



## Stuttford Van Lines Country Guide for

# Austria



Country Guides: Courtesy of Overseas Moving Network International ( OMNI )

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## 1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

**Location:** Central Europe.

**Time:** GMT + 1.

Austrian Embassy in the UK

**18 Belgrave Mews West, London SW1X 8HU, UK Tel:** (020) 7235 3731 or 7344 3289 or (09065) 508 961 (24-hour visa information). Website: [www.aussenministerium.at](http://www.aussenministerium.at) Opening hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1200 (personal callers); 0900-1645 (telephone enquiries); 0900-1200 (visa section); 1400-1600 (telephone visa enquiries).

Austrian National Tourist Office (ANTO) in the UK

**9-11 Richmond Buildings, Dean Street, London W1D 38F, UK Tel:** (020) 7440 3830 or (0845) 101 1818 (holiday information and brochure request line). Website: [www.austria.info/uk](http://www.austria.info/uk) No personal callers.

Embassy of the Republic of Austria in the USA

**3524 International Court, NW, Washington, DC 20008, USA Tel:** (202) 895 6700 or 895 6711 (consular section). Website: [www.austria.org](http://www.austria.org)

Austrian Tourist Office (ATO) in the USA

**120 West 45th Street, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10036, USA Tel:** (212) 944 6880. Website: [www.austria.info/us](http://www.austria.info/us)

## 2 OVERVIEW

'From monarchy to modernism'

Austria, at the geographical heart of Europe, is renowned for its ski resorts set on spectacular mountains, overlooking crystal-clear lakes and voluptuously green valleys. Throughout the country are glorious architectural reminders of the once-powerful Hapsburgs, who dominated central Europe for seven centuries. Nowhere is the legacy more evident than in the capital, Vienna, with its ornate Opera House and the former imperial residence of the Hofburg. Austria's other cities are similarly infused with a historical magic, notably Salzburg, the birthplace of Mozart, with stunning Baroque churches set before a backdrop of snow-covered peaks, and Innsbruck, in the centre of the Austrian Alps. But Austria is also a hothouse of striking contemporary architecture, reflecting a modern country at the forefront of engineering, invention and design, and whose modern, efficient social system ensures a high quality of living for most of its residents. Austria has a justifiable reputation for music, literature and the arts, but also boasts a gourmet culture. The legendary *Gemütlichkeit* – a relaxed enjoyment of life – is in evidence in the cafes, where the art of coffee-drinking has been raised to a high art, and the many Heurigen, where the latest vintages are accompanied by vast quantities of food. Nightlife is versatile, offering laid-back taverns, beer gardens and excellent après-ski, as well as trendy clubs and dance venues packed to the small hours.

Sylvia Huber



### 3 GENERAL INFORMATION

**Area:** 83,858 sq km (32,378 sq miles).

**Population:** 8 million (UN estimate 2005).

**Population Density:** 97.4 per sq km.

**Capital:** Vienna (Wien). Population: 1.6 million (official estimate 1999).

**GEOGRAPHY:** Austria is a landlocked country, bordered by Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Germany, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and Italy. It is a mountainous country, nearly half of which is covered with forests. Austria's nine Federal Provinces form a political entity, but reflect a diversity of landscapes falling into five sections: the Eastern Alps (62.8 per cent), the Alpine and Carpathian Foothills (11.3 per cent), the Pannonian Lowlands (11.3 per cent), the Vienna Basin (4.4 per cent) and the Granite and Gneiss Highlands or Bohemian Massif (10.1 per cent). Austria's highest mountain is Grossglockner (3798m/12,465ft). On its way from the Black Forest in southern Germany to the Black Sea, the River Danube flows approximately 360km (220 miles) through Austria. The vegetation changes according to the climate: the lower regions are densely wooded, with fir predominating above 1600ft and giving way to larch and stone-pine beyond 4000ft; the Alpine foothills consist predominantly of arable land and grassland (above 2000ft). The Pannonian region is characterised by scrub and heathland.

**Government:** Federal Republic. Head of State: President Heinz Fischer since 2004. Head of Government: Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel since 2000. Recent history: Haider - an extreme right-wing populist - and his party entered Government in January 2000. After a furious initial reaction abroad, which included diplomatic sanctions, the rest of the EU came to terms with the new Government. Against expectations, the Government survived until the autumn of 2002, before an internal Freiheitlichen feud between party leader Haider and Riess-Passer spilled over into the administration as a whole and brought it down. The election that followed saw the collapse of the Freiheitlichen vote to just 10 per cent a third of its 1999 level but Haider's Chancellor Schüssel, who held on to his post, was unable to negotiate an alliance with either of the other two main parties the SPÖ and the Greens and was obliged to form a second 'black-and-blue' alliance with the Freiheitlichen (after their party colours). In early 2003, the People's Party agreed to form a Government with the Freedom Party, who then proceeded to disband in 2003 when Haider set up the Alliance for Austria's Future. In April 2004, Heinz Fischer was elected President. Austria still succeeds in generating issues of right-wing contention: recent figures in late 2003 indicated that Austria had the most restrictive asylum laws in Europe. Austria is a federal Republic with bicameral legislature. The 183-member National Council is elected for four years; the 64 members of Federal Council do not have fixed terms. The President, elected for a six-year term, is Head of State. Executive power is held by the Chancellor, normally the leader of the largest party in Parliament, who leads a Cabinet of Ministers.

**Language:** German is the official language. Regional dialects are pronounced and within the different regions of the country one will encounter marked variations from Hochdeutsch, ie 'standard' German. There are Croatian and Slovene-speaking minorities in the Burgenland and southern Carinthia respectively.



**Religion:** 78 per cent Roman Catholic, 5 per cent Protestant, 5 per cent Muslim, 12 per cent other religious sects.

**Electricity:** 220 volts AC, 50Hz. Round two-pin European plugs are standard.

**SOCIAL CONVENTIONS:** Austrians tend to be quite formal in both their social and business dealings. They do not use first names when being introduced, but after the initial meeting first names are often used. Handshaking is normal when saying hello and goodbye. It is considered impolite to enter a restaurant or shop without saying Guten Tag or, more usually, Grüss Gott; similarly, to leave without saying Auf Wiedersehen can cause offence. Social pleasantries and some exchange of small-talk is appreciated. If invited out to dinner, flowers should be brought for the hostess. The Church enjoys a high and respected position in Austrian society, which should be kept in mind by the visitor. It is customary to dress up for the opera or the theatre.

Passport/Visa

	<i>Passport Required?</i>	<i>Visa Required?</i>	<i>Return Ticket Required?</i>
<b>British</b>	1	No	No
<b>Australian</b>	Yes	No/3	Yes
<b>Canadian</b>	Yes	No/3	Yes
<b>USA</b>	Yes	No/3	Yes
<b>OtherEU</b>	1	No	No
<b>Japanese</b>	Yes	No/2	No

**Note:** Austria is a signatory to the 1995 Schengen Agreement. For further details about passport and visa regulations in the Schengen area, see the introductory section How to Use This Guide.

**PASSPORTS:** Passport valid for at least three months beyond length of stay required by all except:(a) 1. EU/EEA nationals (EU + Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) and Swiss nationals holding a valid national ID card. Note: EU and EEA nationals are only required to produce evidence of their EU/EEA nationality and identity in order to be admitted to any EU/EEA Member State. This evidence can take the form of a valid national passport or national identity card. Either is acceptable. Possession of a return ticket, any length of validity on their document, sufficient funds for the length of their proposed visit should not be imposed. (b) nationals of Monaco.

**VISAS:** Required by all except the following: (a) nationals of EU countries and nationals of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland for an unlimited period (nationals of Iceland and Norway cannot remain for an unlimited period); (b) 2. nationals of Japan for stays of up to 90 days;(c) 3. nationals of Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, East Timor, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Hong Kong (SAR), Israel, Korea (Rep), Macau (SAR), Malaysia, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niue, Panama, Paraguay, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, Uruguay, USA, Vatican City and Venezuela for touristic stays of up to three months; (d) transit passengers continuing their journey by the same or first connecting aircraft, provided holding valid onward or return documentation and not leaving the airport (only applicable if arriving from/departing to a non-Schengen country). Note: Nationals of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Congo (Dem Rep), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Iran, Iraq, Liberia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia and Sri Lanka passing through Austria always require a transit



visa, even when not leaving the airport. Transit passengers are advised to check transit regulations with the relevant Embassy or Consulate before travelling.

**Types of visa and cost:** A uniform type of visa, the Schengen visa, is issued for all types of visit, costing £23.80. Spouses and children of EU nationals (providing spouse's passport and the original marriage certificate are produced) receive their visas free of charge; enquire at Embassy for details.

**Validity:** Validity according to documents presented. Visas cannot be extended; a new application must be made each time.

**Application to:** Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy); see Passport/Visa Information. Travellers visiting just one Schengen country should apply to the Consulate of that country; travellers visiting more than one Schengen country should apply to the Consulate of the country chosen as the main destination or the first country they will enter that requires them to have a visa (if they have no main destination).

**Note:** Visa applications can be sent by post or made in person. If using the latter method in the UK, an appointment will need to be arranged by telephone (tel: (020) 7344 3289) or online (e-mail: [www.visa.london-ob@bmaa.gv.at](mailto:www.visa.london-ob@bmaa.gv.at)).

**Application requirements:** Transit/Airport Transit: (a) Completed application form(s). (b) Passport valid for at least three months beyond the validity of the visa with at least one blank page. (c) Fee (cash or postal order only; postal order only for postal applications). (d) Two passport-size photos. (e) Proof of transport (airline tickets, vehicle papers, train reservation etc). (f) Visa for onward destination country, if applicable. (g) Proof of funds in the form of bank statements or traveller's cheques. A minimum of £30 per day, per person is required. (h) An all-risk medical insurance policy covering duration of visa (minimum coverage: £15,000 for entire period of stay). (i) Postal applicants should enclose a self-addressed, prepaid envelope (registered or recorded delivery) for the return of the passport. Visitor: (a)-(i) and, (j) Proof of occupation/student status. (k) Confirmed hotel or tour reservation or letter from business partner in Austria or letter of invitation from Austrian host.

**Note:** All documents must be submitted in both their original form, plus one duplicate.

**Working days required:** Five. Several weeks for nationals of Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Colombia, Congo (Dem Rep), Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Korea (Dem Rep), Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, The Philippines, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Surinam, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo and Yemen.

**Temporary residence:** Seek advice from the Austrian Embassy.

**Passport/Visa Information:** Austrian Embassy in the UK 18 Belgrave Mews West, London SW1X 8HU, UK Tel: (020) 7235 3731 or 7344 3289 or (09065) 508 961 (24-hour visa information). Website: [www.aussenministerium.at](http://www.aussenministerium.at) Opening hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1200 (personal callers); 0900-1645 (telephone enquiries); 0900-1200 (visa section); 1400-1600 (telephone visa enquiries). Embassy of the Republic of Austria in the USA 3524 International Court, NW, Washington, DC 20008, USA Tel: (202) 895 6700 or 895 6711 (consular section). Website: [www.austria.org](http://www.austria.org)



## 4 MONEY

**Single European currency (Euro):** The Euro is now the official currency of 12 EU member states (including Austria). The first Euro coins and notes were introduced in January 2002; the Austrian Schilling was in circulation until 28 February 2002, when it was completely replaced by the Euro. Euro (€) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2, 1 and 50, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

**Currency exchange:** Foreign currencies and traveller's cheques can be exchanged at all banks, savings banks and exchange counters at airports and railway stations at the official exchange rates.

**Credit & debit cards:** Major credit cards are accepted in large cities. However, some smaller hotels may require bills to be paid in cash.

**Traveller's cheques:** These are widely accepted. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take traveller's cheques in a major currency (Euros, US Dollars, Pounds Sterling).

**Currency restrictions:** No restrictions except for export of more than €267.28, for which a permit is required.

Exchange rate indicators

Date At time of publishing £1=1.46 \$1=0.82

**Banking hours:** Mon, Tues, Wed and Fri 0800-1230 and 1330-1500; Thurs 0800-1230 and 1330-1730. Different opening hours may be kept in the various Federal Provinces. The exchange counters at airports and at railway stations are generally open from the first to the last flight or train, which usually means 0800-2200 including weekends.

## 5 DUTY FREE

The following goods may be imported into Austria by persons over 17 years of age arriving from **non-EU countries without incurring customs duty:** 200 cigarettes or 100 cigarillos or 50 cigars or 250g tobacco or a proportional mix of these products; 1l of spirits over 22 per cent or 2l of fortified wine or spirits up to 22 per cent or 2l of sparkling wine or liqueur and 2l of still wine; 500g of coffee or 200g of extracts, essences or concentrates of coffee, and 100g of tea or 40g of tea extracts; 50g of perfume or eau de toilette; medicinal products sufficient for the journey; goods up to a value of €175.

**Abolition of duty free goods within the EU:** On 30 June 1999, the sale of duty free alcohol and tobacco at airports and at sea was abolished in all of the original 15 EU member states. Of the 10 new member states that joined the EU on 1 May 2004, these rules already apply to Cyprus and Malta. There are transitional rules in place for visitors returning to one of the original 15 EU countries from one of the other new EU countries. But for the original 15, plus Cyprus and Malta, there are now no limits imposed on importing tobacco and alcohol products from one EU country to another (with the exceptions of Denmark, Finland and Sweden, where limits are imposed). Travellers should note that they may be required to prove at customs that the goods purchased are for personal use only.



## 6 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Below are listed Public Holidays for the January 2006-June 2007 period. Jan 1 2006 New Year's Day. Jan 6 Epiphany. Apr 17 Easter Monday. May 1 National Holiday. May 25 Ascension Day. Jun 5 Whit Monday. Jun 15 Corpus Christi. Aug 15 Assumption. Oct 26 National Holiday. Nov 1 All Saints' Day. Dec 8 Immaculate Conception. Dec 25-26 Christmas. Jan 1 2007 New Year's Day. Jan 6 Epiphany. Apr 9 Easter Monday. May 1 National Holiday. May 17 Ascension Day. May 28 Whit Monday. Jun 7 Corpus Christi.

## 7 HEALTH

	Special Precautions	Certificate Required
<b>Yellow Fever</b>	No	No
<b>Cholera</b>	No	No
<b>Typhoid and Polio</b>	No	N/A
<b>Malaria</b>	No	N/A

**Food & drink:** Milk is pasteurised and dairy products are safe for consumption. Local meat, poultry, seafood, fruit and vegetables are generally safe to eat.

**Other risks:** Ticks often live in heavily forested areas during the summer months in some of the more easterly parts of Austria and can create discomfort and, in very rare cases, serious infection to people who are bitten. Tick-borne encephalitis is endemic and travellers likely to find themselves in wooded areas from spring to autumn should take a course of injections. Rabies is present in Austria, although there have been no incidents reported in recent years. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If you are bitten seek medical advice without delay. For more information, consult the Health appendix.

**Health care:** European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland: If you or any of your dependants are suddenly taken ill or have an accident during a visit to an EEA country or Switzerland, free or reduced-cost necessary treatment is available in most cases on production of a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Each country has different rules about state medical provision. In some, treatment is free. In many countries you will have to pay part or all of the cost, and then claim a full or partial refund. The EHIC gives access to state-provided medical treatment only and the scheme gives no entitlement to medical repatriation costs, nor does it cover ongoing illnesses of a non-urgent nature, so comprehensive travel insurance is advised. Note that the EHIC replaces the Form E111, which will no longer be valid after 31 December 2005. Some restrictions apply, depending on your nationality. The Regional Health Insurance Office (Gebietskrankenkasse) will give you a list of doctors working under the state scheme. If you use a private doctor you will be charged but may be entitled to a partial refund. The following emergency numbers are used: Police: 133; Ambulance: 144. Fire: 122. You can get prescribed drugs from any pharmacy but you will be charged a fixed amount. You are covered for both out-patient and in-patient treatment in hospitals, but you need a doctor's referral. There is a non-refundable daily charge for the first 28 days in hospital. If you are treated privately, whether at your own request or because of an emergency, you may be entitled to a refund from the



Gebietskrankenkasse, which vary from hospital to hospital. The Gebietskrankenkasse handles reimbursements. To claim money back, send original receipts with your claim. Keep copies of anything you send for your records. More information can be obtained from the Gebietskrankenkasse responsible for the area where you are staying.

#### Travel - International

**AIR:** Austria has three national airlines, all of which are part of the Austrian Airlines Group (website: [www.aua.com](http://www.aua.com)): Austrian Airlines (OS), Austrian Arrows (formerly Tyrolean Airways) (VO) and Lauda Air (NG). Many European airlines serve Austria, as do some budget airlines.

**Approximate flight times:** From Innsbruck to London is two hours and from Salzburg is one hour 50 minutes. From Vienna to London is two hours 10 minutes, to Los Angeles is 15 hours, to New York is nine hours, to Singapore is 14 hours and to Sydney is 25 hours.

**Main airports:** Vienna (VIE) (Wien-Schwechat) (website: <http://english.viennaairport.com>) is 18km (11 miles) south-east of the city. To/from the airport: Airport buses run between the airport and the South Train and West Train Station for approximately €6 single fare (travel time 30 minutes). Rail service is available at frequent intervals to and from stations. Local rail (S-Bahn) services also run to the city centre (travel time 25 minutes). Return fare costs €8 (operates daily 0530-2400). The City Airport Train travels express from the City Airport Terminal located at Vienna Mitte (travel time - 16 minutes). Taxis are available to the city and can be found north of the Arrivals Hall, costing approximately €25-35. A chauffeur-driven car service is also available from the Arrivals Hall. Facilities: Duty free shops, banks, bureaux de change, post office, restaurants, cafes, left luggage, conference facilities, medical facilities, tourist information, car hire, car park and nursery. Innsbruck (INN) (Kranebitten) (website: [www.innsbruck-airport.com](http://www.innsbruck-airport.com)) is 5.5km (3.5 miles) west of the city. To/from the airport: Bus services are available every 10 minutes to the city centre (travel time 15 minutes), costing approximately €1.80. Taxi services are also available and cost approximately €10. Facilities: Duty free shopping, currency exchange, restaurant, medical facilities and car hire. Salzburg (SZG) (Maxglan) (website: [www.salzburg-airport.com](http://www.salzburg-airport.com)) is 4km (2.5 miles) west of the city. To/from the airport: Bus line 77 connects to the Hauptbahnhof (main railway station) in the city centre (travel time 20 minutes) for €1.80. It is also possible to go by train (travel time - 15 to 20 minutes). Taxis are available from the front of the main building for approximately €12.50 (travel time 15 minutes). Some hotels have courtesy coaches. Facilities: Duty free shopping, currency exchange, post office, restaurants and snack bars, bar, left luggage, conference rooms and car hire. Klagenfurt (KLU) (Wörther See) (website: [www.klagenfurt-airport.at](http://www.klagenfurt-airport.at)) is 4km (2.5 miles) from the city. To/from the airport: Bus and taxi services are available. Facilities: Bar, duty free shop and car hire. Linz (LNZ) (website: [www.linz-airport.at](http://www.linz-airport.at)) is 10km (6 miles) from the city. To/from the airport: Taxi and bus services are available. Facilities: Bar, duty free shop, bank and car hire. Graz (GRZ) (website: [www.flughafen-graz.at](http://www.flughafen-graz.at)) is 10km (6 miles) from the city. To/from the airport: Taxis are available to the city and cost €15. Buses operate (a single-way ticket costs €1,60 and there are hourly train services. Facilities: Bar, restaurant, bank and car hire.

**Note:** Airports have fixed charges for portering.

**Departure tax:** None.

**RAIL:** Österreichische Bundesbahnen (ÖBB) (Austrian Federal Railways) operates a wide network of trains throughout and beyond Austria. International connections from Vienna include trains to Germany (Berlin), to the Russian Federation (Moscow, via Warsaw/Kiev and Minsk), to



Romania (Bucharest, via Budapest), to Greece (Athens) or Turkey (Istanbul, via Belgrade) and to Italy (Venice, Milan or Rome). The most common routes are from Brussels or Paris (Eurostar connection from London) to Vienna (see Channel Tunnel, below, for further details). For further details contact Österreichische Bundesbahnen, Elisabethstraße 9, A-1010 Wien (tel: (1) 930 000; website: [www.oebb.at](http://www.oebb.at)).

**Rail passes:** Several international rail passes permitting unlimited travel in a number of European countries are valid in Austria. The Inter-Rail pass offers unlimited second-class train travel in up to 29 European countries (includes Morocco and Turkey) split into eight zones (A-H). Three different tickets are available: a ticket covering one zone (two to six countries, 16 days' validity), a ticket covering two zones (six to 10 countries, 22 days' validity) and an All Zone Pass (29 countries, one month's validity). Ferry services between Italy and Greece are included. Passengers must be resident in Europe for at least six months before the pass is used. Travel is not allowed in the passenger's country of residence. Travellers under 26 years receive a reduction of about 30 per cent. Children's tickets are reduced by about 50 per cent. Supplements are required for some high-speed services, seat reservations and couchettes. Discounts are offered on Eurostar and some ferry routes. Available from Inter Rail (website: [www.interrailnet.com](http://www.interrailnet.com)). The Eurailpass offers unlimited first-class train travel in 17 European countries. Tickets are valid for 15 days, 21 days, one month, two months or three months. The Eurailpass Saver ticket offers discounts for two or more people travelling together. The Eurailpass Youth ticket is available to those aged under 26 and offers unlimited second-class train travel. The Eurailpass Flexi allows either 10 or 15 travel days within a two-month period. The Eurail Selectpass is valid in three, four or five bordering countries and allows five, six, eight or 10 travel days (or 15 for five countries) in a two-month period. The Eurail Regional Pass allows four to 10 travel days in a two-month period in one of nine regions (usually two or more countries). Children receive a 50 per cent reduction. The passes cannot be sold to residents of Europe, Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia or the Russian Federation. Available from The Eurail Group (website: [www.eurail.com](http://www.eurail.com)).

**Eurostar:** Eurostar is a service provided by the railways of Belgium, the UK and France, operating direct high-speed trains from London (Waterloo International) to Paris (Gare du Nord) and to Brussels (Midi/Zuid). It takes two hours 40 minutes from London to Paris (via Lille) and two hours 20 minutes to Brussels. For further information and reservations, contact Eurostar (tel: (0870) 600 0792 (travel agents) or (08705) 186 186 (public; within the UK) or +44 (1233) 617 575 (public; outside the UK); a £5 booking fee applies to all telephone bookings; website: [www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com)); or Rail Europe (tel: (08705) 848 848; website: [www.raileurope.co.uk](http://www.raileurope.co.uk)). From Brussels, there is a morning and a night train to Vienna (travel time - approximately 13 hours); from Paris (Gare de l'Est), there are two trains to Vienna (travel time - 14 hours 45 minutes).

**ROAD:** There are numerous and excellent road links with all neighbouring countries. For information on traffic regulations and required documentation, see the Travel - Internal section. Coach: Coaches run regularly to a large number of European destinations. Eurolines (52 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0AU; tel: (08705) 143 219; website: [www.eurolines.com](http://www.eurolines.com)) and National Express (Ensign Court, 4 Vicarage Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3ES; tel: 08705 808 080; website: [www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com)) run regular coach services from the UK to Austria. Passes: Travellers can either choose Mini-Pass breaks or book a 15-, 30- or 60-day pass. The six Mini-Passes give travellers the freedom to visit three cities, with prices starting from £55. Travellers can stay as long as they like in each city. Some tour operators offer package holidays to Austria by coach from the UK. A full list is available from the Austrian National Tourist Office (see Top Things To Do). The Channel Tunnel: Eurotunnel runs shuttle trains for cars, bicycles, motorcycles, coaches, minibuses, caravans, campervans and other vehicles over 1.85m (6.07ft) between Folkestone in Kent, with direct road access from the M20, and Calais, with links to the



A16/A26 motorway (Exit 13). All road vehicles are carried through the tunnel in shuttle trains running between the two terminals. Terminals and shuttles are well-equipped for disabled passengers. Passenger Terminal buildings contain a variety of shops, restaurants, bureaux de change and other amenities. The journey takes about 35 minutes from platform to platform and around one hour from motorway to motorway. There are up to four passenger shuttles per hour at peak times, 24 hours per day and services run every day of the year. Motorists pass through customs and immigration before they board, with no further checks on arrival. Fares are charged according to length of stay and time of year and whether or not you have a reservation. The price applies to the car, regardless of the number of passengers or size of the car. Promotional deals are frequently available, especially outside the peak holiday seasons. Tickets may be purchased in advance from travel agents, or from Eurotunnel Customer Services in France or the UK with a credit card. For further information, brochures and reservations, contact Eurotunnel Customer Services UK, Customer Relations Department, Saint Martin's Plain, Cheriton, Folkestone, Kent CT19 4QD (tel: (08705) 353 535; website: [www.eurotunnel.com](http://www.eurotunnel.com)). For further information about departure times of shuttles at the French terminal, contact Eurotunnel Customer Information in Coquelles (tel: France +33 (3) 2100 6543).

**Car ferry:** There are regular ferry services across the English Channel. The quickest and most practical route from London to Vienna is via the Dover-Calais ferry (crossing time one hour 30 minutes). The distance by road is approximately 1600km (1000 miles). It is one day's drive in summer, but can take longer in winter. Munich is four to five hours from Vienna; Milan and Zurich are a good day's drive.

**RIVER:** DDSG-Blue Danube Schiffahrt operates a passenger service on the Danube from Germany (Passau) to Vienna. For information and reservations, contact them at Friedrichstrasse 7, A-1010 Vienna (tel: (1) 58880; website: [www.ddsg-blue-danube.at](http://www.ddsg-blue-danube.at)). The German operator Wurm und Köck offers both passenger services and cruises to Linz. Overnight cruise packages from Passau to Linz include hotel accommodation for only slightly more than the regular one-way passenger fare. Evening and music cruises are available in the summer. For further information, contact Wurm und Köck, Untere Donaulände, 4020 Linz (tel: (732) 783 607; website: [www.donauschiffahrt.at](http://www.donauschiffahrt.at)). DDSG-Blue Danube Schiffahrt also operates a hydrofoil service from the Praterlande hydrofoil dock in Vienna to Hungary (Budapest; travel time six hours). Brandner concentrates its services between Melk and Krems. For further information, contact Brandner at Ufer 50, A-3313 Wallsee (tel: (7433) 259 021; website: [www.ms-austria.at](http://www.ms-austria.at)). A regular hydrofoil service also runs three times daily during the summer months from Vienna to the Slovak Republic (Bratislava; travel time one hour 30 minutes). International rail tickets are valid on Danube river boats. More information on the above services, and connections to Serbia & Montenegro (Belgrade), Turkey (Istanbul) and Ukraine (Yalta), can be obtained from the Austrian National Tourist Office (see Top Things To Do).

Travel - Internal

**AIR:** Vienna is connected to Graz, Klagenfurt, Linz and Salzburg by Austrian Arrows (formerly Tyrolean Airways) (VO). Charter: There are companies offering charter services for single- and twin-engined aircraft and executive jets.

**RIVER/LAKE:** A number of operators run cruises along the Danube, and from Switzerland (Bregenz) across Lake Constance. On some cruises, a passport is needed; they last from one to eight days depending on the itinerary. These services run between spring and autumn. Ferries: There are regular passenger boat services from mid-May to mid-September along the Danube and on Austria's lakes. The Danube steamer services are run by DDSG Blue Danube Schiffahrt (tel: (1) 588 800) and private companies.



**RAIL:** Österreichische Bundesbahnen (ÖBB) (Austrian Federal Railways) runs an efficient internal service, with 5700km network of tracks throughout Austria. There is a frequent intercity service from Vienna to Salzburg, Innsbruck, Graz and Klagenfurt, and regular motorrail services through the Tauern Tunnel. Information and booking can be obtained from railway stations or Austrian Federal Railways (see Travel International for contact details). For bookings from the UK, contact Deutsche Bahn (German Rail) (tel: (020) 8339 4720; website: [www.deutschebahn.co.uk](http://www.deutschebahn.co.uk)); or Rail Europe (tel: (08708) 302 008). Tickets can be obtained from any station ticket office (Reisebüro am Bahnhof) or from most Austrian travel agents. For further information, consult the Austrian National Tourist Office (see Top Things To Do). Discount fares: Throughout Austria, up to two children under six years who are accompanied or require no seat travel free and a third child qualifies for a 50 per cent discount. Children aged six to 15 pay half fare. Rail tickets: The Vorteils card offers a 45 per cent discount on rail travel within a one-year period. This ID card can be purchased at all Austrian railway stations. Those under 26 years can purchase the Vorteils card for approximately €364;19.90. Austria offers a number of discount rail passes. The EuroDomino pass enables holders anything from three to eight days' extensive travel within a one-month period on the entire rail network of their chosen country. It is valid in 28 European countries and North Africa, including the ferry service from Brindisi (Italy) to Igoumenitsa (Greece). To purchase a EuroDomino pass you must have been resident in Europe for at least six months and a passport number is required at time of booking. It is not permitted to purchase a pass for travel within your own country of residence. To qualify for the youth rates, you must be under 26 years on the first date of validity of the pass. Children aged four-11 years inclusive pay half the adult fares rounded up to the nearest pound. Children under four years travel for free. Seat reservations, couchette and sleeper charges are not included in the cost of the pass and are payable at the normal rate. Passholder fares are payable on some services. Reservation/supplement charges are payable on all trains within Spain. Available from Rail Europe (website: [www.raileurope.co.uk/railpasses/eurodomino.htm](http://www.raileurope.co.uk/railpasses/eurodomino.htm)). The Austrian Rail Pass is available to foreigners. Reductions are also available for groups of more than six people. For more information, contact the Austrian Railways Head Office (see Travel International section) or enquire locally.

**ROAD:** Austria has an excellent network of roads. Help is readily given by the Austrian Motoring Association (ÖAMTC); there is a fee for non-members. For emergency breakdowns, dial 120 or 123. Regulations: Tolls must be paid on all Austrian motorways and 'S' roads. Tourists can purchase either 10-day, two-month or one-year discs which are available at all major border crossings, newsagents, petrol stations, automobile clubs, ÖAMTC and ARBÖ, and at post offices. The 10-day disc costs approximately €7.60 for passenger cars and €4.30 for motorcycles. The two-monthly disc costs €21.80 for cars. Heavy vehicles pay higher tariffs and motorcycles pay less. Infringements will incur fines. All vehicles under 3.5 tonnes maximum permitted laden weight, using the motorways/expressways, require a small device called a Go-Box to be attached to their windscreens (including private vehicles, such as caravans). Drivers of vehicles close to the limit should carry their registration documents clearly stating this. This can be purchased for €5 at approximately 220 sales centres in Austria and neighbouring countries online (website: [www.go-maut.at](http://www.go-maut.at)). Prohibitions may apply for vehicles over 7.5 tonnes laden weight, and visitors must check with their relevant Embassy. In addition to the disc to be attached to the vehicle's window, there are other charges for the following major roads: Arlberg-tunnel, Brenner Highway, Dachstein, Telbertauern, Gerlos Alpine, Großglockner-Alpine, Maltatal-Hochalm, Nockalm, Pyhrn Highway (Gleinalm Tunnel), Timmelsjoch, Villacher Alpine, Dobratsch, Sölden-Rettenbachferner-Tiefenbachferner, Tavern Highway, Pyhrn Highway (Bosruck Tunnel) and Silvretta. There are complex driving laws in Austria, especially for caravan and motorhome owners. With effect from 15 November 2005, it is compulsory that cars are driven with lights throughout the year. This regulation applies to all



roads including city/towns. Seat belts must be worn and children under the age of 12 and under 150cm tall may not sit in the front seat unless a special child's seat has been fitted. All cars must have a first-aid kit and a warning triangle. All motorists must also carry high-visibility waistcoats complying with European standard EN471 and wear them whenever outside their vehicle on an Austrian roads (besides, obviously, when parked). Both driver and passenger on a motorcycle must wear helmets, and the vehicle must have lights on at all times. Speed limits are 50kph (31mph) in built-up areas (the speed limit in Graz is 30kph), 100kph (62mph) outside built-up areas and 130kph (81mph) on motorways. Traffic drives on the right. Bus/coach: Services are run by federal and local authorities, as well as private companies. There are over 1800 services in operation. Some 70 international coach services travel to or through Austria. For further information, contact Central Bus Information (tel: (1) 794 440; website: [www.postbus.at](http://www.postbus.at)). Coach excursions and sightseeing tours run from most major cities. Car hire: There are car hire firms with offices in most cities, as well as at airports and major railway stations. Documentation: National driving licences issued by EU countries, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein are accepted, and enable holders to drive in Austria for up to one year. UK licences without a photo must be accompanied by some form of photo ID such as a passport. The minimum legal age for driving is 18. Car registration papers issued in the UK are also valid in Austria. A Green Card is recommended.

**URBAN:** Vienna has an extensive system of metro, bus, light rail and tramway services. Most routes have a flat fare, and there are pre-purchase multi-journey tickets and passes. The Vienna Card entitles visitors to 72 hours of unlimited travel by underground, bus and tram within four days. It also entitles the holder to reductions at several museums and other tourist attractions in the city, as well as shops, cafes and wine taverns. The card can be purchased at hotels or at Vienna Transport's ticket offices. Those trams marked *schaffnerlos* on the outside of the carriage do not have conductors, but tickets can be bought from machines on board. Tickets are available from newspaper shops or tobacconists called *Trafik*. It is excellent value at €16.90 and permits one child under 15 years to travel free with an adult cardholder. The classic way to travel round the capital is by horse-drawn carriage (*Fiaker*); fares should be agreed in advance. There are bus systems in all the other main towns, and also tramways in Linz, Innsbruck and Graz, and trolleybuses in Linz, Innsbruck and Salzburg.

**TRAVEL TIMES:** The following chart gives approximate travel times (in hours and minutes) from Vienna to other major cities/towns in Austria.

AirRoadRail

Salzburg0.453.003.18

Innsbruck1.105.005.20

Klagenfurt0.504.004.25

Graz0.402.402.45

## 8 ACCOMMODATION

**HOTELS:** 87 per cent of 5-star hotels and 50 per cent of 4-star hotels in Austria belong to the Austrian Hotel Association. Classifications are according to the guidelines established by the International Hotel Association and relate to the facilities provided: 5-star for deluxe, 4-star for first class, 3-star for standard, 2-star for economy and 1-star for budget. Some hotels may still be under the old grades of A, B, C, etc.

**SELF-CATERING:** Holiday apartments, chalets, alpine huts and ski lodges are available for rent throughout Austria. For full details contact your local travel agent or the Austrian National Tourist Office.



**FARM HOLIDAYS:** There are approximately 29,000 farmhouses with a total of 300,000 beds providing accommodation. Lists of farmhouses taking paying guests for most provinces in Austria are available from the Austrian National Tourist Office. Listings include farms as well as pensions and inns with an attached farming operation.

**CAMPING/CARAVANNING:** There are approximately 500 campsites in Austria, all of which can be entered without any major formalities; approximately 160 sites are equipped for winter camping. Reductions for children are available, and for members of FICC, AIT and FIA. Fees are charged on the usual international scale for parking caravans, motorbikes and cars. The parking of caravans without traction vehicle on or beside the public highways (including motorway parking areas) is prohibited. One can park caravans with traction vehicle beside public highways, if the parking regulations are observed. Some mountain roads are closed to caravans. When camping in private grounds, permission from the landowner, police and municipal council is needed. For detailed information, contact the automobile clubs or Austrian National Tourist Office.

**YOUTH HOSTELS:** Youth hostels can be found throughout Austria and are at the disposal of anyone carrying a membership card of the International Youth Hostel Association. It is advisable to book in advance, especially during peak periods.

**DISABLED TRAVELLERS:** There are hotels with special facilities for disabled persons in towns all over Austria. Hotel guides for disabled travellers (including a special guide for Vienna) are available from the Austrian National Tourist Office.

**ACCOMMODATION INFORMATION:** Austrian Hotel Association Hofburg, Gottfried-von-Einem-Stiege, A-1010 Vienna, Austria Tel: (1) 5330 9520. Website: [www.oehv.at](http://www.oehv.at) Österreichische Jugendherbergsverband (Information on youth hostels) Schottenring 28, A-1010 Vienna, Austria Tel: (1) 533 5353. Website: [www.oehv.or.at](http://www.oehv.or.at) Camping & Caravanning Club Schuberting 1-3, A-1010 Vienna, Austria Tel: (1) 713 6151. Website: [www.campingclub.at](http://www.campingclub.at)

## Introduction

Austria is a country of startling contrasts, from the Austrian Alps in the west to the Danube Basin in the east. It is not only famous as one of the world's premier skiing regions, but also for its historical buildings, world-class museums and galleries, breathtaking scenery, magnificent mountains and established hiking trails. The nine Federal Provinces (Vienna, Upper Austria (Oberösterreich), Burgenland, Lower Austria (Niederösterreich), Styria (Steiermark), Carinthia (Kärnten), Salzburg, Tyrol and Vorarlberg) divide the country along geographical and cultural lines. After Vienna, the western provinces of Salzburg, Tirol and Vorarlberg are the most popular tourist regions, although the southern province of Carinthia (bordering Italy and Slovenia) is now taking a larger share of the trade owing to its mild climate and attractive lakes. Austria lends itself to walking, cycling and climbing as well as skiing, with an extensive network of hiking and mountain routes carefully signposted and cross-referenced to detailed maps. Alpine huts between 915m and 2744m, with resident wardens in the summer, are available for hire. Further information can be obtained from the Austrian Alpine Club (Österreichischer Alpenverein), **Wilhelm-Greil-Strasse 15, 6010 Innsbruck (tel: (512) 595 470; fax: (512) 575 528; e-mail: [office@alpenverein.at](mailto:office@alpenverein.at))**. Skiing facilities can be found in over 600 wintersport resorts between Brand in the west and Semmering in the east. Skiing enthusiasts of all ages and levels have a choice of more than 400 schools and top ski-instructors. It is possible to travel leisurely by boat from Passau on the German border to Vienna; this stretch of the Danube includes some of the finest scenery of its entire course.



## Vienna

The Austrian capital and one of the federal provinces is an important nexus for EastWest trade and a frequent host to major congresses either in the Vienna International Centre (UNO City) or at the Austria Centre Vienna. Vienna is situated in the northeast of the country with the Danube River running through the northern suburbs of the city. The Ringstrasse forms the boundary of the elegant First District (the Innerstadt or Inner City), with its fine architecture, shops and hotels, much of it pedestrianised. Every major architectural style from the Baroque onwards can be found here, with especial importance given to the Art Nouveau (Secession) style which had its roots here. The Hapsburgs who ruled the country for six centuries resided in the Hofburg where the Kaiser-Appartements (Imperial Apartments) and the Crown Jewels are now open to the public. The Spanish Riding School in the Hofburg where the famous white Lipizzaner stallions perform finely executed dressage manoeuvres to Viennese classical music is very popular with tourists (closed during July and August). Schloss Schönbrunn, the sumptuous Imperial summer palace, can be compared with that at Versailles; its landscaped park is also home to the world's oldest zoo. Many fine art collections like the Kunsthistorisches Museum, containing the works of Breughel, Dürer and Titian and the Akademie der bildenden Künste (with works by Hieronymous Bosch) are internationally renowned. There are more than 50 museums open to the public, including the Natural History Museum, the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts, the Museum of the 20th Century, the Museum of Modern Art, the Museumsquartier, the Künstlerhaus, the Clock and Watch Museum and the Technology Museum. Immortalised in the film *The Third Man*, the Ferris Wheel (Riesenrad) in the Prater amusement park is also a popular attraction. Well worth a visit are St Stephen's Cathedral, the art collection at the Belvedere Palace, the Chapel of the Hofburg, the Burgtheater (known as 'Die Burg'), the Parliament, the Rathaus (Town Hall), the University and the Votive church along the Ringstrasse. There are also memorial sites for Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Strauss and Freud. On the southern and western edges of Vienna are the Wienerwald (Vienna Woods), ideal for both quiet time away from the city and rather wilder times at the many local Heurigen (wineries of the local vineyards).

## Burgenland

Austria's youngest Federal Province in the easternmost part of the country is a popular tourist destination. The wooded hills in the south of the region form the foothills of the Austrian Alps. The northeast largely consists of expanses of the Central European Plain. The mild climate is especially well suited for the cultivation of wine.

**EISENSTADT:** The Esterhazy Palace, the Cathedral and the composer Haydn's house (now a museum), as well as the Burgenländische Museum, the Berg and the Franciscan churches, are well worth a visit. A thoughtful atmosphere lies over the Jewish Cemetery and the area of the former Jewish Ghetto.

**EXCURSIONS:** The Neusiedler-Seewinkel National Park was Austria's first World Conservation Union-approved national park, located in the area where the Austrian Alps meet the Euro-Asiatic (pannonische) Plains. Neusiedl am See's Local History Museum is attractive, and Mörbisch, on Neusiedl Lake, hosts an important annual operetta festival. Raiding is the birthplace of Franz Liszt. Passion plays are staged every five years in St Margarethen. Bad Tatzmannsdorf is one of Austria's important spa centres. Storks return each year to nest in the chimneys at the wine-making centre of Rust.

## Styria



Styria is a popular and especially attractive holiday destination stretching from Salzburg to the Hungarian border in the East. In the Dachstein Gebirge overshadowing the Enns Valley, skiing is possible all year round. The south of the province, known as the Weinstrasse (Wine Road), is dominated by large vineyards. Styria also has a wealth of green pine forests suitable for rambles and hikes during the summer.

**GRAZ:** A recent European Capital of Culture, Graz is also capital of the Styria region. From the 15th century, it was a major bulwark against the Turks and, in the 17th century, adopted the Baroque before the rest of the Austrian empire. The city is compact and most important sights are within walking distance of the market square of the Hauptplatz. The Landesmuseum Johanneum, a large complex of museums, is one of the world's oldest, and includes the Alte Galerie with its superb Gothic paintings. The Neue Galerie in the Herbenstrein Palace displays 19th- and 20th-century paintings, including some works by Schiele and Klimt. The Cathedral, the Mausoleum of Emperor Ferdinand II (begun in 1614), the Leech Church, the pedestrian zone of the old quarter, the Schlossberg (Castle Hill) with its Uhrtrum (clock tower) and Glockenturm (bell tower) should also be seen. Some distance west of the city is Schloss Eggenberg, the 16th-century palace noted for its state rooms and museums. More than any other provincial centre Graz preserves the old Kaffeehaus culture where visitors can sit all day enjoying a leisurely coffee, watching the life of the city.

**Excursions:** Any itinerary should include a visit to the Museum and the Convent at Leoben and to the silver mine in Oberzeiring. Piber includes the stud farm for the famous Lipizzaner horses. Stübing/Gratwein, in the forests northeast of Graz, has an excellent open-air museum of furnished houses from all over the country. The Weinstrasse stretches from Ehrenhausen to Elbiswald. Also worth exploring are Bruck an der Mur, Eisenerz, Murau, Oberzeiring, Schladming, Bad Aussee and Ramsau.

## Carinthia

Carinthia (Kärnten), with Austria's highest mountain, the Grossglockner (3798m/12,457ft) to the west and the Karawanken Mountains in the south, has a mild climate. The famous lakes reach temperatures of 28°C (82°F), and earned Carinthia the European Environment Award for their superb water quality. From the Wörther See to the Hohe Tauern National Park (which extends into Tirol and Salzburg provinces), Carinthia offers a wide variety of excursions even in winter, when the lakes become skating rinks and the 10 ski resorts with 1000km (625 miles) of pistes open their doors to the public.

**KLAGENFURT:** The Provincial capital lies on the western edge of the Wörthersee, the largest lake in the region. The town is full of tradition, with more than 50 restored baroque arcades now housing shops and coffee houses. It is worth visiting the Dom (Cathedral), the museums and at least some of the 23 castles which encircle the town, now offering restaurants, cultural performances and even an animal sanctuary. The Naturpark Kreuzbergl overlooking the town offers trails, lakes and a way to see the Austrian hills without too much effort.

**Excursions:** Carinthia has a rich legacy of gothic and renaissance churches, fortresses, palaces, and museums; history is always close at hand. The Wörthersee has many good beaches and attractive campsites. The cathedrals, churches and monasteries of Gurk, Maria Gail, Maria Saal and Viktring are popular, as is the City Museum of Friesach. The hot spring at Villach is known for its curative properties. The Hohe Tauern National Park is one of the last large undisturbed mountain environments in Europe. Also worth visiting for a leisurely holiday are the towns of Heiligenblut, Millstatt, Obervellach, Ossiach, St Veit an der Glan, Velden and Pörschach.



## Lower Austria

Lower Austria (Niederösterreich), to the north and west of Vienna, is the largest Federal Province, encompassing stark mountain scenery, the Alpine foothills, the Danube Valley and the hilly country north of the Danube with its meadows, lakes and ponds. The Wachau Valley of the Danube River with its vineyards and ruins is an attractive destination, less well known than other parts of the country; the most interesting stretch between Krems an der Donau and Melk can best be explored by bicycle or by riverboat.

**ST PÖLTEN:** The Provincial capital is home to a Cathedral, the bishop's residence, a Franciscan church, a church of the Carmelite Nuns, a museum and several Baroque patrician houses.

**EXCURSIONS:** The spa of Baden bei Wien has a casino, a sulphur bath cure, a summer theatre and a harness-racing (trotting) course; the spa has long been popular with the Austrian aristocracy. Krems an der Donau has been a wine-growing town since the middle ages and the Piaristenkirche and the Winestadt Museum both feature important works of the 18th-century artist Johann Martin Schmidt. To the north of Landstrasse, much of the original town layout remains, with numerous renaissance houses and small squares. Melk an der Donau is famous for its enormous Benedictine Abbey on the bluff above the town (although it was less well known as a pilot for the next phase of Nazi concentration camps). Semmering is both a spa and an attractive ski resort. Bad Deutsch-Altenburg boasts a museum and the Roman archaeological park Carnuntum. In Dürnstein, the castle ruins where Richard the Lionheart was imprisoned, the medieval town centre and the monastery church with its Baroque excess of statues of saints are part of every tour. The sights of Retz include subterranean wine-cellars, well-restored medieval city walls, windmills and a Dominican church, and Rohrau is noted as Joseph Haydn's birthplace. The Austrian Military Academy (an old castle), the Cathedral, a Capuchin church and a former Jesuit church (now the city's museum) can be visited in Wiener Neustadt. The abbey, library, state rooms and chapter house at Zwettl are of some interest. Burg Rosenau hosts a Museum of Freemasonry. The Thayatal National Park, on the Thaya River on the border with the Czech Republic, is a transborder protected area of what is left of the European forest. The Donau-Auen National Park to the east of Vienna is the last protected area of European rainforest.

## Salzburg Province

**SALZBURG:** An elegant and spacious baroque city, Salzburg is set against a backdrop of breathtaking mountain scenery. The snow-capped mountains of the Hohe Tauern rise in the south whereas the north offers the hills and lakes of the Salzkammergut. All sights are within walking distance of the old city centre, overlooked by the fortress Hohensalzburg, which can be reached either by walking up through the narrow, winding Festungsgasse or by taking the funicular. The Altstadt (the old city) was recently granted World Heritage Status by UNESCO and has now largely been pedestrianised. Considering its reputation as a 'typically Austrian city' it is ironic that it was either Bavarian or an independent city state, only coming under Hapsburg rule in 1816. Interesting sights include the Peterskirche (St Peter's Abbey, with cemetery and catacombs), the Domkirche (intended to rival St Peter's in Rome) and the Alter Markt (old market square). Salzburg's most famous son although only after his death is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who is commemorated in the yearly Salzburger Festspiele, which take place in the Grosse and Kleine Festspielhäuser (festival halls) as well as on the Cathedral square or in the University church. Mozart's birthplace (Mozart Geburtshaus) is in the Getreidegasse, also the city's main shopping street, while the family residence (Mozart Wohnhaus) is on the market square. Both are museums, with the residence offering a particularly detailed insight into his life and work. Like Vienna, Salzburg contains fine examples of Baroque architecture which stands second only to music in the country's cultural history. The Franciscan church, the Nonnberg Convent, the Trinity



Church, St Sebastian's Cemetery, the Church of Parsch, the Palace of the Prince-Archbishops, the carillon, the Town Hall, the Pferdeschwemme (a fountain), the festival halls, the Mirabell Palace with its landscaped gardens, the Mönchsberg and the Kapuzinerberg, many museums, the theatre, Hellbrunn Palace with the fountains, Leopoldskron and Klessheim Palaces, Maria Pein Pilgrimage Church, the Gaisberg and the Untersberg provide many possible tours and walks.

**EXCURSIONS:** The original wealth of Salzburg and the province was based on the salt trade, and the mines and the Celtic Museum of Hallein are well worth a visit. Badgastein is a popular spa and winter resort, with a large casino, whilst Kaprun offers glacier skiing even in the summer. The Zell-am-See skiing area has an active nightlife. The Open-Air Folklife Museum at Grossgmain is also worth visiting, as are the Eisriesenwelt (ice caves, with wonderful ice sculptures) near Werfen. Kremsmünster Monastery is one of the country's oldest; founded in 877, the buildings are full of paintings, frescos and Renaissance statues. The monastery is also famous for its white wines.

### Upper Austria

The south of this Federal Province is dominated by the Salzkammergut lake district and the Salzkammergut peaks lie across the border of Upper Austria (Oberösterreich) and Salzburg province. This is an area less well known to tourists and, with its slower pace, is ideal for restful holidays. The north offers a relaxed holiday in the many quiet villages and farms the Mühlviertel. Rolling plains, densely wooded highlands and lush meadows are interspersed with rocks of natural granite. The Pyhrn-Eisenwurzen region is more mountainous, while Innviertel (in the west) is an area of endless farmlands, rivers and forests. The many spas and convalescence centres of this region offer treatment for a wide range of illnesses.

**LINZ:** The Province's capital is an attractive town with a Baroque centre, straddling the Danube. Any tour should take in the 15th-century Schloss (castle) with its excellent museum, the numerous churches and museums, especially the Neue Gallerie. However, there are far more attractive offerings in the Urfahr suburb, with its interactive new technology, Ars Electronica Center, and the narrow-gauge train, the Pöstlingbergbahn, which travels to the pilgrimage church of Pöstlingberg with its excellent views over the valley. The Augustinian Monastery of St Florian 7km (4 miles) from Linz was sponsored by the Hapsburgs and is an attractive day trip for Linz. The major Nazi concentration camp at Mauthausen, 20km (12 miles) east of Linz, is difficult to access by public transport but is well worth a day trip.

**EXCURSIONS:** Bad Ischl, a 19th-century spa town, is the hub of the region, near the three most scenic lakes (Wolfgangsee, Traunsee and Hallstättersee); the town offerings include a salt mine, several museums and the summer villa of Emperor Franz Josef. Hallstatt lent its name to a whole era in the Iron Age; surrounded by mountains, it is known for its tranquillity and scenery. The Mondsee is one of the warmest lakes in the Salzkammergut. St Wolfgang does not only offer an impressive altar, but a steam railway as well. Gmunden, the Nice of Upper Austria, is known for its many cultural festivals; located at the northern end of the Traunsee, the largest of the area's lakes, it has been famous for centuries for its porcelain. The old city centres of Braunau and Schärding are not to be missed. Freistadt has medieval forts, whilst Grein offers a navigation museum, Clam Castle and the old theatre. Steyr, with its old inner city, delights visitors with its Working-World Museum and the Christkindl pilgrimage church. The National Park Kalkalpen in the Pyhrn-Eisenwurzen region is primarily a mountainous environment; Windischgarsten is an attractive town from which to explore the park. Much of the interior of Upper Austria is little known to foreign tourists and many towns including Bad Goisern, Gosau, Hinterstoder and Spital am Pyhrn are attractive destinations for a quiet vacation. There are excellent skiing facilities throughout the province, mainly at smaller resorts.



## Tirol

Situated in the heart of the Alpine region, this is the most mountainous province, with forests, hamlets and alpine pastures, beautiful valleys and mountain lakes. In summer it is a popular destination for hikers; in winter, all winter sports are on offer. Traditional Tirolean architecture is reflected in the villages, churches and castles.

**INNSBRUCK:** The Tirolean capital, and twice home of the Winter Olympics, is the centre of another internationally renowned ski complex comprising six major resorts. An 800-year-old university town, it has numerous fine buildings dating from Austria's cultural Renaissance in the 16th to 18th centuries, and a 12th-century castle. When Kaiser Maximilian based the imperial court here in the 1490s, the city became a European centre of culture and politics. For spectacular views over the town and southern Alps, take the funicular to Hungerburg and then the cable car to Hafelekar at 2334m (5928ft). Do not miss the Goldenes Dachl (Golden Roof), Helbling House, the City Tower, the Hofburg with its Cenotaph of Kaiser Maximilian, and the Court Church, the parish Church of St Jakob, Mount Isel, the important Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum and the Tiroler Volkskunstmuseum, the Landestheater, a conference centre and the Seegrube.

**EXCURSIONS:** Passion plays take place every five years in Erl (next staging: 2007) and Thiersee (recent staging on May 29 2005). A sight not to be missed is the Mint Tower at the Hasegg Castle in Hall in Tirol. In Rattenberg, a medieval atmosphere prevails from the glass factories which date back to this period. A visit to the Cathedral Chapter of Stams and its basilica is recommended. 15km (9 miles) from Innsbruck lies Swarovski Crystal Worlds, a museum/exhibition centre featuring unusual displays of crystal. Kitzbühel rose as a 16th-century silver and copper mining town and is now an exclusive resort with a lovely central area. Seefeld in Tirol is an attractive year-round sports destination. The Schneewinkel Area is excellent for all winter sports; St Johann in Tirol in particular is an old market town offering a wide variety of sports and fitness centres, with a good nightlife as well.

## Vorarlberg

Situated at the far western tip of Austria, the scenery of the Vorarlberg is dramatically diverse. The glaciers of the Silvretta mountain ranges drop dramatically to the shores of Lake Constance with its lush vegetation. Vorarlbergers speak a dialect close to Swiss German; in 1918 they declared independence and requested union with Switzerland but this was refused by the Allied Powers.

**BREGENZ:** Bregenz in the summer lends itself to bicycle tours, swimming, sailing or sightseeing, whereas, during the winter season, visitors populate the numerous slopes and hiking trails of the Vorarlberg. The town is noted for its Upper City with the St Martinstrum (St Martin's Tower), the world's largest floating stage for summer opera productions, the Congress Centre, the Mehrerau Abbey Church, the Vorarlberger Landesmuseum with its superb 16th-century paintings and works by late 18th-century artist Angelika Kauffmann. A cable car runs to the viewing platform on Mount Pfänder where one can watch the flight of birds of prey as well as scenic views over Lake Constance.

**EXCURSIONS:** The historical old quarter of Feldkirch contains the Cathedral St Nicholas, the Schattenburg housing the Local History Museum, and the excellent National Conservatoire. In Levis, near Feldkirch, the Castle Amberg and the Hospital should not be missed. Tosters' sights include the castle ruin and the St Corneli Church with a 1000-year-old yew tree. Visitors should



pay a visit to the famous Renaissance palace of Hohenems; the town is also known for its Jewish Museum and the only Jewish Cemetery in the Vorarlberg. A picturesque, completely restored farming village, Schwarzenberg im Bregenzerwald is the birthplace of the painter Angelika Kauffmann; the Landesmuseum and the church there are worth a visit. Ischgl is an attractive unsophisticated Tirolean village, with excellent après-ski in the winter.

## 9 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

**Note:** It is advised that visitors keep up-to-date with weather and avalanche conditions prior to, and throughout, travel in Austria.

**Wintersports:** Austria is one of Europe's major destinations for winter sports, particularly skiing and, more recently, snowboarding. The Austrian Alps take up approximately 60 per cent of the country's surface area and there are more than 800 winter sports resorts, with ski runs stretching some 22,000km (13,750 miles), and a further 16,000km (10,000 miles) of cross-country skiing trails. Every year, Austria hosts a number of prestigious international ski competitions. Besides skiing, many other types of winter sports can be enjoyed, such as tobogganing, sleigh rides, curling or skating. Full details of skiing packages and tours, resort information, snow reports and winter sports events can be obtained from the Austrian National Tourist Office (see Contact Addresses section), which also publishes several brochures, some of which, such as the Winter Tour Finder, can be ordered directly and free of charge from the Internet.

**Walking tours:** During summer, when the snow has melted, the Austrian Alps offer a vast network of hiking trails through varied landscapes, ranging from forests and green slopes to glaciers and rocks. Many rivers and lakes are suitable for swimming or fishing (the latter requiring a permit available from the local authorities). Detailed walking maps can be obtained either from the Austrian National Tourist Office or from the local tourist offices. Guides can be hired locally. Footpaths are recognisable by red-white-red markings displayed on trees and rocks. Interesting routes include the Salt Road, once used by Austria's salt merchants, from the salt mines in the Salzkammergut, through the Mühlviertel, via many historic towns and as far as the border with the Czech Republic; and the Styrian Timber Road, giving travellers an insight into the uses of wood. Near Vienna, a network of city paths (Stadtwanderwege) lead through the Vienna woods or the nearby Danube wetlands. The Vorarlberg's alpine pastures are well suited for gentle walks while the Hohe Tauern National Park is popular for more demanding trekking. Accommodation is widely available along the paths in the form of hotels, inns or mountain huts.

**Mountaineering and climbing:** Both are widely available throughout the Alps. For details of climbing associations and specialist operators, contact the Austrian National Tourist Office. Climbing tours are often combined with hang-gliding, which has recently gained in popularity and can be practised in many locations in the mountains.

**Cycling:** Austria's infrastructure for cyclists is excellent. There are clearly marked cycling routes both in the cities and throughout the countryside. Tourist offices can provide detailed touring maps and the Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) offers substantial services to cyclists. Practically all local trains allow bicycles to be carried in the baggage car. For long-distance trains, cyclists should look out for a bicycle symbol next to the train number if they wish to take their bike. The ÖBB also offers a bicycle rental service (Fahrrad am Bahnhof) at 100 Austrian railway stations, where visitors can rent bicycles directly from the station at a reduced fee. Along the cycling paths, many hotels and inns have lockable bicycle racks and other facilities for cyclists. Austria's mountains offer extensive and challenging trails for mountain biking. For further information on



planning either an organised or independent cycling tour, contact the Austrian National Tourist Office; or Radtouren in Österreich, c/o Salzburger Land Tourismus GmbH, Postfach 1, Wiener Bundesstrasse 23, A-5300 Hallwang bei Salzburg (tel: (662) 66880; fax: (662) 668 866; e-mail: info@salzburgerland.com; website: www.salzburgerland.com).

**Horse riding:** There are many hotels and guest houses specialising in horse riding holidays (reitferien). Horses can be hired for short or longer periods and packages frequently include riding instruction.

**Wine tours:** The Austrian National Tourist Office has singled out three wine routes through Austria's main wine-growing regions Lower Austria, Southern Styria and the Burgenland. In Lower Austria, a whole area in the northeast is known as the Weinviertel (wine quarter), where Kellergassen (wine cellars and wine-press buildings located outside the villages in the hillsides) and Buschenschanken (small wine taverns) can be visited. The Wachau region, a section of the Danube Valley approximately 50km (32 miles) from Vienna, is reputed for its Riesling wines and the wine village of Gumpoldskirchen. Southern Styria enjoys a moist, warm climate and its token wine is the Schilcher, an onion-coloured to ruby-red wine. The Burgenland produces more than a quarter of Austria's wines and is known for sweet wines such as the Ausbruch. Most wine estates and cellars welcome visitors. Further information can be obtained from local tourist offices or the Austrian National Tourist Office; see also Food & Drink in the Social Profile section.

#### Entertainment

**Food & Drink:** Viennese cuisine is strongly influenced by southeast European cuisine, notably that of Hungary, Serbia, Romania and Dalmatia. Austrian desserts and cake are particularly renowned. Things to know: The main meal of the day is lunch. All restaurants have waiter service. Generally the strict registration laws mean that the quality of the wine will be fully reflected in its price. Most bars or coffee houses have waiter service and bills are settled with the arrival of drinks. National specialities: Wiener Schnitzel is a traditional dish of breadcrumbed and fried veal escalope. Tafelspitz is the most famous food, regarded as Austria's 'national dish' and consists simply of boiled beef. Calf's liver with herbs in butter (Geröstete Leber). Goulash, which is made of beef, pepper, paprika and onion. Kaiserschmarrn (dessert of shredded pancake and stewed fruit). Palatschinken (Austrian pancakes). Powidl is a plum stew. Apfelstrudel, the classic pudding. Cheese Danish, which is sweet and stuffed with raisins. Various types of smoked and cured pork. Dumplings (Knödel) with sauce. Mehlspeisen is the national term for cakes and puddings. There are around 60 varieties of Torte, which is often consumed with coffee. National drinks: Local wines (often served in open carafes) are excellent and cheap: most of the wines are white and Riesling and Veltliner are particularly well-regarded. Obstler is a drink found in most German-speaking countries, and is made by distilling various fruits. It is usually very strong, and widely drunk as it is cheap and well flavoured. Legal drinking age: 16 (for beer and wine); 18 (for spirits). There are no national licensing laws in Austria, but each region has local police closing hours. Tipping: Widespread, but large amounts are not expected. On restaurant bills, a service charge of 10 to 15 per cent is included, but it is usual to leave a further 5 per cent. Attendants at theatres, cloakrooms or petrol pumps, expect to be tipped &#8364;0.15-0.25. Railway and airports have fixed charges for portering. Taxi drivers expect &#8364;0.25-0.50 for a short trip and 10 per cent for a longer one.

**Nightlife:** Viennese nightlife offers something for every taste: opera, theatre and cabaret as well as numerous discos, bars and nightclubs. There are cinemas of all types, some of them of architectural interest, showing films in different languages. A good way to spend a summer evening is in one of the beer gardens found all over Austria. The wine-growing area around



Vienna features wine gardens (Heurigen) where visitors can sample local wines in an open-air setting.

**Shopping:** High-quality goods such as handbags, glassware, chinaware and winter sports equipment represent the cream of specialist items found in Austria. A 20 to 32 per cent value-added-tax (called MwSt) is included in the list price of items sold. Shopping hours: Shops and stores are generally open from Mon-Fri 0800-1800 (with a one- or two-hour lunch break in the smaller towns) and Sat 1200-1700. In tourist resorts, shops are usually open Mon-Fri until 2100 and Sat/Sun until 1800.

#### Business

**GDP:** US\$301 billion. Main exports: Machinery, metals, paper, textiles and food livestock. Main imports: Machinery and equipment, chemicals, metal goods, oil and oil products and foodstuffs. Main trade partners: EU, of which Germany is the main trade partner.

**Economy:** Austria is one of the most prosperous countries in the world. Manufacturing, including mining, accounts for nearly 30 per cent of GDP. Since World War II, much of the country's industrial capacity has been in state hands and only recently has been removed from under the protective wing of the state holding company, OIAG. Iron and steel, chemicals, metalworking and engineering all fall into this category. Tourism is a hugely important part of the Austrian economy. Agriculture has proved equally successful, with domestic products meeting 90 per cent of the country's food needs. Crops include sugar beet, potatoes, grain, grapes, tobacco, flax, hemp and wine. Austria has moderate deposits of iron, lignite, magnesium, lead, copper, salt, zinc and silver. Although there are some oil reserves and an extensive hydroelectric programme, Austria must import the bulk of its energy requirements. Austria was a member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) before it joined the EU in 1995; Germany is now Austria's largest trading partner by a considerable margin, followed by Italy, France, the UK and, outside the EU, Switzerland. Overall, the EU now accounts for approximately two thirds of total Austrian trade. In January 2006, Austria took over the six-month rotating presidency of the EU. The previously substantial trade with both the USA and the former USSR has fallen as a proportion of the total in recent years. After implementing austerity measures to cut government spending, Austria was able to meet the criteria for membership of the single European currency and joined it upon its inception at the beginning of 1999. Since then, in common with most of the EU, the economy has been sluggish. GDP growth was just over 2 per cent in 2004, but inflation was at 2.6 per cent in 2005, the highest in four years.

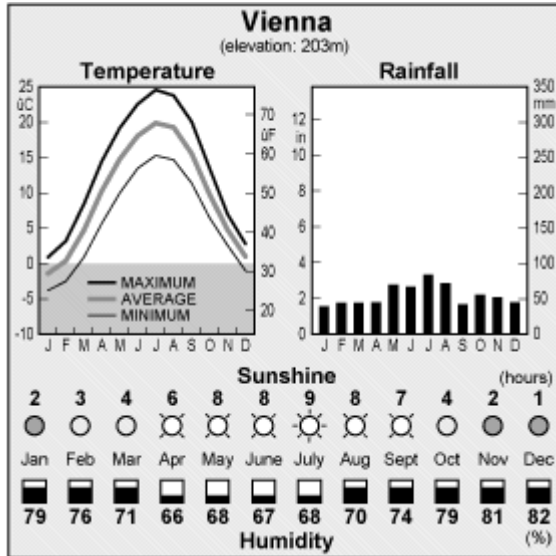
**Business etiquette:** Austrians are quite formal in their business dealings. A working knowledge of German will be very advantageous. Best times to visit are the spring and autumn months. Office hours: Mon-Fri 0800-1230 and 1330-1730.

**Conferences/Conventions:** Austria has 31 conference venues, including over 20 in Vienna and a floating conference centre, the MS Mozart, on the river Danube. The provincial capitals of Salzburg, Innsbruck, Graz, Linz, Bregenz, Klagenfurt and Eisenstadt also offer convention venues, as do several health and spa resorts. Furthermore, there are approximately 70 hotels in Austria which specialise in the conference/convention field. For more detailed information, contact the Austrian National Tourist Office.

**Commercial Information:** Wirtschaftskammer Österreich (Austrian Federal Economic Chamber) A-1010 Wien, Stubenring 8-10, Vienna, Austria Tel: (1) 51450. Website: <http://wko.at/wein>



## 10 CLIMATE



**Austria enjoys a moderate continental climate:** summers are warm and pleasant with cool nights, and winters are sunny, with snow levels high enough for widespread winter sports.

**Required clothing:** European clothes according to season. Alpine wear for mountain resorts.

## 11 HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

**History:** Austria's history since the 13th century is bound up with that of the Hapsburg family. The region was conquered by Charlemagne and remained a part of the Holy Roman Empire. By the 16th century, the Hapsburgs had gained a firm grip on the title of Emperor, although their power owed less to this often empty distinction than to the extensive family lands, many of which were to be found in Austria. Under Charles V, Austria was part of a vast empire; however, after Charles' abdication in 1556, the Spanish and Germanic parts of his lands were separated, passing to his son and his brother, respectively. The Holy Roman Empire as a political unit became more and more fragmented, leading one 18th-century observer to comment that it was 'neither holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire'. It was formally abolished in August 1806, Francis II having already assumed the title of 'Emperor of Austria'. Much of the northern and eastern parts of the Empire had by this time been absorbed into Prussia. During the 17th and 18th centuries, Austria and in particular Vienna became one of the major centres of the cultural renaissance associated with the terms Baroque and The Enlightenment; the musical achievements of this period are particularly notable. The Austrian Empire (by this time the Austro-Hungarian Empire) came to an end after World War I; Austria was declared a republic. In 1938 it was incorporated into the Third Reich but was liberated in 1945 and established as a republic once again under the protectorship of the allied powers. Full independence was restored in July 1955. Austria has since been governed according to an orthodox Western European model. The major parties, the Österreichische Volkspartei (ÖVP Austrian People's Party) and the Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs (SPÖ Social Democratic Party of Austria), enjoyed an effective monopoly of Austrian politics until the 1980s, which saw the rise of the far right and environmentalists. The decade



also brought unusual and unwelcome international attention to Austria when the former UN Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim, stood for the presidency; although a largely titular post, the presidency carries great symbolic significance. The controversy mainly concerned Waldheim's role during World War II, in which he served as a German army intelligence officer, as well as his alleged knowledge of - and complicity in - mass deportations and executions. Dogged by the allegations throughout his six-year tenure, Waldheim stood down in May 1992. His replacement at the election that followed was ÖVP candidate Thomas Klestil, who was re-elected to a second term in April 1998. The Waldheim affair came soon after the first appearance of the far-right party, Die Freiheitlichen, as a major electoral force. Originally known as the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ Austrian Freedom Party), it was led by Joerg Haider, one of the new generation of ultra right-wing European politicians. Concerned to exclude Die Freiheitlichen, the SPÖ and ÖVP formed a series of coalition governments in the mid- and late 1990s, in the hope that Die Freiheitlichen would reach an electoral peak and fade from the political scene. The folly of this strategy was illustrated in October 1999, when Die Freiheitlichen increased their vote again to 27 per cent. Now, even the SPÖ and ÖVP together were unable to secure a majority and Haider's party entered government in January 2000. After a furious initial reaction abroad, which included diplomatic sanctions, the rest of the EU soon came to terms with the new government. This was led by the ÖVP's Wolfgang Schüssel as Chancellor and Haider's deputy, Suzanne Riess-Passer, as Vice-Chancellor. Against expectations, the government survived until the autumn of 2002, before an internal Freiheitlichen feud between party leader Haider and Riess-Passer spilled over into the administration as a whole and brought it down. The election that followed saw the collapse of the Freiheitlichen vote to just 10 per cent a third of its 1999 level but Chancellor Schüssel, who held on to his post, was unable to negotiate an alliance with either of the other two main parties the SPÖ and the Greens and was obliged to form a second 'black-and-blue' alliance with the Freiheitlichen (after their party colours). In early 2003, the People's Party agreed to form a government with the Freedom Party, who then proceeded to disband in 2003 when Haider set up the Alliance for Austria's Future. In April 2004, Heinz Fischer was elected President. Despite these many changes, Austria still succeeds in generating issues of right-wing contention: recent figures in late 2003 indicated that Austria had the most restrictive asylum laws in Europe.

**Government:** Austria is a federal republic with bicameral legislature. The 183-member National Council is elected for four years; the 64 members of Federal Council do not have fixed terms. The President, elected for a six-year term, is head of state. Executive power is held by the Chancellor, normally the leader of the largest party in parliament, who leads a cabinet of ministers.

#### Travel Advice

Most visits to Austria are trouble-free but you should be aware of the global risk of indiscriminate international terrorist attacks, which could be against civilian targets, including places frequented by foreigners. This advice is based on information provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK. It is correct at time of publishing. As the situation can change rapidly, visitors **are advised to contact the following organisations for the latest travel advice:** British Foreign and Commonwealth Office Tel: (0845) 850 2829. Website: [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk) US Department of State Website: <http://travel.state.gov/travel>

#### Top Things To See

No visit to Austria is complete without seeing the capital city, Vienna, which oozes Baroque elegance. The Ringstrasse forms the boundary of the elegant First District (the Innerstadt or Inner City), with its fine architecture, shops and hotels, much of it pedestrianised. Every major architectural style from the Baroque onwards can be found, with especial importance given to the



Art Nouveau (Secession) style, which had its roots here. The Hapsburgs, who ruled the country for six centuries, resided in the Hofburg where the Kaiser-Appartements (Imperial Apartments) are - the Crown Jewels are now open to the public. Schloss Schönbrunn, the sumptuous Imperial summer palace, can be compared with that at Versailles; its landscaped park is also home to the world's oldest zoo. For further culture, the Akademie der bildenden Künste (with works by Hieronymous Bosch) is internationally renowned, and there are scores of other galleries too. In addition, there are more than 50 museums open to the public, including the Natural History Museum, the Museum of Modern Art and the Museumsquartier. Immortalised in the film *The Third Man*, the Ferris Wheel (Riesenrad) in the Prater amusement park is also popular. Well worth a visit are St Stephen's Cathedral, the art collection at the Belvedere Palace, the Chapel of the Hofburg, the Parliament, and the Votive church. There are also memorial sites for Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Strauss and Freud. A recent European Capital of Culture, Graz is also Capital of the Styria region. From the 15th century, it was a major bulwark against the Turks and, in the 17th century, adopted the Baroque before the rest of the Austrian empire. The city is compact and most important sights are within walking distance of the market square of the Hauptplatz. The Landesmuseum Johanneum, a large complex of museums, is one of the world's oldest, and includes the Alte Galerie with its superb Gothic paintings. The Neue Galerie in the Herbenstrein Palace displays 19th- and 20th-century paintings, including some works by Schiele and Klimt. There are also coffee houses galore. Other must-sees include the Cathedral; the Mausoleum of Emperor Ferdinand II (begun in 1614); the pedestrian zone of the old quarter; the Schlossberg (Castle Hill) with its Uhrtrum (clock tower); and the Glockenturm (bell tower). See the famous Lipizzaner stallions perform finely executed dressage manoeuvres to Viennese classical music in the Hofburg in Vienna, or at a stud farm in Piber, where they are looked after, trained and ridden. **View multiple examples of Austria's mountainous landscape:** the Grossglockner (3798m/12,457ft) in Carinthia is Austria's highest mountain; the Karawanken Mountains have a mild climate; the Hohe Tauern National Park is one of the last large undisturbed mountain environments in Europe; and the glaciers of the Silvretta mountain ranges drop dramatically to the shores of Lake Constance with its lush vegetation, plus those seeking Austrian eccentricity will find it in the Vorarlbergers, who speak a dialect close to Swiss German and declared independence in 1918, requesting a union with Switzerland that was subsequently refused by the Allied Powers. Whilst you are at it, take in the awesome panorama of some of Austria's crystal-clear lakes: the province Klagenfurt lies on the western edge of the Wörthersee, the largest lake in the region; Wolfgangsee; Traunsee; Hallstättersee; the Mondsee is one of the warmest lakes in the Salzkammergut; Carinthia's lakes famously reach temperatures of around 28°C (82°F) and have earned the European Environment Award for their superb water quality. Go visit a well-preserved medieval city, like Retz, which boasts subterranean wine-cellars, well-restored medieval city walls, windmills and a Dominican church. Go to the last protected area of European rainforest in the Donau-Auen National Park, a floodplain area of wilderness that nurtures a diversity of plants and animals. For an elegant and spacious baroque city, you cannot do better than Salzburg, watched by the snow-capped mountains of the Hohe Tauern to the south. The Altstadt (the old city) features the fortress, Hohensalzburg, and was granted World Heritage Status by UNESCO in 1996. Interesting sights include the Peterskirche (St Peter's Abbey, with cemetery and catacombs), the Domkirche (intended to rival St Peter's in Rome) and the Alter Markt (old market square). Salzburg's most famous son although only after his death is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Mozart's birthplace (Mozart Geburtshaus) is in the Getreidegasse, also the city's main shopping street, while the family residence (Mozart Wohnhaus) is on the market square. Both are museums, with the residence offering a particularly detailed insight into his life and work. Be overwhelmed at the magical sight of the Eisriesenwelt in Werfen: ice caves, with wonderful ice sculptures all-year-round. These caverns are buried deep beneath the mountain wall that flanks the valley south of Salzburg. Situated in the heart of the Alpine region, Tirol is the most mountainous province, with forests, hamlets and alpine pastures, beautiful valleys and mountain lakes. Traditional Tirolean architecture is reflected in the villages, churches



and castles. Innsbruck is the Tirolean capital, and twice home of the Winter Olympics. An 800-year-old university town, it has numerous fine buildings dating from Austria's cultural Renaissance in the 16th to 18th centuries, and a 12th-century castle. When Kaiser Maximilian based the imperial court here in the 1490s, the city became a European centre of culture and politics. For spectacular views over the town and southern Alps, take the funicular to Hungerburg and then the cable car to Hafelekar at 2334m (5928ft).

**Tourist Information:** Austrian National Tourist Office (ANTO) in the UK 9-11 Richmond Buildings, Dean Street, London W1D 38F, UK Tel: (020) 7440 3830 or (0845) 101 1818 (holiday information and brochure request line). Website: [www.austria.info/uk](http://www.austria.info/uk) No personal callers. Austrian Tourist Office (ATO) in the USA 120 West 45th Street, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10036, USA Tel: (212) 944 6880. Website: [www.austria.info/us](http://www.austria.info/us)

### Top Things To Do

Make the most of the stunning Alps that constitute approximately 60 per cent of the country's surface area, plus Austria's reputation as one of Europe's **major destinations for wintersports**: skiing; snowboarding; tobogganing; sleigh rides; curling; or skating are all available and with great facilities. Take an old 19th-century steamtrain and gaze at some picturesque Austrian scenery, including the famous and beautiful village of St Wolfgang in Salzkammergut. Once the snow has melted, walk and hike through the Alps' varied landscapes, ranging from forests and green slopes to glaciers and rocks; detailed walking maps can be obtained either from the Austrian National Tourist Office or from the local tourist offices, and guides can be hired locally. Footpaths are recognisable by red-white-red markings displayed on trees and rocks. Near Vienna, a network of city paths (Stadtwanderwege) lead through the Vienna woods or the nearby Danube wetlands. The Vorarlberg's alpine pastures are well suited for gentle walks, while the Hohe Tauern National Park is popular for more demanding trekking. Go to the Opera in style; besides the many opera performances in Austria's major towns and cities, for one with a difference, journey to Bregenz and the Upper City with its St Martinstrum (St Martin's Tower), the world's largest floating stage for summer opera productions. Climb the peaks of the Alps; for the very adventurous, combine this with a spot of hang-gliding! Tour through one of Austria's wine-growing regions, such as Lower Austria, Southern Styria and the Burgenland; most wines, such as the well-known Riesling wine, are white, but there also some good red wines from Baden and Burgenland. Relax and watch the world go by as you submit to Austria's Kaffeehaus (coffee shop) culture: cakes and puddings (such as Torte, of which there are around 60 varieties) can be eaten guilt-free, knowing that it is all in the name of upholding a national institution. Dance the night away with elegance at a recreation of a traditional Austrian ball, at the annual Johann Strauss Ball, which takes place in a beautiful ballroom within the Hofburg Palace in Vienna. Admire traditional Austrian attire at the annual Lederhosen Festival in Windischgarsten, where the wearing of the aforementioned costume is optional, but drinking good beer and chuckling at the election of 'Miss Lederhose' is compulsory. Listen to classical music in the city that produced Mozart: the Salzburg Festival (website: [www.salzburgfestival.at](http://www.salzburgfestival.at)) provides a varied programme, from singers, actors, orchestras and opera, with a breathtaking baroque backdrop to boot.

**Tourist Information:** Austrian National Tourist Office (ANTO) in the UK 9-11 Richmond Buildings, Dean Street, London W1D 38F, UK Tel: (020) 7440 3830 or (0845) 101 1818 (holiday information and brochure request line). Website: [www.austria.info/uk](http://www.austria.info/uk) No personal callers. Austrian Tourist Office (ATO) in the USA 120 West 45th Street, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10036, USA Tel: (212) 944 6880. Website: [www.austria.info/us](http://www.austria.info/us)

OverviewII



Austria is a country of startling contrasts, from the Austrian Alps in the west to the Danube Basin in the east. It is not only famous as one of the world's premier skiing regions, but also for its historical buildings, world-class museums and galleries, breathtaking scenery, magnificent mountains and established hiking trails. Visitors in search of culture and visitors in search of scenery are spoilt alike. In addition to natural wealth, the country contains numerous and glorious architectural riches, including frequent reminders of the once-powerful Hapsburgs, who dominated central Europe for seven centuries. It must be said that Austria bears the hallmarks of **past Emperorship beautifully**: the capital, Vienna, is magnificent with its ornate Opera House and the former imperial residence of the Hofburg; Austria's other cities are similarly infused with a historical magic, notably Salzburg, the birthplace of Mozart, with stunning Baroque churches set before a backdrop of snow-covered peaks; and Innsbruck, in the centre of the Austrian Alps. Many places in Austria are themselves worthy of artistic acclaim, so it is little wonder that Austria has produced and inspired a catalogue of cultural figures. During the 17th and 18th centuries, Austria and, in particular, Vienna became one of the major centres of the cultural renaissance associated with the terms Baroque and The Enlightenment; the musical achievements of this period are particularly notable and their note in cultural history still resounds. Remnants of Mozart's legacy are everywhere. However, Austria has also yielded people such as artists Klimt and Schiele, composers Mahler and Schubert, writers Rilke and Schnitzler, psychologists Freud and Rank, and philosophers such as Husserl and Wittgenstein. Nevertheless, Austria strives to cultivate its legacy of the future. The country is a hothouse of striking contemporary architecture, at the forefront of engineering, invention and design, and with a modern, efficient social system. Austria still has a justifiable reputation for music, literature and the arts, with Elfriede Jelinek recently winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2004. You are just as likely to find Alpine New Wave punk-rock as you are to find yodelling. In terms of gourmet culture, the legendary Gemütlichkeit a relaxed enjoyment of life is evident in the cafes where the art of coffee-drinking has been raised to a high art, and the many Heurigen, where the latest vintages are accompanied by vast quantities of food. Nightlife is versatile, offering laid-back taverns, beer gardens and excellent après-ski, as well as trendy clubs and dance venues packed to the small hours. It seems as if Austria is keen not to be regarded as simply a 'historical' country, but one that also proudly fosters the cultural and social present. Regardless, staring at classic Austrian landscape is a reminder that some things are timeless, destined to always be captivating.

#### Communications

**Telephone:** Full IDD facilities available. Country code: 43. Call boxes are grey and found in all areas. International calls can be made from payphones with four coin slots. Trunk calls within Austria and to 40 countries are cheaper Mon-Fri 1800-0800 and approximately 35 per cent cheaper at the weekend (from 1300 Saturday to 0800 Monday).

**Mobile telephone:** Roaming agreements exist with most international mobile phone companies. Coverage is good.

**Internet:** Available throughout Austria. There are many Internet cafes.

**Post:** Letters up to 20g and postcards within Europe are sent by airmail. Letters within Europe take two to four days, and to the USA four to six days. Postcards and letters within Austria and Europe cost €0.55 (€1 if non-priority); to all other countries the cost is €1.25. Post boxes are yellow or orange; red stripes mean that the box is also emptied weekends and bank holidays. Post office hours: generally Mon-Fri 0800-1200 and 1400-1800, and Sat various hours, but main post offices and those at major railway stations are open for 24



hours, seven days a week, including public holidays. Monetary transactions in all post offices permitted Mon to Fri until 1700, Sat 0800-1000.

**MEDIA:** Austria's public broadcaster, Österreichischer Rundfunk, has long-dominated the airwaves, but now faces growing competition from private broadcasters, particularly in Vienna. This is a relatively new phenomenon to Austria. Some German cable or satellite channels deliberately tailor their content for Austrian audiences. The print market is mainly privately owned and fiercely competitive and popular. Press: Newspapers are in German. The Wiener Zeitung, established in 1703, is the oldest newspaper in the world. The national daily with the largest circulation is the Neue Kronenzeitung, followed by Der Kurier, Der Standard and Die Presse. English-language newspapers and magazines are also widely available, particularly in the big cities and tourist resorts. TV: ORF is a public broadcaster, operating national TV channels ORF1 and ORF2. There are also national commercial TV stations, available via cable and terrestrially. Radio: There are a number of both public and commercial radio stations.