecting your hands), though I am having my coffee outside. I wash my hands when I return home and do not hug my friends, mostly. We do meet in twos or threes, and that is fine with me.

I learned to use WhatsApp much more, to share at least photos of objects which are giving me pleasure, to drop a short note, even to exchange spoken sequences by sending short sound files, as not everybody can receive videos. I practiced flute duets with myself, taping one of the lines and then playing to the tape, quite tricky to get it right.

I thought I would share this photo I took from a hot air balloon in Egypt: view of the Valley of the Kings and Hatchepsut-Temple! So much space and freedom before much of the world went into lockdown.

