

Welcome to Vienna

Vienna is packed with imperial history; at the same time it has exciting contemporary museums and lively eating and nightlife scenes.

Imperial Grandeur

Few cities can boast the imperial grandeur of Vienna, once the centre of the powerful Habsburg monarchy. Lipizzaner stallions performing elegant equine ballet, the angelic tones of the Vienna Boys' Choir drifting across a courtyard, outrageously opulent palaces such as Schloss Belvedere and Schloss Schönbrunn, and the monumental Hofburg complex – as a visitor today, you feel grandeur everywhere in Vienna.

City of Music

Vienna is one the most musical cities in the world. This is partly due to the vast number of great composers and musicians who were born here or lived and worked here. Visiting Austria's capital therefore means experiencing the works of Mozart, Haydn, Schubert, Beethoven, Johann Strauss (both father and son), Liszt, Brahms, Bruckner and many others in venues such as the Staatsoper and Musikverein. The music of Bach and Händel continues to be performed in Vienna's historic churches today, and Vienna's Collection of Ancient Musical Instruments, paired with a visit to the Haus der Musik, takes you deeper into the texture of music and how it is created. Venues for classical music are augmented by some great clubs and live rock and jazz places.

Living Well

It's hard to imagine a more livable city than Vienna. This is a metropolis where regulars sit in cosy coffee houses and offer credible solutions to world chaos over the noble bean; where *Beisl'n* (bistro pubs) serve delicious brews, wines and traditional food; where talented chefs are taking the capital in new culinary directions; and where an efficient transport system will ferry you across town from a restaurant to a post-dinner drink in no time at all. It's safe, it has lots of bicycle tracks and it even has its own droll sense of humour.

New Old City

Vienna is a city where postmodernist and contemporary architectural designs contrast and fuse with the monumental and historic. The MuseumsQuartier is a perfect example, with modern museum architecture integrated into a public space created around former stables for the Habsburgs' horses. Twentieth-century designs such as Loos American Bar are little short of inspiring, while contemporary Vienna is constantly being given new and exciting infrastructural designs such as the new Twin City Liners boat landing (with the restaurant, bar and cafe *Motto am Fluss*) and the enormous *Hauptbahnhof* (main train station).



Why I Love Vienna

By Anthony Haywood, Author

Buzzing restaurants, coffee houses like living rooms, *Beisl*n, innovative museums, absurdly pompous architecture and the sheer quality of life. These are just some of the reasons why I love Vienna. But what I especially love is exploring the capital by foot. Some evenings I like to walk through the courtyards of the historic centre, other nights I'll explore the idiosyncratic *Vorstadt* districts – places like Margareten, Neubau, Josefstadt and Leopoldstadt where the rawness of ordinary life washes to the surface. Vienna is a large, variegated city, but it's still one you can easily walk through to discover new sides.

For more about our authors, see p272.