



Styria

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Best Places to Eat

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- ➔ Santa Clara (p189)
- ➔ T.O.M.R (p196)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Hotel Wiesler (p187)
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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 photogenic and fabulously relaxed capital. Head south from Graz and you're in wine country, dubbed '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 Abbey, charming Murau and Erzberg's open-cast mine. The very 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 Graz** (p189) Exploring the smart restaurants, lively bars and late night caverns of Styria's capital.
- 2 Schloss Eggenberg** (p185) Amazing yourself at the capital's stunning Renaissance palace and museum.
- 3 Benedictine Abbey** (p201) Wandering Admont's spectacular baroque abbey

and its library – the largest in the world.

- 4 Erzberg Ironworks & Mine** (p200) Tripping underground, or overground, at Eisenerz.
- 5 Schlading** (p203) Hiking the trails or glacier gazing around this laid-back Alpine resort.
- 6 Wine Roads** (p195) Tasting your way through

'Styrian Tuscany', the vineyards of southern Styria.

- 7 Genuss Regal Vinofaktur** (p194) Sampling local produce and getting to know your Grauburgunder from your Grüner.
- 8 Johnsbach** (p202) Discovering the strange and touching beauty of one of Austria's earliest mountain climbing centres.

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 & MOTORCYCLE

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