



# Upper Austria

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## Why Go?

Unfolding across the gently undulating countryside, this under-the-radar region has a taste of all that is great about Austria. For starters, there's the mighty Danube and a rich musical heritage, old-world coffee houses and castle-topped medieval towns, and resplendent Augustinian abbeys and spas.

Beyond the high-tech museums and avant-garde galleries of Linz lies a land in miniature filled with surprises: from rustic farmhouses serving home-grown *Most* (cider) to the limestone pinnacles of the Kalkalpen, where the elusive lynx roams and picturesque towns such as Steyr and Schärding are painted in a palette of ice cream-coloured hues. Whether you're among the mist-enshrouded hills rippling towards the Czech Republic or wheat fields fading into a watercolour distance at dusk, you'll find these landscapes have a quiet, lingering beauty of their own.

## When to Go

- Summer is a fine time to cycle along the Danube and through the countryside. Come in September for cutting-edge technology festivals and free riverside concerts in Linz. Rooms are at a premium from June to September, so book ahead.
- Autumn is perfect for crisp walks through the forests. Room rates fall from October, along with visitor numbers.
- Winter brings glittering Christmas markets galore. From early December to mid-April, cross-country skiers glide through the Nationalpark Kalkalpen, while downhill skiers carve up the slopes at Wurzeralm and Hinter Stoder.
- The spring shoulder season from March to May is a great time to see the orchards in blossom and to celebrate Schubert in Steyr.

## Getting There & Around

### AIR

Austrian Airlines, Lufthansa, Ryanair and Air Berlin are the main airlines servicing **Blue Danube Airport Linz** (LNZ; ☎ 07221-60 00; [www.linz-airport.at](http://www.linz-airport.at); Flughafenstrasse 1, Hörsching). There are flights to Vienna, Salzburg and Graz, as well as Berlin, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, Stuttgart and Zürich. Ryanair serves London Stansted.

### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

The A1 autobahn runs east–west to Vienna and Salzburg; the A8 heads north to Passau and the rest of Germany; and the A9 runs south into Styria.

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Upper Austria's bus and train services are covered by the **Oberösterreichischer Verkehrsverbund** ([www.oöevv.at](http://www.oöevv.at)). Prices depend on the number of zones you travel (one zone costs €2.20). As well as single tickets, daily, weekly, monthly and yearly passes are available. Express trains between Vienna and Salzburg pass through Linz and much of southern Upper Austria, and there are also express trains heading south from Linz to St Michael in Styria, from where connections to Klagenfurt and Graz are possible.

## LINZ

☎ 0732 / POP 197,500

*'In Linz beginnt's'* (it begins in Linz) goes the Austrian saying, and it's spot on. This is a city on the move, with its finger on the pulse of the country's technology industry. Daring public art installations, a burgeoning cultural scene, a cyber centre and a cutting-edge gallery that look freshly minted for a sci-fi movie all signal tomorrow's Austria.

Linz seized the reins as European Capital of Culture in 2009, and in 2014 Austria's third-largest city became a Unesco City of Media Arts. Sitting astride the Danube, Linz is not only a contemporary hub but also harbours a charming Altstadt filled with historical baroque architecture.

## History

Linz was a fortified Celtic village when the Romans took over and named it Lentia. By the 8th century, when the town came under Bavaria's rule, its name had changed to Linze, and by the 13th century it was an important trading town for raw materials out of Styria. In 1489 Linz became the imperial capital under Friedrich III until his death in 1493.

Like much of Upper Austria, Linz was at the forefront of the Protestant movement in the 16th and 17th centuries. With the Counter-Reformation, however, Catholicism made a spectacular comeback. The city's resurgence in the 19th century was largely due to the development of the railway, when Linz became an important junction.

Adolf Hitler was born in nearby Braunau am Inn and spent his school days here. His Nazi movement built massive iron and steel works, which still employ many locals. After WWII Linz was at the border between the Soviet- and US-administered zones. Since 1955, Linz has flourished into an important industrial city, port and provincial capital.

## Sights

### ★ **Ars Electronica Center**

MUSEUM

([www.aec.at](http://www.aec.at); Ars-Electronica-Strasse 1; adult/child €9.50/7.50; ☎ 9am–5pm Tue, Wed & Fri, 9am–9pm Thu, 10am–6pm Sat & Sun) The technology, science and digital media of the future are in the spotlight at Linz' biggest crowd-puller. In the labs you can interact with robots, animate digital objects, print 3D structures, turn your body into musical instruments, and (virtually) travel to outer space. Kids love it. Designed by Vienna-based architectural firm Treusch, the centre resembles a futuristic ship by the Danube after dark, when its LED glass skin kaleidoscopically changes colour.

### ★ **Mariendom**

CATHEDRAL

(Neuer Dom; Herrenstrasse 26; ☎ 7.30am–7pm Mon–Sat, 8am–7.15pm Sun) Also known as the Neuer Dom, this neo-Gothic giant of a cathedral lifts your gaze to its riot of pinnacles, flying buttresses and filigree traceried windows. Designed in the mid-19th century by Vinzenz Statz of Cologne Dom fame, the cathedral sports a tower whose height was restricted to 134m, so as not to outshine Stephansdom in Vienna. The interior is lit by a veritable curtain of stained glass, including the Linzer Fenster, depicting scenes from Linz' history.

### ★ **Lentos**

GALLERY

([www.lentos.at](http://www.lentos.at); Ernst-Koref-Promenade 1; adult/child €8/4.50, guided tours €3; ☎ 10am–6pm Tue, Wed & Fri–Sun, 10am–9pm Thu) Overlooking the Danube, the rectangular glass-and-steel Lentos is strikingly illuminated by night. The gallery guards one of Austria's finest modern-art collections, including works by Warhol, Schiele, Klimt, Kokoschka and