



Styria

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Best Places to Eat

- Aiola Upstairs (p180)
- Der Steirer (p180)
- Thomawirt (p180)
- Tom am Kochen (p186)
- Prato im Palais (p181)

Best Places to Stay

- Hotel Daniel (p178)
- Hotel Erzherzog Johann (p179)
- Burg Hotel (p187)
- Jugend- und
Familiengästehaus Schloss
Röthelstein (p193)

Why Go?

Austria's second-largest province is a picturesque combination of culture, architecture, rolling hills, vine-covered slopes and mountains. Graz, Austria's second-largest city, is Styria's attractive and relaxed capital. Head south from Graz and you're in wine country, dubbed the 'Styrian Tuscany'. This is also the land of *Kürbiskernöl* – the strong, dark pumpkin-seed oil ubiquitous in Styrian cooking.

The eastern stretch of Styria is dotted with rejuvenating thermal spas and centuries-old castles. If you're a fan of the former, Bad Blumau is a mandatory stop, not only to take the waters but also to appreciate its unusual architecture, designed by Friedensreich Hundertwasser. If you prefer castles, Schloss Riegersburg is one of Austria's best.

In the north and west, Styria's landscape changes to cold, fast-flowing alpine rivers, towering mountains and carved valleys. Highlights are Admont's abbey, charming Murau and Erzberg's open-cast mine. Note that the northwestern reaches of Styria stretch into Salzkammergut.

When to Go

- Unless you are here for the skiing, the best time to visit is during the main season from April to October.
- The wine roads of southern Styria peak in September, when there are festivals; in October, when the vineyards turn golden brown; and around St Martin's Day (11 November), when the young wine is released.
- From November many of the sights and cultural events – such as Graz's best sight, Schloss Eggenberg – close or end for the season.
- Skiers usually hit Schladming from mid-December (or year-round on the Dachstein Glacier).



Styria Highlights

- 1** Visiting Schloss Eggenberg, the beautiful Renaissance palace and museum in **Graz** (p174).
- 2** Exploring the restaurants and bars of **Graz** (p174), Styria's capital.
- 3** Discovering the spectacular abbey in **Admont** (p193) and exploring its fascinating museums.
- 4** Tripping underground, or overground, at the open-cast mine in **Eisenerz** (p191).
- 5** Hiking the trails around **Schladming** (p195).
- 6** Cruising the **wine roads** (p185) of southern Styria.

i Getting There & Away

BUS

Postbus departures to Mariazell, which isn't on the train line, are integrated with train arrivals at Bruck an der Mur. To Eisenerz, integrated bus services leave from Leoben. For Admont and the Gesäuse, the towns of Liezen and Hieflau form the main bus-transfer points.

CAR

The A2, from Vienna to Villach in Carinthia, runs through southern Styria, passing just below

Graz, while the A9 runs an almost north-south course through the middle of Styria, making it straightforward to travel from Linz and Salzburg to Graz. The A9 also connects Graz with Slovenia, 40km to the south.

TRAIN

Styria's train lines are relatively sparse; the main line between Carinthia and Vienna passes well north of Graz through the region's main railhead, Bruck an der Mur. For Linz and Salzburg, a change is usually required at St Michael, 25km southwest of Bruck.