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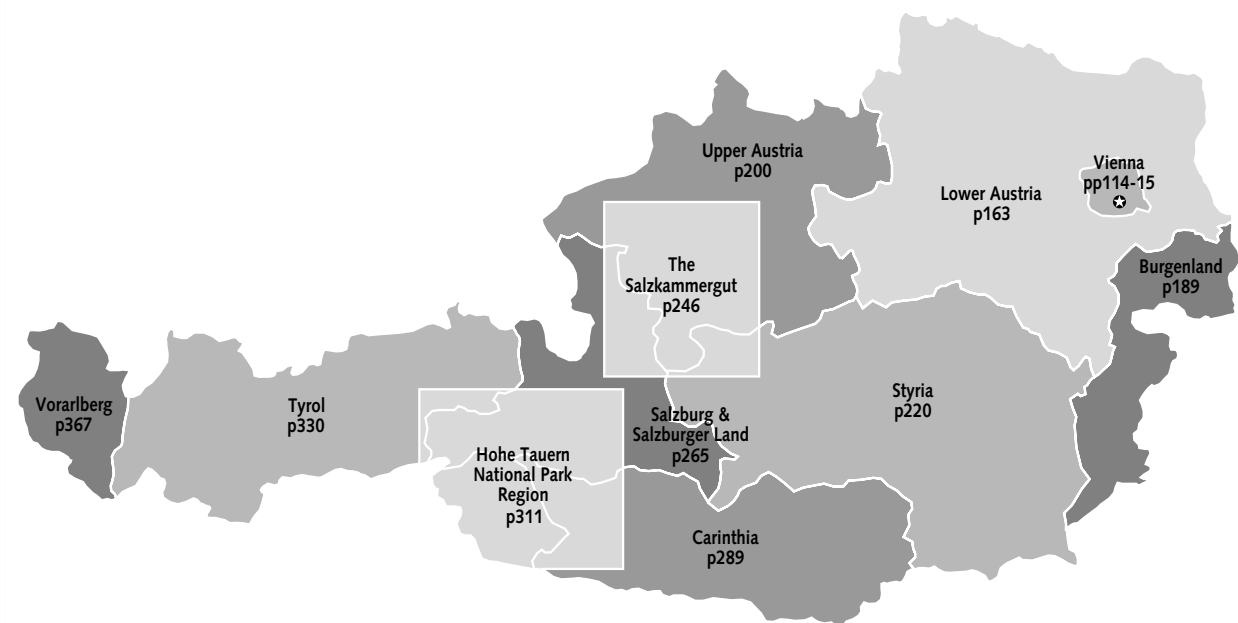
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Regional Map Contents



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Destination Austria

Let's say you wake one morning in Austria and make your way bleary-eyed to a newspaper stand. What you see in the press will probably be at odds with this country you imagine: nothing about those idyllic mountain lakes or spectacular snow-dusted peaks, or even a picture of sweaty mountain bikers in centrifugal frenzy on a windswept forest trail. You are more likely to be greeted by the news that Austrian farmers are dying out, that state finances have been squandered on 18 Eurofighter jets, the ruling coalition government lacks true leadership, and that Austria's youth is guzzling itself comatose on alcopops. Maybe on another page, you see a picture of a somehow familiar politician holding up what looks like a town signpost.

It's no surprise that beautiful landscapes rarely get a showing in the national press – not unless they're being threatened, at any rate. What may strike you, though, is that these are not issues that break a country's back.

Austria has invested a lot into political and social calm. The result today is that while some countries lack direction, Austria is flying ahead with the continent's highest growth rates and standard of living. It has weird architecture, a buzzing capital with an even weirder dialect, and the tendency small countries sometimes have to occasionally drive themselves into strange mental and cultural landscapes. Part of this quality of life also comes from the wonderful physical landscape and opportunities outdoors. Meanwhile, it has a 50th anniversary of neutrality under its belt, and in that same year (2005) Austria joined the European Community while still officially staying neutral.

The death of former president and UN secretary Kurt Waldheim in 2007 did, however, give cause for retrospection. Waldheim had been at the centre of an international uproar in the 1980s after it was alleged he knew about or participated in war crimes during WWII. He died without ever understanding how he had suddenly become a world issue. For Austria, he symbolised a generation of silence post-WWII.

On the political stage, in 2007 a grand coalition between the Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs (SPÖ; Social Democrats) and the conservative Österreichische Volkspartei (ÖVP; Austrian People's Party) was revived, this time under the tutelage of SPÖ's Chancellor Alfred 'Gusi' Gusenbauer. The previous incarnation had lasted 13 years (1987 to 2000) and was followed by international controversy when a conservative government took over the reins with the support of the right-wing Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ; Austrian Freedom Party), at that time strongly influenced by populist Jörg Haider.

Haider himself fell out with his own party and headed a new one, the Bündnis Zukunft Österreich (BZÖ; Alliance Future Austria). Today, he and his party, which is the dominant partner in a ruling coalition in Carinthia, are at the centre of the so-called Ortstafelstreit (locality sign conflict). This conflict dates back to an article in Austria's 1955 State Treaty recognising Slovenian and Croatian as official languages in regions with substantial minorities, and it is the one issue today that jeopardises neutral Austria's amicable relations with its neighbours.

Which brings us back to our bleary-eyed jaunt to the newspaper stand. Grab a newspaper, retire to a coffee house, tolerate your aloof waiter if he's Viennese, maybe get prickly with him at your own peril, get excited and do what Austrians everywhere seem to make a pastime out of – enjoy this quality of life that is Austria.

FAST FACTS

Population: 8,281,950

GDP: €257.9 billion

Inflation rate: 1.8%

Unemployment rate:
6.3%

Growth rate: 2.7%

Median net income per
year: €16,626

Number of dogs in
Austria: 560,000

Percentage overweight
or obese: 43.3% women
& 57.7% men

Getting Started

When it comes to planning for your trip, Austria is a breeze. Infrastructure and services are excellent, which means the amount of advance preparation you need to do in order to ensure access to cash, or to special dietary and other personal needs, is minimal. Nor do you need to spend much time planning how to get from A to B, even if you've set a tight schedule. The distances between sights are usually easily manageable by foot or a short ride, and catching a distance train or bus will require just a quick check of timetables. In terms of budgets, almost all towns have a very good range of accommodation options – from the cheapest to four-star hotels or the occasional five-star-spangled option. See p380 for more accommodation information.

WHEN TO GO

Visiting Austria at any time of year is a great experience, but remember that the season will influence what you can do. Summer is the obvious time for hiking, mountain biking and lake swimming, but ski conditions also make Austria a fantastic place for winter breaks. Festivals take place year-round, but the majority of music festivals are held between May and October.

For warm weather, aim for the months between April and October, although these two months can be changeable. Crowds and prices peak in the July and August high season, when temperatures can also climb to uncomfortable levels and many famous institutions close down, including the opera, the Spanish Riding School and the Vienna Boys' Choir. Consequently, June and September are often the best times for city trips.

You'll find cities less crowded in winter and (except in ski resorts and over Christmas and Easter) hotel prices lower, although it can get bitingly cold. Winter sports are in full swing from mid-December to late March, with the high season over Christmas and New Year and in February. Alpine resorts are very quiet or close down from late April to mid-June, and in November and early December.

Austria lies within the Central European climatic zone, though the eastern part of the country has a Continental Pannonian climate, with low rainfall, hot summers and mild winters. The Alps have high precipitation, short summers and long winters, and visitors should be prepared for all temperatures there. Seasons are distinct. Summer falls between June and August and has the highest temperatures, but also the highest levels of rainfall. Winter can bite hard, especially in December, January and February. Spring and autumn bring changeable weather, but quite often the most comfortable temperatures.

COSTS & MONEY

Compared to other European cities, Vienna is cheaper than London, Paris, Zürich or Rome, similar to Munich, and more expensive than Prague or Budapest. With the exception of ski resorts such as Lech and Kitzbühel, the Austrian countryside is noticeably cheaper than Vienna. Overall, Britons and Americans will probably find things very affordable.

Accommodation will be your most expensive item (see p380 for accommodation costs), but it can be significantly reduced if you use hostels or share in twin rooms and doubles. If you are travelling alone on midrange options, expect to pay about €50 to €60 per night (with breakfast) in a hotel. Prices for a lunch special are around €6 to €9. An evening meal with a glass of wine or beer costs about €15 to €20, while a day pass on public transport in cities averages about €4.50. Museum entry is €5 to €7 in most cases (though

The three most popular provincial capitals in terms of overnight stays by visitors are Vienna, Salzburg and Innsbruck.

See Climate Charts (p383) for average temperatures and precipitation in Austria's major cities.

Don't spend it all at once – visitors spend €13 billion each year in Austria, compared to the €7 billion spent by Austrians travelling abroad.

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

- Double-checking the visa situation and your passport expiry date (p392).
- Organising a good health-insurance policy (p387).
- A spattering of the language, or a phrase book – a little goes a long way (p411).
- Polite servitude; Austrians love their greetings, titles, pleases and thank yous (p413).
- A good relationship with dogs; in Vienna, owners take them everywhere, including bars and restaurants.
- Good hiking boots and a swimming suit; this is the land of mountains and lakes.
- A curling tattoo across your lower back – *Arschgeweih* (ass antlers) are still almost cool.

HOW MUCH?

Deerskin Lederhose €600

Achtel (wine) at a
Heurigen/Buschenshank
€1 to €1.50

Wiener schnitzel €8
to €15

Double room in pension
from €45

A 24-hour ticket on
Vienna's public transport
€5.70

many are cheaper and a few €12 or more); everyday toiletries (buy them in a *Drogerie* or supermarket, not a pharmacy) as well as splurges, blow-outs and luxuries, plus transportation will also need to be budgeted. We arrived at almost €350 for The Big Trip itinerary (p26) with side trips by public transport but excluding city transport. Taking these into account, about €125 per day is realistic.

If you're on a tight budget and choose to stay in hostels, eat cheaply, buy your drinks from supermarkets, and walk rather than use public transport in cities, you should be able to manage on about €70 or €80 per day. If you want to go below that budget level, you'll need to pick and choose the sights you visit carefully. Students and children get discounts for some museums and activities, and family deals often apply.

TRAVEL LITERATURE

Austria is still waiting for its definitive travel description because most writers focus on its rich cultural heritage rather than the trials and tribulations of the everyday traveller. There are a few very interesting ones around, though, providing a fine backdrop for your journey.

A superb starting point is *A Time of Gifts*, the first volume of Patrick Leigh Fermor's trilogy detailing his epic and inspiring walk from the Hook of Holland to Constantinople in 1933–34. Written 40 years after his feet took him along the Danube Valley and through Vienna, this rich, evocative tale gives an insight into Austria between the world wars.

In *Danube*, Claudio Magris passes an erudite, Italian eye over the length of the Danube in his travel journal from the mid-1980s, and naturally spends time in Austria. His sharp, individual style tackles topics like the source of the Danube (a leaky tap in a remote mountain farmhouse, according to one sedimentologist) and larger-than-life characters such as Wittgenstein and Kafka.

Edward Crankshaw combines travel literature and historical detail in *Vienna: The Image of a Culture in Decline*. This study of the golden city in the early and mid-1930s is certainly nostalgic but still manages to tell it like it is.

Arguably the best account of Jewish life in Vienna between the world wars is *Last Waltz in Vienna: The Destruction of a Family 1842–1942*, by George Clare. This heartbreaking autobiography details one family's fate at the hands of the Nazis; it's a superb read and an insight into how the ordinary lives of so many were forever changed from one day to the next.

Stefan Zweig's *The World of Yesterday* is an extraordinary account of *fin de siècle* Vienna, a time when intellectual brotherhood tried to stop the destruction of Europe. It's all that more poignant considering Zweig,

who had been forced into exile by the Nazis, committed suicide in 1942 on completion of the book.

TRAVELLING RESPONSIBLY

Since our inception in 1973, Lonely Planet has encouraged our readers to tread lightly, travel responsibly and enjoy the magic independent travel affords. International travel is growing at a jaw-dropping rate, and we still firmly believe in the benefits it can bring – but, as always, we encourage you to consider the impact your visit will have on both the global environment and the local economies, cultures and ecosystems.

On the whole, Austrians are very much aware of ecology issues, including those on the big issues of winter sports in the Alps and the impact of tourism. Along with seven other countries it has signed up to the Alpine Convention to promote sustainable development in the Alps, while also implementing its own sustainability plan. With such a large tourism industry, the contribution of individuals travelling in the country can also make a big difference (see p85).

Getting There & Around

Getting to Austria by train or bus is easy from within Europe. From London, this can reduce your footprint by about 90% or more compared to plane travel. Once inside the country, avoid using cars when it's not necessary. In this guide we've included two driving tours, as sights are otherwise difficult to do in one grab. If you're fit or have the time, you can do exactly the same tours by bicycle. In Vienna, a nifty bicycle rental scheme in summer will help you get home from late-night clubbing on an ecofriendly footing (p159). Tulln has a free city bicycle scheme (p173) and Waidhofen an der Ybbs in the awkward-to-travel Mostviertel solves the problem by offering free use of mountain bikes for up to a week.

Using public transport is another obvious alternative – and easy because it's so good in Austria. Trains run through some beautiful and isolated spots, and any gaps in local networks can be plugged by taking along a bicycle or hiring locally. Although using buses becomes a problem on Sundays, you can get around this by planning a weekday trip.

One of the best sources of information about carbon offsetting in Austria is the German-language website www.myclimate.at. There you can read around the issue locally, such as one proposal to set up donation boxes in Austrian travel agencies so travellers can make a direct donation to a carbon offsetting scheme. Whether this proposal can be implemented, however, remains to be seen. The website also allows you to calculate your carbon emissions from a flight and buy a myclimate ticket online (London to Vienna is €6) to offset your footprint.

For more information on reducing carbon footprints, see p396.

Sleeping & Eating

Austria is on the move in regard to ecofriendly accommodation. Using water wisely (and towels more than once) is where you can make the biggest contribution. Some hotels have low-allergy, ecofriendly fittings, serve organic breakfasts, or have sound waste management principles; you can help by disposing of recyclable materials separate from the rest in your hotel room. Restaurants serving organic foods are plentiful in Austria, even more bountiful are those serving local produce, and markets always have at least one stall selling organic produce. The Greendex (p436) at the back of this book lists many establishments with environmentally friendly practices.

Austria's most popular festival is the Salzburg Festival in summer, when over 200,000 people descend upon the venues.

'Austria is a labyrinth in which everyone knows the way.'

KABARETT ARTIST HELMUT QUALTINGER (1928–86)

Want to stay in a castle?
Check out www.schloss-hotels.co.at.

TOP 10



BEST READS

There's no better way to get a sense of place than by immersing yourself in a good book – these page-turners have won critical acclaim in Austria and abroad. See p55 for more.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 <i>Measuring the World</i> by Daniel Kehlmann | 6 <i>Setting Free the Bears</i> by John Irving |
| 2 <i>Lust</i> by Elfriede Jelinek | 7 <i>Radetzky March</i> by Joseph Roth |
| 3 <i>Night Games: And Other Stories and Novellas</i> by Arthur Schnitzler | 8 <i>Man Without Qualities, Vol 1</i> by Robert Musil |
| 4 <i>Play of the Eyes</i> by Elias Canetti | 9 <i>Vienna Coffeehouse Wits, 1890–1938</i> by Bernhard Harold B Segel (ed) |
| 5 <i>Cutting Timber</i> by Thomas Bernhard | 10 <i>Burning Secret and Other Stories</i> by Stefan Zweig |

MUST-SEE FILMS

One of the best ways to do a bit of pre-departure planning is to curl up on a sofa with a bowl of popcorn and press play. These flicks range from the best-known films about Austria to the cheesiest. See p56 for more details.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 <i>The Edukators</i> (2004) directed by Hans Weingartner | 6 <i>Siegfried</i> (1924) directed by Michael Haneke |
| 2 <i>The Third Man</i> (1949) directed by Carol Reed | 7 <i>Dog Days</i> (2001) directed by Ulrich Seidl |
| 3 <i>Amadeus</i> (1984) directed by Milos Forman | 8 <i>Lovely Rita</i> (2001) directed by Ernst Marischka |
| 4 <i>Foreigners Out!</i> (2002) directed by Paul Poet | 9 <i>The Sissi Trilogy</i> (1955–57) directed by Jessica Hausner |
| 5 <i>Funny Games</i> (1997) directed by Fritz Lang | 10 <i>Der Bockerer</i> (1981) directed by Franz Antel and Rainer C Ecker |

OUR FAVOURITE FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Austrian is never short of a good festival – you can always count on some kind of celebration going on around the country. These are some favourites, but others appear in the Directory chapter (p385) and throughout this book.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 <i>Wiener Festwochen</i> (Vienna Festival Weeks), May and June (p141) | 6 <i>Salzburger Festspiele</i> (Salzburg Festival), July and August (p274) |
| 2 <i>Musikwochen Millstatt</i> (Millstatt Music Weeks), May to September (p309) | 7 <i>Lange Nacht der Museen</i> (countrywide; Long Night of the Museums), September (p141) |
| 3 <i>Styriarte</i> (Graz), June and July (p229) | 8 <i>Halleiner Stadtfestwoche</i> (Hallein City Music Weeks), September (p284) |
| 4 <i>Milka Schokoladenfest</i> (Bludenz; Milka Chocolate Festival), July (p377) | 9 <i>Viennale</i> (Vienna International Film Festival), October (p141) |
| 5 <i>Bregenzer Festspiele</i> (Bregenz Festival), July and August (p370) | 10 <i>Wörthersee Festspiele</i> (Klagenfurt; Wörthersee Festival), late June to mid-August (p293) |

GET HITCHED IN STYLE

This is probably going to set the father of the bride back €1000. For that he'll cover the local registry costs and the expense of hiring a staggeringly romantic venue. That might be, say, an Art Nouveau cabin on the 65m-high Ferris wheel in Prater, or the west wing of Lower Belvedere palace (with 'a splendid outlook on the Upper Belvedere as the local spin doctors put it). Sure, getting married in Vienna is kitsch, but it's an idea that seems to have taken off.

The city council offers seven palaces; four sights (including the Ferris wheel); seven 'locations' (which include a city tram or the Hotel Sacher); as well as the Danube and four other 'landscape' locations, where couples can tie the knot. For the low down, see the council's website (www.wien.gv.at/english/administration/civilstatus/wedding/dreamwedding.html).

Resources

Websites in English are few and far between, but the government website www.lebensministerium.at does have a large section in English covering sustainability in forestry, water, foodstuffs and the environment.

The internet portal www.nachhaltigkeit.at (in German) is also good place to explore sustainability in Austria. The Austrian Business Council for Sustainable Development (ABCSD; www.abcSD.at, in German) has a small list of companies committed to the concept, or look into the AlpMedia website (www.cipra.org), with lots of information about sustainability and the Alps.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Austrian Federal Government (www.austria.gv.at) Gateway to various ministries of the Austrian government.

Austrian National Tourist Office (www.austria.info) The perfect introduction to Austria in a number of languages, with plenty of information and links.

Austrian Press & Information Service (www.austria.org) US-based site with current affairs and links to a range of topics.

Austro Search (www.austrosearch.at) Exhaustive online directory of Austrian businesses and organisations.

Lonely Planet (www.lonelyplanet.com) General facts on Austria, links to Austrian sites and reports from fellow travellers on the Thorn Tree.

Statistik Austria (www.statistik.at) The government's official number-crunching site, with facts and figures on all aspects of life in Austria.

Tiscover (www.tiscover.com) Useful site for information on the provinces; comes complete with online booking facilities.

An Austrian was the first person to put a propeller on a ship. Other Austrians invented the sewing machine, the typewriter and lithography.

Itineraries

CLASSIC ROUTES

Experience high culture and sharp lifestyles in Vienna and the provincial capitals, bathe in refreshing lakes and hike rugged mountains on a 1500km route that does the whole hog by train (and just a few buses) from the capital to the Austrian heartlands.

THE BIG TRIP

Spend several days in **Vienna** (p111) before catching a train to **Neusiedl am See** (p196) and taking a bus to **Nationalpark Neusiedler See-Seewinkel** (p197). Boat over to medieval **Mörbisch am See** (p194) and **Rust** (p193), continuing to Schloss Esterházy in **Eisenstadt** (p190) before getting on a train to **Wiener Neustadt** (p184). Rail across the **Semmering Pass** (p186) towards **Graz** (p221), Styria's relaxed capital, and continue to **Klagenfurt** (p289), capital of Carinthia, which offers great swimming in the **Wörthersee** (p295). Lively **Villach** (p297) beckons, as does a side trip to Hermagor's **Garnitzklamm** (p105) gorge. Swing northeast to **Spittal an der Drau** (p305) and via **Kitzbühel** (p350) towards **Innsbruck** (p331) for some Tyrolean days. **Bregenz** (p368), on the Bodensee, is another side trip.

From Innsbruck, head to **Salzburg** (p266), cultural highlight and gateway to the lakes region, bussing to **St Gilgen** (p261) on the **Wolfgangsee** (p260) and to **Bad Ischl** (p247), where train lines run to **Hallstätter See** (p249). Wind by train or road via **Gmunden** (p257) to **Linz** (p200) on the Danube and via the **Danube Valley** (p164), **Melk** (p172) and pretty **Krems an der Donau** (p167)

One Month / Vienna to Vienna

CITIES & LANDSCAPES

Two Weeks / Vienna to Innsbruck

Wake up bright and early in **Vienna** (p111) and visit the palace and gardens of Schloss Schönbrunn. Kids will enjoy the zoo and Tyrolerhof there too. The route from here leads west along the **Danube Valley** (p164). **Krems an der Donau** (p167) is one highlight in a region that flows with wine and good living, **Dürnstein** (p171) is especially good for splurging in top-notch hotels, and **Spitz** (p172) has a low-key atmosphere and some enjoyable hikes through vineyards and forest to castle ruins. Also try to take in the views and church at **Maria Taferl** (p166), a spectacular hilltop town that brings the faithful to their knees. The road or railway continues west to **Linz** (p200) – an industrial city with exciting museums. The trail to **Steyr** (p211) will restore the rural flavour, from where you make your way to **Eisenerz** (p242), with its larger-than-life mines, and **Graz** (p221), Austria's second-largest city and arguably its most chilled-out. After taking in its restaurants, bars and cultural sights, you might feel ready for the open country again. It's a 200km rail journey from Graz to **Hallstatt** (p250), but along the way spend a few hours in **Leoben** (p241) to visit the MuseumsCenter before rolling into the **Hallstätter See** (p249) region. After that, **Gmunden** (p257) and the **Traunsee** (p257), though less spectacular, will call you gently back into town life, and **Salzburg** (p266), the next stop, will immerse you in the city again. From here zip across to the pistes or trails of **Kitzbühel** (p350), one of Austria's premier ski resorts, to **Innsbruck** (p331), where you can take your choice between culture or hiking trails.

Take in the large cities and spectacular mountain, lake and river landscapes on a 1000km rail and bus/road route that includes a fine taste of culture, food and wine.



ROADS LESS TRAVELLED

Across picturesque farmland, into gouged valleys and over precarious, windswept passes – this 900km rail and bus/road route takes in places ideal for striking out into even more remote parts. It includes a fortress town, national parks, waterfalls and the highest peaks between Vienna and Innsbruck.

MEADOWS, MOUNTAINS & VALLEYS Three Weeks / Vienna to Innsbruck

From **Vienna** (p111) drive or take the train or bus north to the tiny Czech border town of **Drosendorf** (p178). After walking around its medieval town wall, continue by road to Hardegg and the **Nationalpark Thayatal** (p178). From here, the route runs south through the often neglected Waldviertel (via Retz and Horn if on train or bus) to **Schloss Rosenberg** (p177) and **Krems an der Donau** (p167) for a shot of culture and good living. Explore the Danube on a side trip, especially the lower-key regions on the south bank. Make your way to **Waidhofen an der Ybbs** (p177; via Melk and Amstetten if using rail and bus), the perfect spot to begin exploration of the Mostviertel by bicycle. Continue south on rail or road to the Enns Valley, which will provide a spectacular viaduct for the next section of the route. (A side trip from Hieflau goes to **Eisenerz**, p242, to view the ore mines.) The route closely follows the course of the Enns River to Gstatterboden, gateway to the **Nationalpark Gesäuse** (p243), and continues to **Admont** (p243), where you can peek at the Benedictine Abbey. At Selzthal a side trip to **Graz** (p221) is an option, but this route continues along the Enns Valley before heading west to **Zell am See** (p312). Swing south by road from there to **Grossglockner** (p318), Austria's highest peak, in the Hohe Tauern range, and bus or drive on to **Heiligenblut** (p319) and its pilgrimage church. From here continue south to **Lienz** (p323) before swinging northwest to Mittersill, west via the spectacular **Krimmler Wasserfälle** (p317) to **Zell am Ziller** (p347), near **Mayrhofen** (p348) with great activities, and on to **Innsbruck** (p331). An alternative is to go from Mittersill via **Kitzbühel** (p350) to Innsbruck.



On the Road



ANTHONY HAYWOOD Coordinating Author

Mariazell (p238) in Styria is an unusual town in that it's Austria's most important place of pilgrimage. Wayfaring pilgrim-hikers clack to its basilica with Nordic walking stocks; stalls outside the basilica peddle devotional objects; and incense hangs in the air. Not to be forgotten though are its couple of good mountain-bike trails, pretty forest hiking and the glistening Erlaufsee (Lake Erlauf; p238). Leaving the tumult around the basilica, I went up to Bürgeralpe, the local peak. I think this photo captures the 'other side' of Mariazell: the backdrop of low mountains, some highly atmospheric clouds and Erlaufsee.



KERRY WALKER There's something special about a place that, for all its beauty, remains untouched. The Tennengebirge (p97) in Salzburger Land is one of those rare places. This karst plateau is a lonely wilderness of otherworldly rock formations, sheer precipices and rounded heights. The ascent was tough going: a dizzying 1000m scramble in the sweltering midday sun. Exhausted yet exhilarated, I sat beside a cool snowfield at the summit and watched shafts of light pick out the contours of the Northern Limestone Alps, rippling across to Germany. It was breathtaking in every sense of the word.

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History

Although Austria's territorial heartland has always been modest in size, its monarchy ruled an empire that spanned continents and was once the last word in politics and high culture. How did it happen and how did it all change over time? To really understand this, it's useful to know more about the civilisations and empires that figure in its colourful past. Civilisations & Empires is therefore where this history starts. Afterwards we take a trail through themes of post-WWII neutrality (Neutral, Nice & Not Guilty), uprisings (To the Barricades), Jewry (Jewish History in Austria) and foreign invasion of its territory (The Enemy at the Gate), culminating in one of the world's most enduring family dynasties (Keeping it in the Family – the Habsburgs).

CIVILISATIONS & EMPIRES

It would be an understatement to say that alpine regions of Austria were inhospitable places during the Ice Age some 30,000 years ago. They were virtually impenetrable for human and beast. It's therefore not surprising that while mammoths were lumbering across a frozen landscape, the more-accessible plains and Danube Valley in Lower Austria developed into early showplaces of civilisation. A visit to the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna (p129) contains two fascinating stone Venus statuettes that are reminders of this era.

When the Celts settled in the late Iron Age (around 450 BC) they also chose the valley of the Danube River and salt-rich regions around Salzburg, encountering Illyrians who had wandered there from the Balkan region. Gradually an Illyric-Celtic kingdom took shape, known as Noricum, that stretched from eastern Tyrol to the Danube and eastern fringes of the Alps in Carinthia.

The Romans, who crossed the Alps in force in 15 BC and settled south of the Danube River, carved up these regions into administrative areas and built fortresses (*Limes*) and towns such as Carnuntum (p178), Vindobona (the forerunner of Vienna), Brigantium (Bregenz; p368), Juvavum (Salzburg; p266), Flavia Solva (Leibnitz in Styria), Aguntum (p325) and Virunum (north of Klagenfurt). However, the Western Empire created by the Romans collapsed in the 5th century, leaving a vacuum that was filled by newly arriving tribes: the Germanic Alemanni in Vorarlberg, Slavs who pushed into Carinthia and Styria, and Bavarians who settled south of the Danube in Upper and Lower Austria, Tyrol and around Salzburg. The Bavarians proved to be the most successful, and by the 7th century they had most regions of Austria in their grip, creating a large German-speaking territory.

Discover more about the history of Austria from the Babenbergs through to the country's entry into the EU in *The Austrians: A Thousand Year Odyssey* by Gordon Brook-Shepard.

TIMELINE

30,000–25,000 BC

The 30,000-year-old Venus of Galgenberg (aka Dancing Fanny) and the 25,000-year-old buxom beauty, the Venus of Willendorf, are crafted – both are now in Vienna's Naturhistorisches Museum.

5300 BC

The Neolithic 'Ötzi' dies and is mummified in a glacier in the Ötztal. He's found in 1991 and several Austrian and Italian women ask to be impregnated with his frozen sperm.

800–400 BC

The Iron Age Hallstadtkultur (Hallstadt Culture) develops in the southern Salzkammergut, where settlers work salt mines. Around 450 BC Celts arrive in the region and build on this flourishing culture.

THE CAROLINGIANS STRIKE BACK

But at this time it was still possible to talk only about tribes, not fully fledged empires. This changed in Europe and in Austria itself with the growth of the so-called Carolingian Empire in the 6th century. This was Europe's most powerful empire in its day. It originated in western France and Belgium, grew into a heavyweight under Charlemagne (747–814) and took its inspiration from the Romans. Significantly for future Austria, Charlemagne created a buffer region in the Danube Valley, later dubbed Ostmark (Eastern March), which shored up the eastern edge of his empire, and in 800 he was crowned Kaiser (see boxed text, below) by the pope.

Fate took another decisive turn in 976, when the Eastern March landed in the hands of Leopold von Babenberg (940–94), a descendent of a noble Bavarian family. The Babenbergs were a skilful family who in the 11th century expanded their small territory to include most of modern-day Lower Austria (with Vienna), and a century later Styria (1192) and much of Upper Austria. In 1156, under the Babenberg monarch Heinrich II 'Jasmirogott', the Eastern March (still a political fence at that time) was elevated to a duchy (ie with its own duke and special rights) and Vienna became its capital.

THE EMPIRE OF THE HABSBURG

The Babenberg dynasty, however, ran out of heirs in 1246 when one of its rulers, Duke Friedrich II, died in battle with neighbouring Hungarians over a border dispute. This had enormous ramifications for future Austria because it led to the catapulting of another noble family, the Habsburgs, to power in Europe. In a twist of bad fortune, a Bohemian monarch of the day, Ottokar II, married Friedrich's widow and in 1273 refused to recognise the election to king by prince-electors (see boxed text, opposite) of another noble whose star was rising in Central Europe – the Habsburg Rudolf I (1218–91).

This caused one of the most celebrated clashes in Austrian history when in 1278 the House of Habsburg and Bohemian arch rival Ottokar II (who also controlled Styria and Carinthia) fought it out on the Marchfeld, situated 30km northeast of Vienna. Ottokar, held up while trying to penetrate Drosendorf's fortress en route to the battle (p178), was killed in battle, allowing the Habsburg family to reign over the Holy Roman Empire.

That was pretty much the way things remained for over 500 years. It's only a modest simplification to say that between the era in which mammoths roamed the frozen wastes and the next important change – the arrival of 164cm, low-rise Napoleon in the early 19th century – Austria had seen early human settlers (the ones who carved those Venus statuettes), two major civilisations (Illyrians and the Celts), one Roman Empire and two families (the Babenbergs and the Habsburgs) control the land.

The patron saint of Austria is Saint Leopold III of Babenberg (1096–1135).

The distended lower jaw and lip, a family trait of the early Habsburgs, is discreetly downplayed in official portraits.

AUSTRIA & THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

The Holy Roman Empire was Europe's oddest 'state'. Its foundations were laid when Charlemagne's father, Pippin, rescued a beleaguered pope and became Patricius Romanorum (Protector of Rome), making him Caesar's successor. The title 'Kaiser' is derived from 'Caesar'. Pippin, with Italian spoils on his hands (one being the present-day Vatican), gave these to the pope. Charlemagne continued this tradition as protector, and in 962, with the crowning of Otto I (912–73) as Holy Roman Emperor, the Empire was officially born.

Kings in the Empire were elected in political horse-trading by a handful of prince electors, but to take the next step and become Kaiser (and protector of the pope), the pope had to crown the king. Depending on how feisty the pope happened to be, this brought other troubles. In 1338 enough was enough, and the electors threw the pope overboard, deciding they could elect their own Kaiser.

In 972, just before Otto I died, borders of the Empire included present-day Austria, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Germany, Holland, Belgium and much of the Italian peninsula. These borders ebbed and flowed with the times. When Rudolf I arrived in 1273, it all – or what remained of it – belonged to the Habsburgs.

The Empire was formally buried in 1806 when Napoleon Bonaparte tore through Europe, and by the time the Austro-Hungarian Empire took shape in 1867 (a dual monarchy of Austria and Hungary), it was little more than a dim and distant reminder of medieval times.

The French Revolution of 1789–99 was a political explosion that ushered in a new age of republicanism in Europe, and it challenged surviving feudalistic anachronisms like the Holy Roman Empire. Thus, although Napoleon was soundly defeated in Leipzig in 1813 and, finally, at Waterloo in 1815, his advance across Europe caused its collapse. The Habsburgs survived, however, and in the post-Napoleon Vormärz (Pre-March) years, they dominated a loose Deutscher Bund (German Alliance) comprising hundreds of small 'states' cobbled together in a period of cultural flourish – called the Biedermeier period.

Given that ordinary citizens at the time were kept on a short leash by their political masters, it's not surprising that they began to seek new freedoms. In 1848, inspired by the February 1848 revolution in France, Austrians demanded their own parliament (p33). One was created and met (without Hungary, a Habsburg possession at the time, and without parts of Italy that had been in Habsburg hands) in July that year. But revolution and a democratic parliament failed to endure in Austria.

In 1867 a dual monarchy was created in Austria and Hungary, arising out of an attempt by the Habsburgs to hold onto support for the monarchy among Hungarians by giving them a large degree of autonomy. This Austro-Hungarian Empire would grow to include core regions of Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovine, as well as regions like the Voivodina in Serbia, and small chunks in northern Italy, Romania, Poland and the Ukraine.

The roots of Austria's Österreichische Volkspartei (ÖVP; Austrian People's Party) go back to 1887; a forerunner of the Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs (SPÖ; Social Democratic Party of Austria) was founded a year later.

Vienna's population peaked at more than two million between 1910 and 1914. After WWI, Vienna was one of the world's five largest cities.

15 BC–AD 600

The Romans establish relations with Celts and Celtic-influenced Noric tribes. From 15 BC Roman occupation begins in the three provinces of Rhaetia, Noricum and Pannonia. Slavic, Germanic and other tribes later overrun the territories.

800

The Frankish king Charlemagne is crowned Holy Roman Emperor. The troublesome Avars are routed and disappear, creating an Eastern March that passes into the hands of Charlemagne's successors Otto I (912–73) and Otto II (955–83).

976 & 996

The Babenbergs are entrusted with the Eastern March in 976, administer it as margraves, and in 996 this appears for the first time in a document as Ostarrichi.

1156

As consolation for relinquishing Bavaria, which fell into Babenberg hands after a local conflict, Austria becomes a duchy (Privilegium Minus) and the Babenberg ruler Heinrich Jasomirgott (1107–77) becomes Austria's first duke, residing in Vienna.

1192

Styria is given to Babenberg Leopold V (1157–94) on the condition that it stays part of Austria forever. Styria at the time includes chunks of Slovenia and various parts of Lower and Upper Austria.

1246–78

The last Babenberg dies in 1246 and Habsburg rule begins when Rudolf I is elected king of the Holy Roman Empire in 1273; he defeats Bohemian Ottokar II in the Battle of Marchfeld in 1278.

This was the so-called 'KuK' (König und Kaiser; King and Kaiser) monarchy – the Kaiser of Austria was also King of Hungary. In practice, the two countries increasingly went separate ways, united only by the dual monarch and a couple of high-level ministries like 'war' and 'foreign affairs'.

THE MODERN REPUBLICS

The turmoil caused by defeat in WWI, however, brought this to an end, laying the foundations for modern Austria. Austrians demanded a fully fledged republic, and they got one, ending 640 years of Habsburg rule.

This First Republic was the country's first experiment with truly democratic institutions, but the stigma of WWI defeat weakened it. Austria, now reduced almost to the size of the country we know today, lost access to resources beyond its own borders, which caused economic problems. Polarisation was another hurdle. This had a geographical edge in Austria: 'Rotes Wien' (Red Vienna) was controlled by a socialist city government, while rural regions were firmly in the grip of the conservative federal government of the Christian Socials. Chaos broke out in March 1933 when the Christian Socials chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss (1892–1934) dissolved parliament and, in what was virtually a putsch, prevented it from sitting.

Dollfuss' sympathies lay with the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini (1883–1945) and the Catholic Church. He banned the communist party and the pro-German Austrian Nazi Party (this favoured annexation of Austria by Germany), and when he took up the battle with the Social Democrats, he sparked the Austrian Civil War in 1934.

By 1936, however, Hitler and Mussolini had created a Rome–Berlin axis and Austria found itself between a rock and a hard place. In March 1938, Hitler's troops invaded Austria, and Hitler, an Austrian himself, ruled the country as an appendage of Germany until 1945.

Soviet, not Allied, troops liberated Vienna in March 1945, triggering a twilight period in which the Soviet Union, Britain, the USA and France occupied Austria and carved up the capital into zones – the famous 'four men in a jeep' period. It was the beginning of the Second Republic (below) – today's Republic of Austria.

NEUTRAL, NICE & NOT GUILTY

In 1948 the British author Graham Greene flew to Vienna and roamed the bomb-damaged streets looking for inspiration for a film he had been commissioned to write about the occupation of post-WWII Vienna. As chance would have it, Greene penned the script for one of Europe's finest films about the era – *The Third Man*, starring Orson Wells as the penicillin racketeer Harry Lime. In a moment of improvisation the end of the film, Orson Wells as Lime waxes lyrical about how under the bloody reign of the Borgias' Italy produced some of its finest art. 'In Switzerland they

had brotherly love, 500 years of democracy and peace, and what did they produce? The cuckoo clock.'

Postwar Austria sought the kind of Swiss stability that makes a cuckoo clock fascinating. One day in April 1945, at the instigation of the Soviet Union, the country was proclaimed a republic for the second time in its history. The constitution from 1920 was revived (in its 1929 form), and pre-Nazi laws from March 1933 came back into force; free elections were held in November 1945.

The Soviet Union insisted on Austria declaring its neutrality as a condition for ending occupation in 1955. At the last minute, though, recognition of Austria's guilt for WWII was struck out of the State Treaty that paved the way for neutral independence. Its neutrality differs from the Swiss 'cuckoo clock' model, however, because Austria joined the UN and has even participated in international peace-keeping forces. The Second Republic became a mostly quiet, peaceful period during which the economy enjoyed solid growth or boom conditions, Austria played a moderating role during the East–West frost, and the world forgot about the past.

This silence was shattered in 1986, however, and not surprisingly it was the guilt question again. When accusations surfaced that presidential candidate Kurt Waldheim had been involved in Nazi war crimes, Austria seriously confronted its Nazi past for the first time. Evidence that he had committed war crimes while a lieutenant serving with the German army in the Balkans could never be proved, but nor was Austria's elected president willing to fully explain himself or express misgivings about his wartime role.

TO THE BARRICADES

While empires waxed and waned, Austria was wracked by revolt and resistance. Apart from frequent squabbles between sycophantic monarchs, the first large-scale uprising took place in the mid- and late-15th century, when peasants in Austria (as elsewhere in Central Europe) rose up against their nobility in the Peasants' Wars. These upheavals were spontaneous and directed at local despots, however, rather than against the empire itself. The roots of discontent could be found in a need for cash to finance defences against the Turks, or in some instances demands by an oppressive monarch during the drawn-out anti-reformation.

In April 1809, during the Napoleonic occupation, Tyrol – which had fallen into the hands of Bavaria – was the scene of another rebellion when innkeeper Andreas Hofer (1767–1810) led a rebellion for independence. For his troubles, Hofer was put on trial and executed at Napoleon's behest. His body is entombed in Innsbruck's Hofkirche (see p334).

The next show of strength from the people was the Revolution of 1848. Austrians suffered badly during the system of atrophy under Klemens von Metternich, a diplomat who rose to power in the splash caused by Napoleon's

Hella Pick's Guilty Victim: Austria from the Holocaust to Haider is an excellent analysis of modern-day Austria.

When Governor Schwarzenegger allowed an execution to go ahead in California in 2005, some Austrians wanted to revoke his Austrian citizenship. Austria first abolished capital punishment in 1787.

Austria's greatest military hero, Prince Eugène of Savoy, was in fact French. Refused entry to the French army by Louis XIV, Eugène went on to humiliate him on the battlefield.

Carl E Schorske magically interlinks seven essays on the intellectual history of Vienna in his seminal work *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*.

1335 & 1363

Bavarian Ludwig IV (1314–47) gives Carinthia (minus Tyrol) to the Habsburgs in 1335 and territories include Austria (Ostarrichi), Styria, Krain (in Slovenia) and Carinthia. In 1363 Margarethe Maultasch (1318–63) dies and Tyrol is added.

1517

Theology professor Martin Luther sparks the Reformation when he makes public his 95 Theses that call into question corrupt practices of the Church, and most of Austria becomes Lutheran (Protestant).

1556

Abandoning the idea of uniting an empire under Catholicism, Karl V abdicates – the Spanish part goes to his son Philipp II and Ferdinand I gets Austria, Bohemia and largely Turkish-occupied Hungary.

1618–48

Anti-reformer Ferdinand II (1578–1637) challenges Bohemia's confessional freedom. Habsburg counsels are thrown out of a window (the Prague Defenestration), triggering the Thirty Years' War.

1683

Turkish Siege of Vienna. This siege of 1683 comes after an even closer call in 1529 when Turks were thwarted by winter. Christian Europe is mobilised and the threat persists until 1718, after which the Ottoman Empire gradually wanes.

1740–48

Maria Theresa (1717–80) inherits Habsburg possessions, Prussia seizes Silesia (in Poland today) and the Austrian War of Succession starts a European power struggle between Prussia and a Habsburg-controlled Austria-Hungary.

fall. Metternich believed in the power of absolute monarchy and his police snapped ferociously at the heels of liberals and Austrian nationalists in the decades before revolution. This Vormärz era (ie pre-March 1848, and also called 'Biedermeier') was culturally rich, but socially the air was heavy with political resignation and Austrians grew insular. This was about to change, not least because atrocious industrial conditions were making the country ripe for change. Nationalism – the best chance of liberalising societies in those days – was also threatening to chip the delicate edges of the Habsburg empire.

The sparks of February revolution in Paris (1848) flared in Vienna in March, but, reflecting the city–country divide, failed to really ignite Austria elsewhere except in Styria. In one ironic twist, a similar revolution in Germany meant some Austrian revolutionaries supported being part of a greater, unified and liberal Germany. This was the tricky *Grossdeutsch-Kleindeutsch* (Greater Germany–Lesser Germany) question, and reflects the difficult affinity between Austrians and Germans.

The rebels demanded a parliament, and briefly they got one in May 1848. Kaiser Ferdinand I packed his bags and his family and fled to Innsbruck. This should have been the end of the Habsburgs. It wasn't. Parliament passed a bill improving the lot of the peasants, and Ferdinand cleverly sanctioned this, overnight winning the support of rural folk in the regions. Meanwhile, the Habsburgs received a popular boost when General Radetzky (1766–1858) won back Lombardy (Italy) in successful military campaigns.

In October 1848 revolution reached fever pitch in Vienna. Although this uprising was ultimately quashed, the Habsburgs decided to dispense with Ferdinand I, replacing him with his nephew Franz-Joseph I, who introduced his own monarchical constitution and dissolved the parliament in early 1849. It would only be revived properly in 1867.

By September 1849 it was time to weigh up the damage, count the dead and, most importantly, look at what had been won. Austria was not a democracy, because the Kaiser could veto the Reichstag's legislation. But revolution had swept away the last vestiges of feudalism and made state citizens out of royal subjects.

The Nazi Era

By 1927, these citizens inhabited a very different world. WWI had ended in defeat and armed paramilitary groups roamed the streets of Vienna and elsewhere engaging in bloody clashes. A July revolt broke out in 1927 when left-wing groups stormed the Palace of Justice in Vienna. This was prompted by a court having acquitted members of a right-wing paramilitary Frontkämpfer (Front Fighters) group charged with killing two people during demonstrations. The police moved in and regained control of the building, but about 90 people died in the revolt and over 1000 were injured.

In the late 1920s and the 1930s, the stakes were raised even higher and, with the annexation of Austria by Hitler in 1938, opposition turned to resistance. As elsewhere, whenever Hitler's troops jackbooted over a border, resistance from within was extremely difficult. Communists and Social Democrats were outlawed in the early 1930s and fought from underground. Members of the Social Democratic Worker's Party fought a four-day battle with police in Linz and Vienna before being banned and their leadership was arrested.

The role of Austria during WWII is one of the most controversial aspects of its modern history. Austria's home-grown brand of Austro-Fascism had favoured independence, but Hitler was popular inside Austria, and Austria itself supplied a disproportionately large number of officers for the SS and the German army. In short, what Hitler and the Nazis couldn't achieve through pressure, large numbers of Austrians themselves helped achieve through their active and passive support for Nazism and Hitler's war.

Interestingly, Tyrolean resistance leaders often rallied opposition to Nazism by recalling the revolt of innkeeper Andreas Hofer in 1809 (see p33). An *Österreichisches Freiheitsbataillon* (Austrian Freedom Battalion) fought alongside the Yugoslav People's Liberation Army, and partisan groups in Styria and Carinthia maintained links with other partisans across the Yugoslavian border. Tellingly, unlike other countries, Austria had no government in exile.

Resistance increased once the war looked lost for Hitler. The Austrian Robert Bernardis (1908–44) was involved in the assassination attempt on Hitler by military brass on July 20, 1944 and was then executed by Nazis. Another involved in that plot, Carl Szokoll (1915–2004), survived undetected. The most famous resistance group, however, was called 05, whose members included Austria's president from 1957 to 1965, Adolf Schärf (1890–1965).

With the Red Army approaching Vienna in 1945, 05 worked closely with Szokoll and other military figures in Operation Radetzky to liberate Vienna in the last days of the war. Although they were able to establish contact with the Red Army as it rolled towards Vienna, they were betrayed at the last moment and several members were strung up from street lanterns. The Red Army, not Austrians, would liberate the capital.

JEWISH HISTORY IN AUSTRIA

When the Nazis stomped into Vienna in March 1938, ordinary Austrians threw bouquets of flowers and cheered. A few days later, Hitler addressed tens of thousands of cheering Austrians on Vienna's Heldenplatz to declare the integration of his 'homeland' into the Third Reich. For those Jews who had not yet managed to flee the country, this must have been a depressing moment. Vienna's 'father' of modern psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), had not wanted to read the signs for a long time, but in June that year he fled to England. The 20th century's most innovative classical

The findings of the Historical Commission's report into Austria during the Nazi era can be found at www.historikerkommission.gv.at.

Women in Austria gained the right to vote in national elections in 1919.

'The Viennese are neither more abstinent nor more nervous than anyone else in big cities.'

SIGMUND FREUD

1764

The reformer Kaiser Joseph II (1741–90) takes the throne and the Age of Enlightenment that began under Maria Theresia is in full swing. The power of the Church is curbed, but Hungary drags its feet.

1793

Following a marriage to French king Louis XVI (1754–93), Maria Theresia's 15th daughter Marie-Antoinette (1755–93) – who the French call 'L'Autrichienne' (the Austrian) – is beheaded during the French Revolution. A new European age begins.

1804–05 & 1809

Napoleon (1769–1821) occupies Vienna in 1805. The Holy Roman Empire is abolished, Franz II reinvents himself as Austrian Kaiser Franz I, creating a Danube Monarchy. But in 1809 the Frenchman must return to re-take Vienna.

1848

Revolution topples Chancellor Klemens von Metternich, who flees disguised as a washer-woman. Kaiser Ferdinand I abdicates, but successor Franz-Joseph I (1830–1916) abolishes many reforms. Austria's first parliament is formed.

1866

Austria and its allied principalities in Germany fight the Austro-Prussian War (1866), which leads to victory for Prussia and creates the groundwork for a unified Germany that excludes Austria.

1867

Weakened by loss against Prussia, Austria is now forced by Hungary to create a dual Austro-Hungarian monarchy (the Ausgleich) in 1867. Austria establishes a democratic parliament.

composer, Arnold Schönberg (1874–1951), had already been booted out of his job as a lecturer in Berlin in 1933 and fled to the US. They were just two of many prominent Austrian Jews forced into exile.

Others were not as fortunate. The Holocaust (or ‘Schoa’), Hitler’s attempt to wipe out European Jewry, was a brutal and systematic act that saw some 65,000 Austrian Jews perish in concentration camps throughout Europe. It ruptured a Jewish history in Austria dating back to the early Middle Ages, and even today it’s not really possible to talk about a ‘recovery’ of Jewish culture in the country.

The first mention of Jews in Vienna was in 1194, when a minter by the name of Schlom was appointed by the crown. The very same man was subsequently murdered along with 16 other Viennese Jews by zealous crusaders on their way to the Holy Land. Gradually, a ghetto grew around today’s Judenplatz in Vienna (see p127), where a large synagogue stood in the 13th century.

Historically, Jews could only work in some professions. They were seldom allowed into tradesmen’s guilds or to engage in agriculture and therefore earned a living through trading goods and selling, or through money lending, which explains many of the clichés of the past and present. Two ‘libels’ in the Middle Ages made life difficult for Jews. One of these was the ‘host desecration libel’, which accused Jews of desecrating Christ by such acts such as sticking pins into communion wafers and making them weep or bleed. The second was the ‘blood libel’, which accused Jews of drinking the blood of Christians during rituals. In 1420 these libels culminated in one of Vienna’s worst pogroms, during which many Jews committed collective suicide. The synagogue on Vienna’s Judenplatz was destroyed and the stones of the synagogue were used for the building of the old university.

Out of the Darkness

Jews were officially banned from settling in Vienna until 1624, but this law was regularly relaxed. It did mean, however, that Vienna’s Jews had a particularly rough time of it, and in 1670 when Leopold I (1640–1705) drove them out of Unterer Werd, the quarter was re-christened Leopoldstadt, the name it bears today. They returned, however, and this district remained Vienna’s largest Jewish quarter prior to WWII.

When money was tight following the 1683 Turkish siege, Jews were encouraged to settle in town as money lenders. Interestingly, once the threat subsided from 1718, Sephardic Jews from Spain arrived and were allowed to establish their own religious community. An edict from Kaiser Joseph II (1741–90) improved conditions for Jews and after Kaiser Franz I reinvented himself as Austria’s Kaiser and allowed Jews to establish schools, some of Vienna’s Jewry rose into bourgeois and literary circles.

The revolution of 1848 (see p33) brought the biggest changes, however. Vienna’s Jews were at the forefront of the uprising, and it brought them

freedom of religion, press and schooling. Indirectly, it also led to the founding of the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* (Jewish Religious Community), more than a century after the Sephardic Jews had founded their own. Today this is the main body that represents religious Jews in Austria.

Legally unfettered, Vienna’s Jews nevertheless found themselves walking a high tightrope. They owed much to the Habsburg monarchy and many therefore identified with it. Many also cherished the freedoms of revolution. And all inhabited an ‘Austrian–German’ cultural landscape. Somewhere in there, they also lived out their strong Jewish identity.

In 1878 Jewry in Austria was shaken up again by the arrival from Budapest of Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), who founded political Zionism, a concept that brought together the ideas of the workers’ movement with support for a Jewish state. His book *Der Judenstaat* (1896; The Jewish State) would later be crucial to the creation of Israel.

Beginning with Adolf Fischhof (1816–93), whose political speech on press freedom in 1848 helped trigger revolution, and continuing with Herzl and with the founding father of Austrian social democracy, Viktor Adler (1852–1918), Jews drove ahead reforms in Austria and played a key role during the Rotes Wien (see p32) period of the 1920s and early 1930s.

This, of course, poured oil on the fires of Hitler’s ideology. When Hitler’s troops reached Vienna in 1938, Jews were subjected to attack and abuse. The tragedy was that the Jewish community had contributed so much to Viennese cultural and political life, and now many of Vienna’s non-Jewish citizens simply looked the other way.

The events that followed, culminating in the Holocaust, are etched in the collective memory of Jews everywhere: the prohibitive Nuremberg Laws, the forced sale and theft of Jewish property, the *die Kristallnacht* (‘Night of Broken Glass’) on 9–10 November, 1938 when synagogues and Jewish businesses burned and Jews were attacked openly on the streets.

Because of this, today the Jewish community is only a fraction of its former size. About 7000 religiously affiliated Jews live in Austria, and about another 3000 to 5000 who are not affiliated with a community. The number was boosted by the arrival of Jews from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s. For a fascinating glimpse of Jewish life from the 13th century to today, don’t miss the Jewish Museum and the Museum Judenplatz, both in Vienna (see p127).

THE ENEMY AT THE GATE

The Celts, the Romans and various tribes have all swept across borders at one time or another to lay claim to Austrian lands. In fact, Austria itself was originally founded as a border *March* to keep out tribes (see p30). The Turkish sieges, though, are the ones that really got the European imagination firing.

Hear and read stories of Holocaust victims at the website of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (www.ushmm.org).

Take a virtual tour through Jewish history in Austria from the Middle Ages to the present in the Jewish Virtual Library at www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Austria.html.

1878

1908

1914

1918

1920s

1934

To prevent the Russians increasing their influence in the Balkans after they win the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, Austria-Hungary occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Fatefully, Austria-Hungary is given a mandate to occupy and administer Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the expectation that it would later be annexed completely.

Austrian archduke Franz Ferdinand is assassinated in Sarajevo by a Serbian nationalist, triggering World War I, which sees Austria-Hungary in alliance with Germany and the Ottoman Empire.

WWI ends and Karl I abdicates after the humiliating defeat; the First Republic is proclaimed in Vienna. Meanwhile, the Habsburg empire is shaved of border nationalities and Austria keeps most German-speaking regions.

The Social Democratic Party of Austria controls ‘Red Vienna’, its heart set on Austro-Marxism, while the provinces are controlled by conservative forces.

Austrian politics is chronically polarised, paralysed by paramilitary groups and in 1934 parliament is in gridlock and Austria collapses into civil war – hundreds die in three-day fighting culminating in Social Democrat defeat.

The Ottoman Empire viewed Vienna as ‘the city of the golden apple’, but it wasn’t Apfelstrudel they were after in their great sieges. The first, in 1529, was undertaken by Süleyman the Magnificent, but the 18-day endeavour was not sufficient to break the resolve of the city. The Turkish sultan subsequently died at the siege of Szigetvár, yet his death was kept secret for several days in an attempt to preserve the morale of his army. The subterfuge worked for a while. Messengers were led into the presence of the embalmed body which was placed in a seated position on the throne. They then unwittingly relayed their news to the corpse.

At the head of the Turkish siege of 1683 was the general and grand vizier Kara Mustapha. Amid the 25,000 tents of the Ottoman army that surrounded Vienna he installed his 1500 concubines, guarded by 700 black eunuchs. Their luxurious quarters contained gushing fountains and regal baths, all set up in haste but with great effect.

Again, it was all to no avail, even though Vienna was only lightly defended by 10,000 men. Mustapha’s overconfidence was his downfall; failing to put garrisons on Kahlenberg, he and his army were surprised by a swift attack. Mustapha was pursued from the battlefield and defeated once again, at Gran. At Belgrade he was met by the emissary of the Sultan Mehmed IV. The price of failure was death, and Mustapha meekly accepted his fate. When the Austrian imperial army conquered Belgrade in 1718 the grand vizier’s head was dug up and brought back to Vienna in triumph.

KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY – THE HABSBURG

Possibly no other family has influenced the European continent – or the world for the matter – as much as the Habsburgs. Although its origins could never be described as humble, the family came a long way from its Habichtsburg (Hawke’s Nest) castle near Basle in present-day Switzerland.

Marriage, not muscle, was the historic key to Habsburg land grabbing. The Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus (1443–90) once adapted lines from Ovid when he wrote: ‘Let others wage war but you, lucky Austria, marry! For the empires given to others by Mars are given to you by Venus.’

The age of the convenient wedding began in earnest with Maximilian I (1459–1519), whose moniker was The Last Knight because of his late predilection for medieval tournaments. His other loves were Renaissance art, his own grave (which he commissioned during his own lifetime) and Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), who he commissioned to work on the very same grave before he stepped into it. It is now in Innsbruck’s Hofkirche (see p334).

But it was Maximilian’s affection for Maria of Burgundy (1457–82) that had the greatest influence on the fortunes of the Habsburgs. The two married, and when Maria fell from a horse and died as a result of a miscarriage in 1482, Burgundy, Lorraine and the Low Countries fell into Habsburg hands. In their

Really mad or really handsome? The Habsburg Johanna the Mad kissed the feet of husband Philipp the Handsome when his coffin was opened five weeks after his death in 1506.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE HABSBURG?

They’re still around. Otto von Habsburg (1912–) is the current family head, but he renounced his claims to the Habsburg lands in 1961, a step that allowed him to re-enter Austria and launch a career in European politics.

Once asked why his name never surfaced in the tabloids, the 90-plus year old ‘monarch’ replied: ‘I’ve not once attended a ball. I prefer to sleep at night. And if you don’t go to nightclubs, you don’t run into the gossip columnists.’ Somewhat of a sporting man, too, when Otto von Habsburg was quizzed about who he thought would win an Austria versus Hungary football match, he reportedly replied ‘Who are we playing?’

Most poignant is perhaps a comment by German President Paul von Hindenburg to Otto von Habsburg in 1933 (the year Hitler seized power in Germany): ‘You know, your majesty, there’s only one person with hostile feelings towards the Habsburgs, but he’s an Austrian.’

day, these regions were the last word in culture, economic high-kicking and the arts. The downside was a sticky relationship with France that stuck to the Habsburg shoe for centuries.

The ‘Spanish Marriage’ in 1496 was another clever piece of royal bedding. When Maximilian’s son Philipp der Schöne (Philipp the Handsome) married Juana la Loca (1479–55; Johanna the Mad), Spain and its resource-rich overseas territories in Central and South America became Habsburg. When their son, Ferdinand I (1503–64) married Anna of Hungary and Bohemia (1503–47), fulfilling a deal his grandfather Maximilian I had negotiated with King Vladislav II (1456–1516), Bohemia was also in the Habsburg fold. In the same deal, Maria von Habsburg (1505–58) married into this Polish–Lithuanian Jagiellonen dynasty, which traditionally purveyed kings to Poland, Bohemia and Hungary at that time. By 1526, when her husband Ludwig II (1506–26) drowned in a tributary of the Danube during the Battle of Mohács against Turks, Silesia (in Poland), Bohemia (in the Czech Republic) and Hungary were all thoroughly Habsburg.

Under Karl V (1500–58), the era of the universal monarch arrived, and the Habsburgs had added the Kingdom of Naples (southern Italy, including Sicily). That, unfortunately, was about as good as it got.

The rot set in with the Treaty of Augsburg (1555), which regulated religious bickering surrounding the Reformation. This treaty stipulated that each ruler could decide the religion of his or her own region. Not only does this explain the patchwork of Protestant and Catholic religions today in many regions that used to be part of the Holy Roman Empire, but it also made a mess of the Habsburgs because Karl V had dedicated his life to creating his so-called ‘universal Catholic monarchy’. Seeing the writing clearly on the wall, he abdicated in 1556 and withdrew to a monastery in Spain to lick his wounds and die.

1938

1939–45

1955

1955–66

1986

1995

Nazi troops march into Vienna and Hitler visits his birthplace Braunau am Inn, his beloved Linz, and Vienna to address 200,000 ecstatic Viennese on Heldenplatz. After a rigged referendum, Austria becomes part of Hitler’s Reich.

War and genocide in Austria. Over 100,000 of Vienna’s 180,000 Jews escape before the Anschluss but 65,000 Jews die. In 1945 the Red Army liberates Vienna. Austria and Vienna are divided among the powers.

The Austrian Staatsvertrag (State Treaty) is ratified. Austria declares its sovereignty and neutral status and a decade of occupation ends. Neutral status draws post-WWII international bodies to Vienna, and the UN later establishes offices here.

‘Grand coalitions’ of major parties govern Austria based on a system of Proporz (proportion), whereby ministerial posts are divided among the major parties. This becomes a hallmark of Austrian politics.

Austria confronts its past when Austrian presidential candidate Kurt Waldheim (1918–2007) is accused of war crimes. Waldheim wins a tough election but is stained. An Historian’s Commission finds Waldheim unhelpful but no proof of crimes.

Austria joins the European Union (EU) in 1995 but because of guarantees in 1955 to Moscow to remain neutral, it foregoes NATO membership.

The spoils were divided up among Habsburgs. The brother of Karl V – Ferdinand I (the same one who had married Anna of Hungary and Bohemia) – inherited Austria and (yes, you guessed it) Hungary and Bohemia, and Karl V's only legitimate son, Philipp II (1527–98) got Spain, Naples and Sicily, the Low Countries, and the overseas colonies.

Maria Theresia

For a succinct biography of every Habsburg ever born (including the current family), see www.antiquesatoz.com/habsburg.

If Maximilian I was the Last Knight, Maria Theresia (1717–80) was the mother of the nation. Thrust into the limelight when her father died with no male heirs, she held onto power for 40 years, while also managing to give birth to 16 children – among them Marie Antoinette, future wife of Louis XVI. Maria Theresia's fourth child, Joseph II, weighed a daunting 7kg at birth.

Although Maria Theresia pushed through many enlightened reforms, she was remarkably prudish for a family that had married and copulated its way to power. One of her less popular measures was the introduction of the short-lived Commission against Immoral Conduct in 1752, which raided private homes, trying to catch men entertaining loose women – the commission even tried to snare Casanova during his visit to Vienna.

Maria Theresia's low take on fornication was no doubt coloured by the conduct of her husband, Francis I, who was apparently very adept in just that field. Yet despite his philandering, Maria Theresia felt she should remain loyal to her spouse, and when he died suddenly in 1765 she stayed in mourning for the rest of her life. She retreated to Schloss Schönbrunn (p135) in Vienna, left the running of the state in the hands of Joseph II (of 7kg fame), and adopted a low-profile and chaste existence.

Although the last Habsburg ruler abdicated in 1918, the family is still going strong in public life (see boxed text, p39).

1999

Austria introduces the euro and abolishes the Austrian shilling as its currency, having easily satisfied the criteria for the level of debt and the inflation rate.

2007

A grand coalition government of Social Democrats and Austrian People's Party is formed under Alfred Gusenbauer.

2008

Austria co-hosts with Switzerland football's European Cup.

The Culture

THE NATIONAL PSYCHE

Trying to put a finger on the psyche of a country that gave us the likes of psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud is surely fraught with dangers. As Freud himself said, 'I know only one thing for sure. The value judgements of human beings are...an attempt to prop up illusion with argument'. So what was he trying to tell us? Maybe that whatever we decide about Austrians on a visit, some of it will be our own narrative.

Even Freud, though, couldn't deny a few things about the Austrians' mental topography. One is the self-styled conservatism you find in the deeper rifts and valleys of its regions. On top of this come a few historical grains that irritate the Austrian psyche. Once upon a time half the world was its oyster. Now it isn't. But what Austria now lacks in land it makes up for with a grandiose bureaucracy honed with vigour since the 19th century. Inside this bureaucracy you are likely to find (apart from the odd grump) a system of dividing up posts not on merit but consensus. Austrians see themselves – probably quite rightly – as more harmony-seeking than the neighbouring Germans, but they can also be greater sticklers for convention and public opinion is less fragmented, which has much to do with the country's size.

Austrians are self-made rather than born; strikingly 'New World' at times and also fiercely regional. Along with the national symbols, each state has its own anthem, which is sung by schoolchildren on important occasions, and each even has its own patron saint.

The Viennese are different because they see themselves first and foremost as Austrians. The capital lives and thrives from its Wiener Schmäh (Vienna humour), a concoction of morbid, wry, misanthropic wit, personified by dead rock singer Falco (p49). Some of the local Vienna Actionism art did too. Maybe it's also why one of Freud's most important works is his *Jokes*

'In Austria, everyone becomes what they are not.'

COMPOSER GUSTAV MAHLER

The Austrian Federal Government's official website www.austria.gv.at has plenty of information on the country's political situation in English.

DOS & DON'TS

Austria is a society of politeness; to ignore the rules is the height of rudeness. Stick to the following dos and don'ts and you'll do just fine:

- Do greet people with *Grüss Gott* or *Guten Tag*, whether it be in a social setting, shop, café, restaurant or information office. *Servus* is reserved for greetings only between friends or the younger generation. When departing, *Auf Wiedersehen* or *Auf Wiedersehen* is appropriate.
- Do shake hands when introduced to someone, even in younger, informal company. Likewise, shake hands when you leave.
- Do introduce yourself at the start of a phone call by giving your name.
- Do dress up if going to the opera, theatre or a top restaurant. A jacket and tie for men is the norm.
- Do use full titles at the beginning of formal meetings; *Herr* for men and *Frau* for women is the minimum required. If you speak German, always use the *Sie* form with the older generation and on the telephone; it's not so common with the younger generation.
- Don't cross at the traffic lights when the figure is red, even when there is no traffic in sight. Austrians rarely do it, and the cops can instantly fine you for jaywalking.
- Don't strip off or go topless at every beach in Austria. Nude bathing is limited to areas with FKK signs and if no-one else is going topless at other beaches, you shouldn't either.

and their Relation to the Unconscious. All very serious stuff, of course. But it also happens to be a fine collection of Schmääh.

LIFESTYLE

With their high material standard of living, a spectacular landscape on the doorstep lending itself to skiing, hiking and extreme sports, and its exciting cultural metropolises, Austrians enjoy a quality of life that is the envy of other Europeans. The Viennese lifestyle brings the excitement and perks of a big city at a pace that is more relaxed than in most other European capitals. This shows in the favoured Viennese pastime of enjoying a beer, wine or coffee with friends in one of the capital's many bars, restaurants or coffee houses. Vienna is also a magnet for artists, students and professionals from all over Austria, who go there to live and work, but return to their 'homes' in the provinces regularly for a shot of country life.

The roots of tradition still reach down deep into Austrian soil outside the cities, so sometimes Austrians live up admirably to bizarre images the world has of them. Women can still be seen in the *Dirndl* (a full, pleated skirt) with tight bodice, worn with traditional apron, bonnet, and blouse with short, puffed sleeves. Men, meanwhile, can be founding drinking a beer or wine in collarless loden jackets, green hats, wide braces and shorts or knee breeches. In early summer, hardy herders plod to alpine pastures with their cattle and live in summer huts while tending their beasts. Austria also has lots of traditional festivals.

All this is packed into in a small country with the fifth-highest standard of living in the EU and the 10th in the world in terms of earnings and purchasing power. It's coupled with a generous system of social security and healthcare funded by a percentage on the pay packet, and Austrians are also among the best educated in the world; 98% of the population (aged 15 and above) is literate.

ECONOMY

When Soviet tanks rolled into Austria in 1945, the government nationalised many of its industries to prevent them from takeover or wholesale dismantling and transportation to Siberia as war reparations. Since the 1990s, Austrians have watched the pendulum swing back and privatisation is bringing the country into line with current trends. Since joining the EU in 1995, it has also liberalised sectors such as telecommunications, steel and energy.

Women earn about 26% less than men on average (the biggest gap in the EU's 15 countries), and almost half of a person's gross wage goes in tax and social security contributions.

Although its farms still tend to be of the 'two cows, three fences type', it has strong export industries, particularly in chemicals, machine goods, electronics and steel. Most companies are small or medium-sized, however; less than 200 employ more than 1000 people. Tourism accounts for about 10% of GDP, and with 20 million foreign visitors each year, more people per capita visit Austria than any other country. Interestingly, for all this industrial flurry, the landscape has largely been spared the worst and it is not a big polluter – CO2 emissions are below the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average, and less than half the level per person than in the USA.

POPULATION

Given the country's population distribution, Austria might be expected to tilt towards neighbouring Slovakia. Its two largest provinces are Vienna and

A 2007 survey showed Austrians ranked health, a good marriage and good friends as most important for happiness. Hairdressers were the happiest employees.

National service is still compulsory for males in Austria, who can either serve their time in the military or perform civil service duties.

'If you want to abolish Austrian capitalism, first you have to create it.'

HANNES ANDROSCH, BUSINESSMAN AND POLITICIAN

Lower Austria in the east, and it is here, too, that most of Austria's immigrants have settled (see p44).

Austria has a population of 8.3 million. On average, there are 96 inhabitants per sq km, but this figure doesn't really tell us much. Vienna's density is well above this figure, while the rest of Austria's provinces (aside from Vorarlberg) are well below it; Tyrol, with only 53 inhabitants per sq km, is the least populated.

More females than males reside in Austria; at last count, the population was divided: 51.5% females to 48.5% males. Women die about six years later than men: at the ripe old age of 82 compared to the male average of 76. Based on current projections, however, Austria will have almost 9 million people in 2050.

SPORT

Peer into the pantheon of Austrian Olympic Games medallists and one thing becomes clear: Austrians are killer-bee at winter sports. Football, however, draws the largest crowds, and will no doubt be boosted by the European Championship in 2008. Ice hockey, handball, tennis and motor racing also enjoy a strong following. Except for motor racing, Austrians participate in these in large numbers too.

Summer is pretty much a time for niche sports like golf (except for snow golf), paragliding, and anything to do with running, swimming and windsurfing. With the arrival of autumn and winter, things get going on the pistes.

Football

The Austrian humorist and actor Alfred Dorfer (b 1961) reckons that staging a football European Championship in Austria is like putting on ski jumping in Namibia; but co-hosting the championship with Switzerland in 2008 hooks into a proud local history of the 'beautiful game'.

The halcyon days of Austrian football were in 1931–32 when local legend Hugo Meisl (1891–1937) coached the national team through 14 consecutive international matches undefeated. In 1932 the team lost narrowly to the England team at old Wembley and in the 1934 World Cup to Italy in the semifinal.

The national football league, the Austrian *Bundesliga* (www.bundesliga.at, in German), kicks off at the end of autumn and runs until the beginning of spring with a break during the severe winter months. Games are hardly ever sold out, so getting hold of a ticket is usually no problem.

Skiing

As much a national hobby as a sport, nothing gets an Austrian snorting more than the whiff of powder snow. It's hardly surprising, because some of the best conditions worldwide are here. Innsbruck has hosted the Winter Olympics twice (in 1964 and 1976), and World Cup ski races are annually held in Kitzbühel (p350), St Anton am Arlberg (p362) and Schladming.

Stars of the Austrian skiing scene abound, and one person who does this literally is the ski jumper Thomas Morgenstern (b 1986), winner of team and individual gold medals in large hill ski jumping events in the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino. Another, Salzburg-born Hermann 'The Herminator' Maier (see p44), has achieved superhero status in an alpine career spanning more than a decade and bristling with medals and cups.

Austria's first true superstar, Toni Sailer, is arguably the greatest skier the country has ever produced. At 17 he claimed the Tyrolean championships at downhill, slalom and giant slalom, and four years later won gold medals in all three disciplines at the 1956 Winter Olympics in Cortina d'Ampezzo.

In 2006 Lukas was the most popular boy's name. Leonie topped the list of newborn girls and other popular names were Tobias, David, Lena and Anna.

About 600,000 people play, organise or watch football each weekend during the season in Austria. The Austria Sports Organisation website www.bso.or.at, in German, showcases all sports.

SPORTING LEGENDS – TO HELL & BACK

In a twist of fate, three of Austria's great sportsmen stand out for one feature: they were badly injured at the height of their careers and made sensational comebacks.

The Formula One legend Niki Lauda is possibly most famous of all. He suffered horrific burns in a high speed crash during the 1976 season, yet he was back in his car after missing only two races. That year he narrowly failed to retain the world championship, losing out to James Hunt by a single point on the last race of the season. Undeterred, he regained the title the following year, and proceeded to net his third championship win in 1984.

The somewhat bumbling side of skier Hermann Maier has led to him being likened to Superman's human alter ego, Clark Kent. However, in the 1998 Nagano Olympics, Maier showed the amazing toughness that characterises his all-or-nothing skiing style. During the men's downhill competition, he misjudged a difficult curve, got too close to a gate, somersaulted 30m through the air, bounced over a fence and crashed through two safety nets before finally coming to rest. Austria held its breath as the man known as 'The Herminator' got to his feet, dusted himself down and waved at the crowd. He went on to win two gold medals in the next six days.

But worse was to come. In August 2001 Maier was involved in an horrific motorcycle crash that almost cost him his life. Doctors faced an agonising decision – amputate the hopelessly damaged leg or not. They tried to save it. Maier underwent some painful operations to insert a titanium rod into the leg to hold it together. His recovery was miraculous; in January 2003, only 18 months after the accident, he went on to win the Super G (super giant slalom) at Kitzbühel – his 42nd World Cup victory.

Thomas Muster, Austria's top tennis player during the 1990s, had his kneecap crushed by a drunk driver, just hours after a win at the 1989 Lipton Championship semifinal in Florida. It was doubtful he would ever play tennis again. Images of Muster hitting balls while strapped to an osteopathic bench evoked admiration and bewilderment among tennis fans. He went on to become world number one and in the process earned the nickname 'The Iron Man'.

Other Sports

Motor racing is enormously popular as an armchair sport, and only speed limitations prevent this from spreading to the highways. No Austrian has roared around the Formula One circuit more successfully than Vienna-born star of the 1970s and '80s, Niki Lauda (b 1949; see boxed text, above). Off the circuit, Lauda morphed into a local aviation mogul, and more recently founded the low-cost Niki airline and a car rental firm.

Gone are the days when Austria could claim a tennis ace of the likes of the Styrian *Laufstier* (running bull) Thomas Muster (b 1967; see boxed text, above), although tennis is still popular, and Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) tennis events are held in Vienna, Pörtlach am Wörthersee and Kitzbühel.

Ice hockey is also popular, and Austria's one and only superstar, Thomas Vanek (b 1984), currently plays in the National Hockey League (NHL) in the USA for the Buffalo Sabres.

MULTICULTURALISM

With just under 10% of her population on foreign passports, Austria has a lower percentage of foreigners than Switzerland and the Benelux countries, and is on par with Germany. In numbers, that means about 815,000 foreigners. The trend is upward: foreigners have a higher birth rate, and more people are arriving than leaving. The other important trend over recent years has been an increase in people taking the plunge to become 'neo-Austrians' (as the local statistical office quaintly puts it). A good indication of the situation on the ground is that almost 17% – or one in six people living in Austria – have a migrant background.

According to the Austrian State Treaty, Croatian and Slovenian minorities have a right to place name signs in both German and the minority language.

A tiny 1.5% of the population is made up of indigenous minorities, mainly from Eastern Europe. Most settled in Austria's eastern parts between the 16th and 19th centuries and include Croatians, Slovenes, Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks and Sinti or Roma. A number of traditional languages have also crossed the border with them; Slovene is an official language in Carinthia and some town signs – much to the chagrin of the populist governor of Carinthia, Jörg Haider – are bilingual. Croatian and Hungarian are spoken in Burgenland.

The largest immigrant groups are Serbians, Bosnians and Croats who arrived in the early 1990s, and Turks or descendants of Turks who arrived as guest workers in earlier decades, mainly in the 1950s and '60s.

As a result, Vienna has some fascinating quarters – such as the 16th district – that are colourful places for a plunge into multicultural life, but immigration has also produced a backlash. Anti-foreigner campaigns have been a feature of Austrian politics since the 1990s, particularly by the right-wing nationalist Freedom Party, (FPÖ), which played the anti-Turkish card with a slogan 'Home, not Islam' during the 2006 national elections, and by Haider, whose Alliance Future Austria (BZÖ), a break-away party from the FPÖ, campaigned on the platform of a one-third reduction of the number of foreigners in Austria.

MEDIA

Although mass media and press freedom has a long history in Austria, so too is a tradition of media being concentrated in just a few hands. Austria was the last country in Europe to abolish its state monopoly on TV and radio.

The state-owned *Wiener Zeitung* (www.wienerzeitung.at, in German), first published in 1703, is the oldest newspaper in the world. It is also one of the duller and least-read, selling only 22,000 copies of a weekday, and is a strong candidate for revamping. *Der Standard* (<http://derstandard.at>, in German) and *Die Presse* (www.diepresse.com, in German) are at the serious end of a spectrum of about 20 daily national or regional newspapers, but together account for less than 10% of readership. *Kurier* has a readership of about 10%, while the mass-circulation *Kronen Zeitung* (www.krone.at, in German) at the low-brow end of the rack has a massive 43% and wields enormous clout in politics and public opinion.

The TV staples of most Austrians are dished up by ORF1 and ORF2, the two channels of the public broadcaster. There's also a good culture channel, 3Sat, also broadcast in Germany and Switzerland. Local private channels of quality are still thin in the ether, and many Austrians actually watch German private stations. The radio landscape has more depth in the field, although here ORF holds the reins on a swathe of national and local stations. Hitradio Ö3 is the most popular mainstream music station, FM4 serves up an entertaining dish of interviews, some English language programmes and news reports, plus music beyond the chart staples, and Ö1 strokes a classic number.

RELIGION

On the surface of things, religion would seem to play an important part in the lives of Austrians, and the country has certainly been a stronghold of Catholicism for centuries. Inquiring whether there's a church in town is bit like asking whether the pope is Catholic. In the latest census, 73.6% of the population said they were Roman Catholic, 4.7% Protestant and 4.2% Muslim. Freedom of religion is guaranteed under the constitution.

All is well for the Catholic Church then, right? It could be worse. Religion for most Austrians means observing the major rituals such as

For a good numbers crunch, visit the English and German language pages of the government statistic internet site at www.statistik.at.

For online information on Austria's cultural life, people and movements, see the Austrian Encyclopaedia website www.aeiou.at.

baptism, confirmation and weddings and funerals; about one-third make it regularly to church.

ARTS

Music

What other country can match Austria's musical heritage or the creative tones of its great composers? At the low-brow end of the shelf, Vienna was known as early as the 12th century for its *Minnesänger* (troubadours), and in *Heurigen* (wine taverns) today performers scratch out a uniquely Viennese folk music, known as *Schrammelmusik*, in combos with violin, accordion, guitar and clarinet. In the Alpine regions, *Volksmusik* (folk music), based on traditional tunes but often sawn or pumped out with modern instruments, echoes in hills and valleys.

The Habsburgs were prolific patrons of the arts, and in the 18th and 19th centuries Europe's finest flocked to Vienna in search of their generosity. In fact, some of the Habsburgs themselves were gifted musicians: Leopold I (1640–1705) composed, Karl VI (1685–1740) stroked a violin, his daughter Maria Theresia plucked a decent double bass, and her son Joseph II was a deft hand at harpsichord and cello.

Today, Austrian orchestras like the Vienna Philharmonic enjoy a reputation others would die for, and organisations such as the Vienna Boys' Choir, the Staatsoper (p152), the Musikverein (p152) and the Konzerthaus (p152) are unrivalled. Salzburg and Graz complement Vienna as major music centres and, like Vienna, host important annual music festivals. Linz has the international Brucknerfest (p205), Schwarzenberg in Vorarlberg hosts Schubertiade (Schubert Festival; p373), and Innsbruck has its own Festival of Early Music (p338). The Bregenz Festival (p370) is famous for productions performed on a floating stage on the Bodensee.

PAST MASTERS

Austria overflows with past masters and pretty much has been a weather vane registering the current direction of classical music in Europe. Most of the figures will need no introduction. Christoph Willibald von Gluck (1714–87) is important because he brought operatic music and drama together, setting the stage for opera as we know it today. Later in the century, Josef Haydn (1732–1809) ushered in classicism and influenced music like no other in his epoch with opera and operetta, symphonies, string quartets, piano sonatas and piano trios. His greatest works included the oratorios *The Creation* (1798) and *The Seasons* (1801) and Symphony No 102 (1794) in B-flat Major. Haydn thought Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91) to be the 'greatest composer' and Schubert effused that the 'magic of Mozart's music lights the darkness of our lives'. Mozart was born in Salzburg, where today his house of birth and his residence give

TOP FIVE CDS

- Mozart: *The Magic Flute*
- Schubert: *The Trout Quintet*
- Falco: *Falco 3* (try to get the original LP with the full version of 'Rock Me, Amadeus', rather than the CD)
- Kruder & Dorfmeister: *The K&D Sessions*
- Arnold Schönberg: *Pierrot Lunaire*

Austria has almost 2000 wind instrument orchestras in which about 100,000 musicians blow horns of one variety or another. Lower Austria has almost 500, Vienna just 19.

wonderful insights into his creative genius; a Mozartwoche (Mozart Week) is celebrated in late January.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) was born in Bonn, Germany, but his musical genius blossomed in Vienna under Mozart and Haydn. He was totally deaf by 32, but that didn't stop him composing what many consider to be his best works, including Symphony No 9 in D Minor (1824) and Symphony No 5 (1808). Franz Schubert (1797–1828), a native of Vienna, was the last in the great line of composers from the Viennese School's Classical period (1740–1825). Although syphilis (or typhoid) took him to an early grave at 31, he composed a startling number of symphonies, overtures, masses, choral and piano works, chamber music and *Lieder* (songs).

The waltz originated in Vienna in the early 19th century and early masters of this genre were Johann Strauss the Elder (1804–49), who also composed the *Radetzky March* (1848), and Josef Lanner (1801–43). Johann Strauss the Younger (1825–99) followed up with Austria's unofficial anthem, the *Blue Danube* (1867), *Tales from the Vienna Woods* (1868) and his eternally popular operettas *Die Fledermaus* (1874) and *The Gypsy Baron* (1885).

The 19th century brought forth great composers such as Anton Bruckner (1824–96), who was long associated with the abbey in St Florian (p209); the Hamburg-born Johannes Brahms (1833–97), who worked in Vienna and died there; the director of the Vienna Court Opera from 1897 to 1907, Gustav Mahler (1860–1911); and Hungarian born Franz Lehár (1870–1948), who composed *Die lustige Witwe* (The Merry Widow; 1905).

Vienna also gave us the 20th century's most innovative composer Arnold Schönberg (1874–1951), who stretched tonal conventions to snapping point with his 12-tone style of composition. The most influential of his pupils in this Second Vienna School were Alban Berg (1885–1935) and Anton von Webern (1883–1945); both were born in the capital and both explored and continued the development of Schönberg's technique. Tellingly, at the first public performance of Berg's composition *Altenberg-Lieder*, the concert was cut short because the audience fell over itself with rage.

CONTEMPORARY CLASSIC

Given such a pedigree in classic, the high quality of Austria's contemporary classic scene should come as no surprise. The post-WWII years were finally lifted out of darkness by Friedrich Cerha (b 1926), whose famous compositions include *Spiegel I-VII* (1960–72) and the Brecht opera *Baal* (1974). In the 1960s and '70s Cerha was joined by a wave of brash and exciting young composers. Influenced by Schönberg, MOB art & tone ART was one group of composers and musicians that shook up the scene, formed around Otto M Zykan (1935–2006), Kurt Schwertsik (b 1935) and Heinz Karl Gruber (b 1943). Today Gruber is the most successful of the three. The 1980s brought the next generation. The Swiss-born Beat Furrer (b 1954) founded the Klangforum (Sound Forum), which has developed into the foremost group featuring new music soloists today – not least because it has a long-running residency at the prestigious Paris Opera (Palais Garnier). Others paddling innovative waters are Bernhard Lang (b 1957), who integrates electronic forms into his new music, and Olga Neuwirth (b 1968), who collaborates closely with Nobel Prize-winning author Elfriede Jelinek (see p55) on exciting dramatic works. On a more traditional note, the Tyrolean composer Johannes Maria Staud (b 1974) is very highly regarded. A premiere of his orchestral work *Apeiron* (2005) was performed by the Berlin Philharmonic under the expert baton of Sir Simon Rattle.

'After the call for a republic, the gentry in Austria was abolished. In its place is possession of a season ticket for the Vienna Philharmonic.'

AUSTRIAN WRITER HANS WEIGEL

Before burial, Haydn's head was purloined by phrenologists. The skull was preserved, passed around over the years, and finally reunited with the rest of Haydn in the 1950s.

Beethoven must have been picky with his dwelling; he lived in as many as 60 addresses during his time in Vienna.

JAZZ

Among the figures from the 1980s, Max Nagl (b 1960; www.maxnagl.at, in German) is possibly the most influential, but jazz aficionados abroad will probably be more familiar with Wolfgang Puschnig (b 1956; www.puschnig.com, in German) and the big band Vienna Art Orchestra (www.vao.at), founded with Zürich-born Mathias Rüegg (b 1952) and others.

Since then a new guard has unpacked its instruments in the clubs and bars. The young trumpeter Lorenz Raab (b 1975; www.lorenzraab.at, in German) currently enjoys a very strong following in club culture. Other club performers to watch out for are HDV Trio from Vorarlberg (www.hdvtrio.com, in German), and Vienna's best-known acoustic act, Drechsler, a saxophone trio with its own DJ (www.ulrichdrechsler.com). The guitarist Wolfgang Muthspiel (b 1965; www.materialrecords.com, in German) is also quite well-known internationally, but if the soul sounds of the Hammond organ are your secret vice, Raphael Wressnig (b 1979; www.raphaelwressnig.com, in German) is the man in Austria to watch out for.

A group of ultra contemporary artists are associated with Vienna's Jazzwerkstatt (www.jazzwerkstatt.at), a collective that promotes jazz in Austria and organises an annual three-week jazz festival (free admission) in Vienna each March. Following is a whirlwind tour of the scene; check the websites for current dates and venues.

Austria currently has some great saxophone artists, including Christoph Auer (b 1981; www.christophauer.at), the saxophone quartet Phoen (<http://phoen.at>) and the sax and clarinet player Clemens Salesny (b 1980; www.clemens-salesny.at, in German). Christoph Dienz (b 1968; www.dienz.at, in German) plays the bassoon and brings the zither, a stringed folk instrument, to jazz and improvisation, whereas Kelomat (www.kelomat.at), which plays traditional and improvised jazz, is the most successful among a new generation on the scene.

Moving on to grooves styles, Peter Rom (b 1972; <http://peterrom.com>) heads an exciting trio, and Bernd Satziger (b 1977; www.wurschtsemmerl.at, in German) leads a wonderful three-piece outfit that uses a Wurliitzer organ. If your style is more rock, fusion, punk, improvisation or strange noises, Jazzwerkstatt figures to keep an ear open for are the unutterable Brpobr (<http://brpobr.klingt.org>, in German), some of whose work is reminiscent of early Pink Floyd; the more melody-based Fuzz Noir (www.fuzznoir.com), and Tumido (<http://tumido.klingt.org>, in German); the latter is a techno-punk-jazz outfit.

Jazz women figure prominently on the scene, and one group to watch out for is Falb Fiction, led by the saxophonist Viola Falb (b 1980; www.falbfiction.com, in German). Her style ranges from 'strictly harmonic to free, melodic ballads to pulsing grooves' and goes into rock. Mosaik, an outfit headed by Angela Tröndle (b 1983) creates vocal and purely instrumental jazz sounds based on clean rhythms and melodies infused with lots of piano, which Tröndle herself plays. Agnes Heginger (b 1973) has an education in classic as well as jazz, and doesn't shy away from throwing in improvisation or pop or anything else for that matter. In the past she's worked with Georg Breinschmidt (b 1973), Austria's virtuoso of contrabass jazz. The Graz-born Elisabeth Harnik (b 1970) composes and improvises on piano, and appears regularly at home-grown jazz events and across Europe, either solo, on piano or improvising with groups. Austria also attracts some talented Balkan and Eastern European jazz artists. The Slovenian Maja Osojnik (b 1976; www.majaosojnik.com), a long-time resident of Vienna, is a hot tip among jazz punters.

As well as the Jazzwerkstatt events, the three week Jazzfest Wien is held in June-July each year (www.vienna.jazz.org).

ROCK, POP & UNDERGROUND

Dig into the rock scene and the depth and variety of Austria's talent will lead to a lot of wild and sleepless nights in dark places. Some of the acts we mention here are well-known, others spend more time underground than above it. The websites will usually give you a taste of the music, and with a bit of surfing and good old-fashioned pencil and paper you can cobble together a 'Sound of Music' tour of a different kind (and more interesting than the Von Trapp variety).

Naked Lunch (www.nakedlunch.de) is currently the best-known Austrian band and have been working sounds for ages, yet it's only been in the last couple of years that they've risen to popularity at home and abroad. Going a bit deeper into the underground, the duo Attwenger (www.attwenger.at) has a large following for its music with flavours of folk, hip-hop and trance. Completing the triumvirate of relative old hands, Graz-based Rainer Binder-Kriegelstein (b 1966; performing as binder & kriegelstein, www.mikaella.org/bk, in German) does an eclectic blend of headz, hip-hop, groove and nu-jazz.

For hip-hop pure, Linz-based Texta (www.texta.at, in German) is the most established in the art. Young blood comes in the form of art-house hoppers Miese Medusa & Tenderboy (www.miezemedusa.com, in German), who are regulars on the Vienna circuit and organise poetry slams in town. Two other bands calling the hip-hop shots are Waxolutionists (www.waxos.com) and the bizarre Bauchklang (www.bauchklang.com), remarkable for

FALCO – LIVING HARD, LEAVING BEHIND A WRECK

It may come as a surprise to some, but the music scene in Austria is one of Europe's most exciting at the moment. The roots of a distinctly Austrian sound go back to the 1970s, when 'Austropop' was born. It was influenced by US artists like Bruce Springsteen and Bob Dylan, and this small and still quite close-knit scene often sprinkled its lyrics with local dialect.

One of the most eccentric bands from the very beginning was the rock-punk group Drahdwaberl, who combined Vienna Actionism with rock and a damned good show. One of its members, a certain Hans Hölzel, played bass in the group and stood out from this chaotic, totally hotwired ensemble, with his tough style and light touch of arrogance. Decked out in a suit, gelled to the brink and performing with idiosyncratic gestures – that was the beginning of the phenomena Falco. In 1982 he went solo, and turned rock music upside down.

According to Helge Hinteregger from the Music Information Center Austria (MICA; www.mica.at, in German), an organisation that promotes Austrian artists, Falco's influence on the development of the scene has been enormous.

Falco brought together the chill of New Wave with a blend of English and German phrased lyrics delivered in spoken chants, which is one reason why he's also known as the inventor of German-language hip-hop. Fatalism was always in there somewhere; drugs and alcohol were almost part of his style. Legendary songs like 'Ganz Wien' (Total Vienna) about heroine abuse, 'Jeanny' and 'Junge Römer' (Young Romans) played with the chill of human life on the edge of a precipice. His innovation and power, his success, and not to forget the musician Falco himself, were a stroke of luck for the Austrian music scene. You can still feel his influence today. Out of the local style of New Wave later came Vienna Electronic.

With a number one hit in the US charts, Falco reached the peak of his career. But Falco himself knew it was also breaking point and the only way now was down. Rock me Amadeus wasn't Falco's last hit, but nor could he recreate its phenomenal success. Right up until his death in a car accident in 1998, he remained a key figure in Austrian music, and Falco events are held every year on his birthday and on the anniversary of the crash.

'Actually, you don't go to the disco in Linz. You don't really go to Linz. Linz is the ass of the world: chemicals, boredom, drugs. Which means, come to think of it, of course you have to go to Linz if you're in the rap business – the ghetto city of Austria and the toughest Austria's got to offer.'

GERMAN JOURNALIST WOLFGANG HÖBEL

using only voices – no instruments – for its reggae- and ethnic-influenced hip-hop and trance.

This, of course, is absolutely normal compared to the equally remarkable Fuckhead (www.fuckhead.at), who, alone for a tendency to perform in plastic robes or gear that looks suspiciously like underwear, will obviously not be everyone's cup of tea. This is high-voltage turbo industrial grunge and it's akin to listening hard while a surgeon removes your eardrum; afterwards you might be ready to tune into the saccharine flavours of teeny rocker Christina Stürmer (b 1982; www.christinastuermer.de, in German), or indeed to the very soft lounge rhythms of Saint Privat (www.saintprivat.com).

Stage diving into the DJ scene, Electric Indigo (Susanne Kirchmayr, b 1965; www.indigo-inc.at) is the most influential of the female DJs, she organises a platform (female: pressure) for gals who DJ and an online sound base (Open Sounds), and performs with a Club Crazy residency in Vienna's Flex venue (see p153). Tanja Bednar (aka tibcurl; www.tibcurl.com), is possibly Vienna's best-known DJ act; she regularly puts on the Icke Micke Club (www.ickemicke.at), whose wintering ground in the past has included Vienna's Camera Club (p153). Among the guys, DJ Patrick Pulsinger (b 1970; www.feedback-studio.com) spins a variety of genres, including jazz, new music and experimental. Peter Kruder (b 1967) and Richard Dorfmeister (b 1968) together form the production and DJ and production team Kruder & Dorfmeister, who are Austria's most successful act, which ranges from downtempo to trip-hop and electronic rhythms.

Architecture

The earliest 'architecture' you'll find in Austria is a funereal form – the 700 grave mounds located outside Grossklein (p236), illustrating how the Iron Age Hallstatt Culture buried its dead. Also surviving from the early days of settlement are numerous Roman ruins dating from 15 BC to AD 500, including those excavated in Carnuntum (p178), and on Michaelerplatz (p137) in Vienna.

ROMANESQUE

The Romanesque period in Austria dates from about AD 1000 to 1250 and features heavy walls, closely spaced harmonising columns and heavy, rounded arches, along with the use of statues and reliefs on the portals and apses. Dig below any Gothic church and you'll often find Romanesque foundations. This style was almost entirely religious in nature and flourished under the Babenberg dynasty, which threw plenty of cash at craftsmen to build cathedrals and abbeys. Some of the best surviving Romanesque buildings today are the cathedral in Gurk (p302) and the Benedictine abbey in Millstatt (p308), both in Carinthia, and the funerary chapel of the Pfarrkirche St Stephan in Tulln (p173). You can also find some Romanesque features today in the main entrance and towers of Vienna's breathtaking Stephansdom (see p124).

GOthic

Around 1250 the Romanesque style gave way to Gothic, which petered out in the 16th century. Its hallmarks are high stained-glass windows, pointed arches and ribbed ceiling vaults, external flying buttresses to support the walls, and elaborately carved doorway columns. Stephansdom is the heart and soul of the Gothic style, but Austria also has lots of secular Gothic buildings, including the Goldenes Dachl (p337) in Innsbruck, the Kornmesserhaus (p240) in Bruck an der Mur and the Bummerhaus (p211) in Steyr.

RENAISSANCE

By the 16th century, Gothic flavours began to pall and Austrians discovered a new enthusiasm for classical forms. This obsession with grace, grandeur and symmetry coincided with the rising fortunes of the Habsburgs. Italian architects set to work on designing palaces, mansions and houses that blended Italian and Austrian influences. One of the hallmarks of the era was the arcade courtyard; fine examples are Schloss Schallaburg (p166) and Landhaushof (p224) in Graz. Another feature of Renaissance was the sgraffito façade, which is created by applying two layers of different colours and scratching a design into the top layer to reveal the layer beneath. This effect has been put to good use on houses in St Veit an der Glan in Carinthia (p303).

BAROQUE & ROCOCO

With the end of the Thirty Years' War and a receding Turkish threat, Austria's monarchy discovered urban development. This happened at a time baroque was making huge ground in architecture. Features of the resplendent, triumphal style were marble columns, elaborate sculpture and painting, and rich, gilded ornamentation; it added up to extravagant interiors designed to inspire and impress. Not to be outdone, the Church chipped in with a profusion of decorated interiors rich enough to make worshippers giddy.

Having learnt from the Italian school, Graz-born architect Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723) developed an Austrian baroque style, which grew to prominence from 1690 and expired around 1730. This reflected the gushing decorative style of Italian baroque but gave it a specifically Austrian twist, with dynamic colours and irregular or undulating lines. Austria has so many outstanding baroque buildings that it's difficult to know where to start. Some of the best are Fischer von Erlach's Kollegienkirche (p273) in Salzburg and his Karlskirche (p133) in Vienna, Johann Lukas von Hildebrandt's Schloss Belvedere (p132), also in Vienna, and Stift Melk (p172) and Augustiner Chorherrenstift (p209), both by Jakob Prandtauer (1660–1726).

Rococo, the decorative climax of baroque, was the favoured style of the empress Maria Theresa, who chose it for the rooms of Schloss Schönbrunn (p135) when she commissioned Nicolas Pacassi to renovate the palace in 1744.

NEOCLASSICISM

From the 18th century, rococo's extravagance bowed down to a revival of old architectural styles. Known as neoclassicism (because many works had a classical bent) or revivalism, the trend culminated in cold lines and strict forms in the 19th century. The Ancient Greece-inspired historicism of the parliament building (p128) in Vienna from 1883 is a good illustration, symbolising democracy with its impressively soaring columns.

When Emperor Franz Josef I took the Austro-Hungarian throne in 1848, the building boom reached new heights of grandiosity. Vienna's Ringstrasse (p128) is Austria's showcase from this time, and was developed on the site of the old city walls from 1857 onwards. Ringstrasse also demonstrates just how flagrantly builders plundered previous styles, including French Gothic (Votivkirche), Flemish Gothic (Rathaus; p128), Grecian (Parliament; p128), French Renaissance (Staatsoper; p152) and Florentine Renaissance (Museum für angewandte Kunst; p128). If neoclassicism is your thing, this is the best Europe has to offer.

'The obsession with grace, grandeur and symmetry coincided with the rising fortunes of the Habsburgs'

Learn more about Austrian architecture at the Architekturtage (Architectural Days) in June. For more information go to www.architekturtage.at, in German.

GUSTAV KLIMT & SECESSIONISM

Now usually associated with Art Nouveau, the Viennese Secession movement was formed by 19 artists in the 1890s in order to break away from the historical or revivalist styles that dominated Europe at the time. The painter Gustav Klimt (1862–1918) was its first president, and other Secession artists included architect Otto Wagner (1841–1918), interior designer and painter Carl Moll (1861–1945) and painter Kolo Moser (1868–1918).

Secession artists worked in a highly decorative style. Klimt's famous painting *The Kiss* (1908) is typical of the rich ornamentation, vivid colour and floral motifs favoured by the movement. His later pictures (such as the two portraits of Adele Bloch-Bauer from 1907) employ a harmonious but ostentatious use of background colour, with much metallic gold and silver to evoke or symbolise the emotion.

Otto Wagner, by contrast, began working in historicist styles (some neo-Renaissance buildings on Vienna's Ringstrasse are by his hand), joined the Secessionists, and with Klimt and others split from them and adopted his own more-functional style. His greatest works include the Postsparkasse (Post Office Savings Bank; p131), the Kirche am Steinhof (p136) and the Majolikahaus (p135), but his work can be seen everywhere in the capital; he designed some 35 stations of the current U-Bahn system.

MODERN

In an age of change, something had to give. Late-19th-century Jugendstil (Art Nouveau) was sensuous, decorative and, unlike rococo, neoclassicism or neoclassical revivalism, not intent on bowling over with exaggerated displays of beauty or strict lines. In Vienna the style blossomed with the founding of the Secession movement in 1897, led by painter Gustav Klimt (1862–1918). One of the foremost architects in the movement was Otto Wagner (1841–1918; see above). Another, Adolf Loos (1870–1933) was influenced by Wagner, broke with his style, and became a bitter critic of the Ringstrasse buildings. His Loos Haus (p137) and American Bar (p149) in Vienna offer a good insight into his style.

The influence of the Social Democrats in the Vienna city government of the new republic (from 1918) gave rise to a number of municipal building projects, not least the massive Karl-Marx-Hof apartment complex. This stands in contrast to the multicoloured, haphazard-looking work of Austria's maverick 20th-century architect, Friedensreich Hundertwasser (see boxed text, opposite).

Austria's leading postmodern architect is Hans Hollein (b 1934), designer of the angular glass and stone Haas Haus (1990) in Vienna, near Stephansdom. Impressive but very different in its form, the monumental Hangar-7 (2003; p278) at Salzburg's airport is a spectacular glass and steel hanger housing vintage aircraft, art exhibitions and visitor facilities, designed by Volkmar Burgstaller (b 1944). Meanwhile in Linz, the Zürich architects Weber & Hofer are the force behind the cube-shaped Lentos art museum (2003; p203). One of Austria's most bizarre recent constructions, however, is the 'Friendly Alien' Kunsthaus (2003; p226) in Graz by British architects Peter Cook (b 1936) and Colin Fournier (b 1944), a creation with nozzles and an acrylic skin with electronic morphing capabilities.

Painting

Austria has some of the world's most impressive collections of paintings. Oberes Belvedere (p132) and the Prunkstall (p132) have a wealth of Gothic religious art from the Middle Ages. Come the Renaissance, the focus of the Viennese shifted from biblical motifs to landscapes. The Danube School (unusual because it combined both) included greats such as Rueland Frueauf

the Younger (1470–1545), Wolf Huber (1485–1553) and German-born Lukas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553).

Baroque artists were relatively thin on the ground in Austria, but the ceiling frescoes of Johann Michael Rottmayr (1654–1730) in Salzburg's Residenz (p268) and in the Stift Klosterneuburg (p160) are remarkable legacies. The other great baroque master is Daniel Gran (1694–1757), whose major work is in Vienna's Nationalbibliothek (p126). Taking the brush to canvas as well as roofs, Franz Anton Maulbertsch (1724–96) left legacies in the Riesensaal of the Hofburg in Innsbruck (p334) and in the Österreichische Galerie of Schloss Belvedere in Vienna (p132). The other great baroque painter, Paul Troger (1698–1762), created stunning spatial effects in Stift Melk (p172).

The Biedermeier period of the mid-19th century produced leading artists Ferdinand Waldmüller (1793–1865) and Friedrich Gauermann (1807–62), who captured the age in portraits, landscapes and period scenes. Some of Waldmüller's evocative (if idealised) peasant scenes can be viewed in the Oberes Belvedere (p132) in Vienna.

While the neoclassical period certainly produced its local greats, including August von Pettenkofen (1822–89) and Hans Makart (1840–84), Austria's golden age was still just around the corner. The turn of the century brought the Jugendstil period, featuring organic motifs such as plant tendrils, flowing hair, flames and waves. No-one embraced this sensuousness more than Gustav Klimt (1862–1918; opposite).

His contemporary, Egon Schiele (1890–1918), created grittier and more confronting works. Schiele worked largely with the human figure, and many of his works are brilliantly executed minimalist line drawings splashed with patches of bright colour and usually featuring women in pornographic poses. He also produced many self-portraits and a few large, breathtaking painted canvases, most of which can be seen in the Leopold Museum (p130). Vienna's Oberes Belvedere (p132) has a wonderful collection from the era,

Museum after museum is listed on www.austrianmuseums.net; it's in German but it's pretty easy to navigate.

THE STRAIGHT LINE IS GODLESS

One of Austria's most celebrated architects-artists is Friedensreich Hundertwasser. Thanks to his eccentricity, he is also one of the most entertaining – visually and literally. When you look at his creations, including his last work – a public toilet in his beloved second home, New Zealand – you can understand what lies behind his claim that the 'straight line is godless and immoral'.

Some say his work is a nervous response to Bauhaus or Jackson Pollock. Perhaps. In his famous *Verschimmelungsmanifest* (Mould Manifesto, 1964), he claimed to have once counted 546 straight lines on a razor blade. And while not everyone who has battled with mould in their homes will agree with his (positive) view that 'with the microbes and sponge, life comes into the house'. His claim that his uneven floors 'become a symphony, a melody for the feet, and bring back natural vibrations to man' has won followers.

Hundertwasser lost a good deal of his family in the Nazi death camps and began a career in art at the Akademie der bildenden Künste (Academy of Fine Arts) in 1948, soon afterwards treading his own creative path. He would later move towards spiritual ecology, believing that cities should be harmonious with their (natural) environment. He envisaged buildings semi-submerged beneath undulating meadows, and homes with 'tree tenants', who pay rent in environmental currency. With the air and ozone layer getting thinner, perhaps he was onto something.

Hundertwasser locked horns with the Viennese establishment on many occasions, and he complained that his more radical building projects were quashed by the authorities. Nevertheless, he was commissioned to re-create the façade of the Spittelau incinerator in Vienna. This project opened in 1992 and is probably the most unindustrial-looking heating plant you'll find. Other Hundertwasser creations include the Kunsthaus Wien and Hundertwasserhaus in Vienna (p131), St Barbara Kirche in Bärnbach (p235) and Bad Blumau's spa resort (p237).

VIENNESE ACTIONISM *Dr Ed Baxter*

Viennese Actionism spanned the years 1957–68 and was one of the most extreme of all the modern art movements. It was linked to the Wiener Gruppe (Vienna Group) and had its roots in abstract expressionism. Actionism sought access to the unconscious through the frenzy of an extreme and very direct art: the Actionists quickly moved from pouring paint over the canvas, which was then slashed with knives, to using bodies (live people, dead animals) as 'brushes', and using blood, excrement, eggs, mud and whatever else came to hand as 'paint'. The traditional canvas was soon dispensed with altogether. The artist's body became the canvas, and the site of art became a deliberated event (the scripted action, staged both privately and publicly).

It was a short step from self-painting to inflicting wounds upon the body, and engaging in physical and psychological endurance tests. For 10 years the Actionists scandalised the press and public and incited violence and panic – and got plenty of publicity in the process. Often poetic, humorous and aggressive, the Actions became increasingly politicised, addressing the sexual and social repression that pervaded the Austrian state. Art in Revolution (1968), the last Action to be realised in Vienna, resulted in six months hard labour all-round.

and a museum in Tulln (p173) is dedicated entirely to Schiele. The other major exponent of Viennese Expressionism was playwright, poet and painter Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980), whose sometimes-turbulent works reveal an interest in psychoanalytic imagery and baroque-era religious symbolism. Kokoschka's work is also showcased in the Leopold.

Painting took a backseat between the two world wars, but returned with a vengeance after WWII. In the 1950s HC Artmann (1921–2000) founded the Wiener Gruppe (Vienna Group); its members integrated surrealism and Dadaism into their sound compositions, textual montages, and Actionist happenings. Public outrage and police intervention were regular accompaniments to their meetings. The group's activities came to an end in 1964 when Konrad Bayer (1932–64), its most influential member, committed suicide; much of the legacy of the movement is on show in the MUMOK (p130).

Some of the important names in today's Austria's art scene include Gunter Brus (b 1938) and Hermann Nitsch (b 1938), both former members of the Actionism group, Arnulf Rainer (b 1929), also associated with Actionism but more recently involved in photographing and reworking classic pieces by Schiele, van Gogh and Rembrandt, and Eva Schlegel (b 1960), who works with a wide range of media. Sammlung Essl in Klosterneuburg has many of these artists and should be high on the list of places to visit for contemporary art.

Sculpture

Austria is blessed with two very early pieces of erotic pre-Christian sculpture. At over 30,000 years old, *Venus of Galgenberg* (aka Dancing Fanny) is the oldest-known stone figurine in the world, while the more rapturous *Venus of Willendorf*, discovered in the Danube Valley, has fended off suitors for some 25,000 years. Both are now in Vienna's Naturhistorisches Museum (p129).

The enamel *Verdun Altar* (1181) in Klosterneuburg abbey (p160) is Austria's finest surviving work from the Romanesque period. Some of the most beautiful altars were carved of lime wood during the Gothic era. The best known are today in St Wolfgang (p260) and are the work of Michael Pacher (1440–98), who is one of the most skilful religious artists working in the 15th century. The tomb (1502) of Maximilian I in Innsbruck's Hofkirche (p334) is a highlight of the Renaissance, and the same church has impressive statues in bronze, including several by the German master of all trades, Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528).

Hermann Nitsch still practices Viennese Actionism; decide for yourself whether it's your cup of tea at www.nitsch.org, in German.

Take a peak at the sublime works of the Wiener Werkstätte and learn something of the organisation's history at www.wiener-werkstaette.at.

The baroque period is captured in the fountain by George Raphael Donner in Vienna's Neuer Markt (p137), and Balthasar Permoser's statue of Prince Eugène in the Schloss Belvedere (p132). Those with a special interest in baroque funeral caskets should look no further than the giant double sarcophagus created by Balthasar Moll (1717–85) for Maria Theresia and Franz I, located on Vienna's Neuer Markt (p127).

Neoclassicism was the age of the equestrian statue, and nothing typifies this better than the one from 1804 of Emperor Joseph II in Josefsplatz in Vienna's Hofburg (p125). Salzburg also has some distinctive equine marvels in its old town centre.

The Biedermeier period achieved much in furniture and some of this can be seen in Vienna's Museum für angewandte Kunst (Museum of Applied Art; p131). It also gave rise to the technique of 'bending' wood in furniture, particularly in the backs of chairs, and since that time the bentwood chair has also been known as the Viennese chair.

The Secessionist movement not only had a hand in painting and architecture, but also some interesting sculpture. This offshoot was known as the Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna Workshop), which changed the face of domestic design. Wallpaper, curtains, furniture, tiles, vases, trays, cutlery, bowls and jewellery were all targets for design; aesthetics came before practicality, which means that some of it is brilliant but utterly useless. Josef Hoffmann was a prominent figure in the Werkstätte, as was Kolo Moser (1868–1918); many of their works, along with other members, can be seen at the Museum für angewandte Kunst (p131) and Leopold Museum (p130).

Literature

The outstanding Austrian work produced in the Middle Ages was the *Nibelungenlied* (Song of the Nibelungs), written around 1200 by an unknown hand. This epic poem told a tale of passion, faithfulness and revenge in the Burgundian court at Worms. Its themes were adapted by Richard Wagner in his *The Ring of the Nibelungen* operatic series.

Aside from Franz Grillparzer (1791–1872; see p57), Austria's literary tradition didn't really take off until around the turn of the 20th century, when the Vienna Secessionists and Sigmund Freud were creating waves. Influential writers who emerged at this time included Arthur Schnitzler (1862–1931), Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929), Karl Kraus (1874–1936) and the young poet Georg Trakl (1887–1914). Kraus' apocalyptic drama *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* (The Last Days of Mankind, 1922) employed a combination of reports, interviews and press extracts to portray the absurdity of war.

Peter Altenberg (1859–1919) was a drug addict and alcoholic whose doctor wrote him off as unfit for work due to an overly sensitive nervous system. Quite sensibly, he dedicated his life to poetry after that and portrayed bohemian Vienna. You'll find an amusing figure of him as you enter his favourite coffee house, Café Central (p151) in Vienna. Hermann Broch (1886–1951) was also very much part of Viennese café society. Broch was a scientist at heart who believed literature could provide the metaphysical explanations for scientific discovery. His masterwork was *Der Tod des Vergil* (The Death of Virgil, 1945) written in a Nazi concentration camp and after his emigration to the USA.

Robert Musil (1880–1942) was one of the most important 20th-century writers, but he only achieved international recognition after his death with his major literary achievement, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (The Man without Qualities, 1932). This seven-volume unfinished work is a fascinating portrait of the collapsing Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Heimito von

A slice of Viennese life in the late '60s from popular US author John Irving. *Setting Free the Bears* tells a charming, sad and amusing story about a plan to release the animals from the zoo at Schönbrunn.

Set in 1932, *The Radetzky March* by Joseph Roth is the study of one family affected by the end of empire. The themes of *The Radetzky March* are applicable to any society emerging from a long-hated, but at least understood, regime.

Not just a novel, but a complete overhaul of what a novel can be, *The Death of Virgil* by Hermann Broch is as stylistically groundbreaking as Joyce's *Ulysses*. Covering the last day of the poet's life, this book is hard, hard work.

Doderer (1896–1966) grew up in Vienna, which is why his two great works, *Die Strudlhofstiege* (1951) and *Die Dämonen* (The Demons; 1956) depict Vienna society in the first decades of the 20th century.

A friend of Freud, a librettist for Strauss and a victim of Nazi book burnings, Stefan Zweig (1881–1942) certainly had a rich social pedigree. A poet, playwright, translator, paranoiac and pacifist to boot, Zweig believed Nazism had been conceived specifically with him in mind and as a result he when he became convinced in 1942 that Hitler would take over the world, he took an overdose of barbiturates in his chosen exile, outside Rio de Janeiro. Joseph Roth (1894–1939), primarily a journalist, wrote about the concerns of Jews in exile and of Austrians uncertain of their identity at the end of empire. His re-released *What I Saw: Reports from Berlin, 1920–33* (2002) is part of a resurgence of interest in this fascinating writer.

Perhaps it's something in that murky Danube water, but the majority of contemporary Viennese authors (at least, those translated into English) are grim, guilt-ridden, angry and sometimes incomprehensibly avant-garde. Thomas Bernhard (1931–89) was born in Holland but grew up and lived in Austria. Like seemingly many Viennese, he was obsessed with disintegration and death, and in later works such as *Holzfällen* (Cutting Timber, 1984) turned to controversial attacks against social conventions and institutions. His novels are seamless (no chapters or paragraphs, few full stops) and seemingly repetitive, but surprisingly readable once you get into them.

The best-known contemporary writer is Peter Handke (b 1942). His post-modern, abstract output encompasses innovative and introspective prose works such as *Die linkshändige Frau* (The Left-Handed Woman, 1976) and stylistic plays like *Die Stunde, da wir nichts voneinander wussten* (The Hour When We Knew Nothing of Each Other, 1992). The provocative novelist and 2004 Nobel Laureate Elfriede Jelinek (b 1946) dispenses with direct speech, indulges in long flights of fancy and takes a very dim view of humanity, but she is worth persevering with. *Die Klavierspielerin* (The Piano Teacher, 1983), *Lust* (1989), *Die Liebhaberinnen* (Women as Lovers, 1975), *Die Ausgesperrten* (Wonderful, Wonderful Times, 1980) and *Einar* (2006) are all available in English; *The Piano Teacher* has also been made into a film.

Elisabeth Reichart (b 1953) stands out for her novels and essays, and especially for criticism of patriarchy and investigations of Nazi-related Austrian guilt, both during WWII and more recently. *Her Das Haus der sterbenden Männer* (House of the Dying Men, 2005) is a richly textured novel based on the relationship between two very different women, one of whom runs a home for terminally ill men. Novelist and lyricist Wilhelm Aigner (b 1954) was awarded the prestigious *Grosser Österreichischer Staatspreis für Literatur* (Grand Austrian State Prize for Literature) in 2006 and his *Die schönen bitteren Wochen des Johann Nepomuk* (The Beautiful, Bitter Weeks of Johann Nepomuk, 2006) about first love, football and adolescence also appears in English. Contemporary young authors who are shaping the literary scene today include Thomas Glavinic (b 1972), Berlin-based Kathrin Röggla (b 1971), and Vienna-based (Munich-born) Daniel Kehlmann (b 1975), whose historical novel *Vermessung der Welt* (Measuring the World, 2005) about early scientists Alexander von Humboldt and Carl Friedrich Gauss is highly acclaimed and in translation.

Cinema & TV

Austria may have a long history in film (1908 marked the country's first feature film, *Von Stufe zu Stufe*; From Stage to Stage), but its endeavours have generally gone unnoticed outside the German-speaking world. As a cinematic backdrop for film, the story is quite different; two of the most famous films

in cinematic history, *The Third Man* (1949) and *The Sound of Music* (1965), are set in Vienna and Salzburg respectively. Both flopped on release in the country, and while most Austrians still haven't a clue about 'Doe, a deer, a female deer', opinions on Harry Lime and his penicillin racket have turned 180 degrees since then (p32). There are literally hundreds of other films and TV programmes filmed in Austria; *Before Sunrise* (1994), *The Living Daylights* (1987) and *Where Eagles Dare* (1968; starring Clint Eastwood and Richard Burton) are three of the more famous examples.

Many of Austria's early big names were successful after they travelled to Berlin or Hollywood. Vienna-born director Fritz Lang (1890–1976) pretty much captures it all: he almost ruined his Berlin film studio with the astronomical budget of *Metropolis* (1926), the story of a society enslaved by technology. This and his *The Last Will of Dr Mabuse* (1932), during which an incarcerated madman spouts Nazi doctrine, were banned under the Nazis; after knocking back a work offer from Hitler, who was besotted Lang's silent classic *Die Nibelungen* (1924), the director went to Hollywood.

Writer and director Billy Wilder (1906–2002), who moved to Vienna in 1916, also worked in Berlin before striking out for Hollywood. Others who are famous internationally are glamour girl Hedy Lamarr (1913–2000), and director Fred Zinnemann (1907–1997; *From Here to Eternity* and *High Noon* in 1952). For many, Klaus Maria Brandauer (b 1944), star of *Out of Africa* (1985) and *Mephisto* (1981) will need no introduction, and Arnold Schwarzenegger (b 1947), has left visiting cards in Hollywood and as Governor of California.

One filmmaker today attracting attention at home and abroad is Michael Haneke (b 1942), whose work often features violence and a theme of self-destruction. His first film, *Funny Games* (1997), played at the Cannes Film Festival, and his *The Piano Teacher* (2001), based on the novel by Viennese writer Elfriede Jelinek went one step further by winning three awards there. Director Hans Weingartner (b 1970) achieved acclaim with *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* (The Educators, 2004), an insightful film that shows the generation problems you take on if you kidnap an ex-student revolutionary-turned-businessman (it's not worth the trouble, it seems). Ground was also broken in *In 3 Tagen bist du tot* (In 3 Days You're Dead, 2006), when director Andreas Prochaska (b 1964) filmed amateur actors speaking local dialect in a teenage thriller set in the bucolic landscape of the Salzkammergut. In the documentary genre, Hubert Sauper (b 1966) received an Oscar nomination for *Darwin's Nightmare* (2004).

Although news coverage is excellent, locally dubbed foreign fare dominates a bland TV landscape. Testing the brain's sleep centre are noble but interminable broadcasts of parliament, Austrian talk shows, local variants on reality TV or specials on folk music. Against this backdrop, the old favourite, *Kommissar Rex*, a bizarrely genre-fluid crime series with a dash of slapstick featuring a ham-roll-stealing German Shepherd dog and plenty of local scenery, reaches giddy and thoroughly enjoyable heights.

Theatre & Dance

Vienna's tradition in the theatre was – and still is – bolstered by the quality of the operas and operettas produced in the golden age of music. In addition to these forms, Greek drama, avant-garde, mime, comedy, cabaret, farce and other theatrical genres are regularly part of the vibrant scene. Vienna is home to the four national theatres and opera houses – the Staatsoper (p152), Volksoper (p153), Akademietheater (the Burgtheater's second stage) and the Burgtheater itself (p153), which is one of the premier theatre and opera venues in the German-speaking world. Theater in der

Thomas Bernhard's one-sentence prose poem *On the Mountain* is the story of a man about to die of lung disease. The first book Bernhard wrote and the last he published, it is bleak and bitter. Also try *Cutting Timber* and *Wittgenstein's Nephew*.

Witty and clever, Elfriede Jelinek hates all her characters. Her novel *Lust* is the story of a rural woman preyed on by her husband and lover, told without a gram of sympathy for the filthy habits of humans.

So it's kitsch, tacky and full of cheesy songs, but there's no denying the popularity of *The Sound of Music* (1965) by Robert Wise, the story of the multitalented Von Trapp family and their too-good-to-be-true nanny.

'All my six husbands married me for different reasons.'

AUSTRIAN HOLLYWOOD FILM ACTRESS HEDY LAMARR

For a complete rundown of Austrian films in English, consult the archives of www.afc.at, the Austrian Film Commission's website.

Viennese enfant terrible Haneke's first world-renowned work, *Funny Games* (1997) is a disturbing study of sadism and destruction. A family on holiday is taken hostage by two well-educated young men who want to push some boundaries.

Find out what the Austrian Oak's saying these days by visiting the Terminator-cum-governor's slightly wacky personal website at www.schwarzenegger.com.

Josefstadt (p153) is known for the modern style of acting evolved by Max Reinhardt, while the Theater an der Wien (p152) puts on opera, dance and concerts. All provincial capital cities are blessed with major theatres.

The first great figure in the modern era was the playwright Franz Grillparzer (1791–1872). Other influential playwrights who still get a regular airing are Johann Nestroy (1801–62), known for his satirical farces, and Ferdinand Raimund, the 19th-century author of *Der Alpenkönig und der Menschenfeind* (The King of the Alps and the Misanthrope, 1828). Adalbert Stifter (1805–68) is credited as being the seminal influence in the development of an Austrian narrative style.

Many Viennese authors are also playwrights – perhaps the Viennese fondness for the avant-garde encourages crossing artistic boundaries. Arthur Schnitzler, Thomas Bernhard, Elfriede Jelinek and Peter Handke (p55) have all had their plays performed at the Burgtheater.

Dance is by no means as popular as the other arts, but it does have a world-class venue in the TanzQuartier Wien (p153) as well as in those venues already mentioned.

Food & Drink

Tradition with new, non-regional edges best describes what you can increasingly expect from Austrian restaurants today. Wiener schnitzel (from veal), *Tafelspitz* (boiled beef with apple and horseradish sauce) and delicious hams and cheeses from Tyrol are often balanced by dishes with flavoursome infusions from outside a region or abroad. For many, the best is left for last: deliciously divine cakes and pastries, with an international reputation hard to beat, round off a meal perfectly.

STAPLES & SPECIALITIES

Traditionally, the largest meal of the day is at *Mittag* (midday), known as *Mittagessen* (midday meal), whereas *Abendessen* (dinner) consists of bread, cheese, ham and a beer or wine. Snacking between meals is common, and is often referred to as *Jause*. If they have time, Austrians will still sit down to a *Tagesteller* (set dish) or *Mittagsmenü* (set lunch, including soup; around €6 to €9) in a restaurant, which is invariably a cheap way to fill the belly. *Frühstück* (breakfast) is less important, and usually consists of coffee or tea with a *Semmel* (bread roll) and jam, ham or cheese (or all three). On weekends, particularly in Vienna, breakfast is a completely different creature; people lazily while away the hours over coffee, rolls, and occasionally a full English breakfast.

Three courses are usual for traditional meals. Clear soups are a particular favourite as a *Vorspeise* (starter), such as *Frittattensuppe*, a clear soup with shreds of crepe-like pancake. *Markknödelsuppe* is a clear bone-marrow soup with dumplings, while *Leberknödelsuppe* is yet another clear soup with liver dumplings. *Gulaschsuppe* (goulash soup), a rich beef-vegetable soup with plenty of paprika, can be taken as a starter or a main. If you're not a soup fan, then try *Bauernschmaus*, a platter of cold meats and bread.

Wiener schnitzel, a breaded escalope of veal, is Vienna's best-known culinary concoction, but it is ubiquitous throughout Austria. Variations on the schnitzel theme include the more common pork schnitzel, *Cordon Bleu*, with ham and cheese, and the *Natur*, a schnitzel fried on its own.

Other than schnitzel, *Speisekarten* (menus) normally feature classic Austrian dishes, such as *Backhuhn* (fried chicken; also known as *Backhendl*), *Tafelspitz*, *Schweinsbraten* (slices of roast pork) and *Zweibelrostbraten* (slices of roast beef smothered in gravy and fried onions). A great variety of *Wurst* (sausage) is available, and not only at the takeaway stands. Common fish include *Forelle* (trout), *Hecht* (pike), *Fogosch/Zander* (pike-perch), *Karpfen* (carp), and *Saibling*, a local freshwater fish, similar to trout.

Main dishes commonly appear with *Beilagen* (side dishes) and extras, which come in a variety of shapes and forms. *Knödel* (dumplings) are an element of many meals, and can appear in soups and desserts as well as main courses. *Nockerln* (sometimes called *Spätzle*, especially in the west) is small homemade pasta with a similar taste to *Knödel*. *Nudeln* is normally flat egg noodles, except when it's the tiny noodles in a soup. Austrians love potatoes, and are not satisfied with just boiling them. They appear as *Pommes* (French fries), *Quellmänner* (boiled in their skins), *Bratkartoffel* (roasted), *Geröstete* (sliced small and sautéed) and *Erdapfelsalat* *Erdäpfel* (boiled potatoes with chopped chives in a watery dressing).

Regional traditional cuisine is where things get really interesting. Burgenland has strong ties to Hungarian cooking, with lashings of paprika, beans, potatoes and cabbage, while in Styria it's hard to go anywhere

www.pumpkinseedoil.cc – more information than you will ever need to know about southern Styria's liquid gold.

It's estimated that each year about 73 million servings of schnitzel, 42 million portions of goulash and almost 40 million pasta dishes are spooned into Austrian digestive systems.

OUR TOP EATING EXPERIENCES

Vienna

- **Österreicher im MAK** (p147) Classics like tongue of veal find a new edge in this sharp restaurant.
- **Naschmarkt** (p149) Not just the capital's most famous farmers market – nosh houses stand cheek by jowl, tantalising with exotic and local flavours.
- **Halle** (p147) Penne with artichoke hearts meets Styrian chicken on a changing menu in the pulsating Museums Quartier.

Lower Austria

- **Mörwald Kloster Und** (p170) All the hallmarks of the Wachau are here: a lovely setting, good wine and a chef to watch out for (all while enjoying breast of pigeon).
- **Filmbar im Kesselhaus** (p169) A hungry film-lover's dream come true, with delicious salads and meats, an art-house cinema, plus cinema exhibition space.
- **MOKA** (p178) Miss the last bus out, treat yourself to poppy seed cake and – damn it! – stay overnight.

Burgenland

- **Weingut Gabriel** (p194) Wash down smoked sausage with great wine while watching storks mate above the yard of this picturesque Heuriger.
- **Weingut & Weingasthof Kloster am Spitz** (p195) Organically produced wines, game flavoured with ginger and other fusion elements are all at home here.
- **Zur Dankbarkeit** (p196) A regional kitchen in a leafy yard off the pink, shimmering Neusiedler See, plus the best drops from local winegrowers.

Upper Austria

- **k.u.k. Hofbäckerei** (p207) Fritz Rath tempts the sweet-toothed with his famous *Linzer Torte* in the city's oldest café.
- **Knapp am Eck** (p213) Down a cobbled lane, this gorgeous tavern serves sage-stuffed pork in a lantern-lit, ivy-clad garden.
- **Schlossbrauerei Weinberg** (p216) Devour beer-drenched goulash and beer-battered schnitzel in this cavernous brewpub, hidden in the forest above Kefermarkt.

Styria

- **Lendplatz farmers markets** (p231) The finest out of the *Selchkammer* (smoke house), *Hartkäse* (matured cheese), vegetables, breads and flowers from Graz vendors – with views.
- **Aiola Upstairs** (p230) Chilled music, lemongrass risotto and beef, plus a strong wine and cocktail list and views of Graz from Schlossberg.
- **Iohan** (p231) Gothic vaulting, great wines and food, with *Leberpate* (liver pâté) served at the bar.

Salzkammergut

- **Restaurant-Pizzeria Simmer** (p253) Pizza and a bowling alley out back, and views across the swampy meadows to Hallstätter See.

without encountering *Kürbiskernöl*, a rich, dark pumpkin-seed oil. It is also home to Austria's *Almochsen* (shortened to *Almo*) bulls, delivering the best beef. In Carinthia, look for *Käsnudeln*, pasta made into balls and combined with cheese. *Käsnocken*, *Kässpätzle* and *Käsnödel* are variations on a the theme. Tyrol specialities include *Tiroler Gröstl*, pan-fried onions, meat and potatoes, and *Tiroler Knödel*, dumplings hiding small pieces of ham.

- **Im Weissen Rössl** (p261) Braised cheek of veal, colonial sauces, and fine views in two restaurants overlooking the Wolfgangsee.
- **Rudolfsturm** (p102) Rustic, filling fare while perched some 800m above Hallstätter See – a perfect end to hiking around the lake.

Salzburg & Salzburger Land

- **Scio's Specereyen** (p278) Few can resist the blinis with caviar and chocolate-coated *Venusbrüstchen* (Venus breasts) at Scio's.
- **Afro Café** (p277) Hot-pink walls, wacky artwork and African flavours (such as sticky ostrich kebabs) make this Salzburg's coolest café.
- **Obauer** (p286) Karl and Rudi Obauer reach for the Michelin stars, with local fare like Werfen lamb and trout strudel.

Carinthia

- **Restaurant Maria Loretto** (p294) Stupendous Wörthersee views, plus classic fare – from local trout and schnitzel with cranberries to Carinthian *Almo* steak.
- **Zauberhutt'n** (p294) Mediterranean influenced food, a kitchen full of magicians, and the best squid conjured up this side of the Alps.
- **Millstätter See** (p308) A romantic dinner for two on a raft on a lake: enjoy a seven course meal ferried out by to you by waiters on a watery mission.

Hohe Tauern National Park Region

- **Hözlalneralm** (p317) The *Kaspressknödel* (dumpling in Pinzgauer cheese) is a meal in itself at this farmhouse high above Krimml Falls.
- **Our's Lounge** (p316) Glass walls, throne-like red velvet chairs and a menu packed with fusion flavours draw trendies to the lounge.
- **Hotel Haidenhof** (p326) Locals pile into the South Tyrolean tavern for fresh trout, homemade strudel and appetising Dolomite views.

Tyrol

- **Metzgerei Kröll** (p349) Nip into this family-run butchers for delicious *Schlegeis-Speck* ham, cured at 1800m to achieve its aroma.
- **Stanz** (p359) High on a plateau, Stanz's 65 distilleries pack a punch with fiery plum schnapps.
- **Auracher Löchl** (p355) Expect walls festooned with forest animals, low beams and humungous *Schweinshaxe* (pork knuckles) at this medieval haunt.

Vorarlberg

- **Käsestrasse** (p374) The dairies lining this road through the Bregenzerwald roll out tasty cheeses, from creamy Bergkäse to walnuty Nussknacker.
- **Cafesito** (p371) Squeeze into this hip café for chilli hot chocolate and Bregenz's freshest bagels and smoothies.
- **Wirtschaft zum Schützenhaus** (p376) '*Schiessen und Geniessen*' (shoot and enjoy) is the motto at this half-timbered tavern, with lederhosen-clad staff and enormous schnitzels.

No meal in Austria would be complete without *Nachspeise* (dessert). Beating all-comers in the popularity race is the *Apfelstrudel*, although *Palatschinken* (crepes) comes a close second. A speciality for Salzburg is the *Salzburger Nockerl*, a fluffy baked pudding made from eggs, flour and sugar. *Germknödel* are sourdough dumplings, but more appetising are *Marillknödel* (apricot dumplings). Look for *Mohr im Hemd*, a chocolate pudding with whipped cream and chocolate sauce, *Guglhupf*, a cake shaped

like a volcano, the *Sacher Torte* in Vienna and the *Linzer Torte* in Linz. The ever-present *Mozartkugeln* (Mozart Balls) are another favourite.

DRINKS

Nonalcoholic Drinks

Although herbal and black teas are popular, coffee is the preferred hot beverage, which is drunk mainly in a *Kaffeehaus* (coffee house) or café, or sometimes in a Café-Konditorei. Strong Turkish coffee is a popular variation in coffee houses. Mineral or soda water is widely available and cheap, though tap water is fine and for the asking. *Almdudler*, a cross between ginger ale and lemonade, is one local soft drink found the country over. Come September, *Traubenmost*, a fresh, unfermented grape juice, is available in wine regions.

Alcoholic Drinks

Although *Bier* (beer) is by far the most popular drink in Austria, internationally, *Wein* (wine) outshines the amber fluid. White wine is traditionally Austria's mainstay, but one-third of the country's viniculture is now planted in reds. Austria has four winegrowing regions: Weinland (Lower Austria and Burgenland; see p195), Steierland (Styria; see p236), Wien (Vienna) and Bergland (Upper Austria, Salzburg, Carinthia, Tyrol and Vorarlberg). These bring together 19 different winegrowing areas. Grüner Veltliner is the most common variety, while *Sekt* is the local bubbly.

Come autumn the whole country goes mad for *Sturm* – new wine in its semi-fermented state. It's yeasty, highly drinkable, has a kick like a mule, and hangovers resemble a porcupine waltzing inside your head, but it's an absolute must. *Staubiger* is new wine fully fermented and is more sour and cloudy than *Sturm*. Some of the young wines can be a little sharp, so it is common to mix them with 50% mineral water, called a *Gespritzer* or *G'spritzer*.

The perfect place to sample wine and *Sturm* is a *Heurigen* or *Buschenschank*, Austria's wine taverns. Rustic and rural, these wonderful establishments have plenty of character and traditionally sell only their own wine, but quite often you'll find stock from outside. They're easy to spot; just look for the *Busch'n* (green wreath or branch) hanging over the front door.

Acidic but pleasant, *Most* is an alcoholic beverage made from apples or wild and cultivated pears and similar to cider. It's found almost all over Austria, but especially in Upper Austria, and in Lower Austria, from where the fruit-growing Mostviertel region (between the Ybbs and the Enns Rivers) gets its name.

Austria loves its home-grown beer, which is no surprise considering the quality. It's usually a light, golden-coloured lager or pilsner (there are dark versions too), and is produced by breweries across the country. Common brands include Ottakringer from Vienna, Gösser and Puntigmer from Graz and Stiegl from Salzburg. *Weizenbier* (wheat beer), also known as *Weissbier* (white beer) has a full-bodied, slightly sweet taste and can be light or dark, clear or cloudy, and is sometimes served with a slice of lemon straddling the glass rim. *Vom Fass* (draught beer) comes in either a 0.5L or a 0.3L glass. In Vienna and some other parts of eastern Austria these are called respectively a *Krüglerl* (sometimes spelled *Kriigel*) and a *Seidel*. Elsewhere these will simply be *Grosse* (big) or *Kleine* (small). A small beer may also be called a *Glas* (glass). A *Pfiff* is just 0.125L, which will probably satisfy you for all of two seconds. *Radler* is a mix of beer and lemonade.

Austrians have a soft spot for *Schnapps*, made from a variety of fruits and sometimes called *Obstler*. Some of the country's better drops can be bought at *Bauernmärkte* (farmers markets) across the country.

Check out what's happening in the Austrian vineyards and even practice your Austrian wine terms with mp3 at www.winesfromaustria.com.

Vienna is the largest wine-growing city in the world, although it produces only 1.4% of Austrian wine; 91.7% is produced in the Weinland region.

The Ultimate Austrian Wine Guide, by Peter Moser and published by Falstaff, is the wine lover's bible to Austrian wine. It features a rundown on wines from Austria, 200 leading wineries and is in English.

MORE THAN JUST COFFEE

Legend has it that coffee beans were left behind by the fleeing Turks in 1683, however the tradition of the Viennese *Kaffeehaus* developed in the 19th century, when their numbers reached a reputed 600 cafés.

When ordering a cup of the brown stuff, a 'coffee, please' doesn't suffice. Make your choice from the many types, and this will generally be served on a silver platter accompanied by a glass of water, and if you're lucky, a small sweet.

Here's what you'll generally find on offer:

- *Brauner* – black but served with a tiny splash of milk; comes in *Gross* (large) or *Klein* (small)
- *Einspänner* – with whipped cream, served in a glass
- *Fiaker* – Verlängerter with rum and whipped cream
- *Kapuziner* – with a little milk and perhaps a sprinkling of grated chocolate
- *Maria Theresia* – with orange liqueur and whipped cream
- *Masagran* (or *Mazagran*) – cold coffee with ice and Maraschino liqueur
- *Melange* – the Viennese classic; served with milk, and maybe whipped cream too, similar to the cappuccino
- *Mocca* (sometimes spelled *Mokka*) or *Schwarzer* – black coffee
- *Pharisäer* – strong *Mocca* topped with whipped cream, served with a glass of rum
- *Türkische* – comes in a copper pot with coffee grounds and sugar
- *Verlängerter* – *Brauner* weakened with hot water
- *Wiener Eiskaffee* – cold coffee with vanilla ice cream and whipped cream

CELEBRATIONS

Austrian cuisine very much follows the seasons. Game, an integral part of most menus throughout the year, really comes into its own in autumn, when most of the hunting takes place. Expect to find *Hirsch* (venison), *Wildschwein* (wild boar), *Gems* (chamois) and *Reh* (roe deer) on menus around this time. Come early autumn, the hills and forests are crawling with Austrians, with their bums up and their heads down, searching for *Schwammerl/Pilze* (mushrooms). In May, it's hard to avoid *Spargel* (asparagus), but why would you want to miss this crisp, freshly picked stick of goodness? It's often served with a rich, creamy sauce.

St Martin's Day (November 11) is traditionally marked with the serving of *Gans* (goose), St Martin's symbol. The tasty dish is available the entire month of November. Just before *Weihnachten* (Christmas), you might like to check what's splashing in the bathtub before you dip a toe – the Central European tradition of keeping a live *Karpfen* (carp) in store for Christmas festivities is not unknown in Austria. Seasonal celebrations are complemented with *Vanillekipferl*, crescent cookies which have a special place in the hearts of all Austrians.

WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

Restaurants are by far the most common place to eat. Quite often a rural inn will call itself a *Gasthof* or *Gasthaus* to denote a more traditional setting and décor. Restaurants usually open from 11am or 11.30am to midnight (kitchen till 10.30pm); some close the kitchen, or even the premises, during downtime from 2.30pm to 5pm or 6pm.

Heurigen are fairly inexpensive places to eat in wine areas and the capital. Food is usually buffet style and consists of hearty, Austrian cuisine, and is

Ewald Plachutta and Christoph Wagner put together their favourite Austrian dishes in *The 100 Classic Dishes of Austria*, published by Deuticke.

Legend has it that the origin of the humble bagel dates back to 1683, when a Viennese baker created a *Beugal* (stirrup) for Polish King Jan III Sobieski in celebration of his victory over the Turks.

The Wiener schnitzel is not in fact from Vienna; it was brought back to the capital from Milan in 1848 by Field Marshal Radetzky's chief cook.

available from around 11am to 11pm. Take note that a *Kaffeehaus* (coffee house) or *Café* is very different from a *Café-Konditorei*. A coffee house/café serves coffee, tea and other beverages, as well as light warm and cold meals and sometimes a few pastries and cakes. By contrast, a *Café-Konditorei* specialises in cakes, often baked on the premises, and will usually serve coffee too. While it is customary to linger for hours, read the newspapers from the racks, drink a wine or beer and play chess or cards in a coffee house/café, this would be out of line in a *Café-Konditorei*. Hours tend to be different too. A *Café-Konditorei* keeps close to standard shop hours, whereas coffee houses and cafés open their doors early, often between 7am and 8am, and close from anything between 7pm and 1am, depending on the market they're catering to, or even morph into very late-night drinking dens.

In mountainous areas, *Hütte* or *Almhütte* (alpine huts) are atmospheric places for basic Austrian cuisine in stunning surroundings.

Quick Eats

If you need something in a hurry, a *Würstel Stand* (sausage stand) is never too far away. Deli shops sometimes offer hot food, such as spit-roasted chicken (an Austrian favourite). Supermarket delis will always have sandwiches for those on the run.

VEGETARIANS & VEGANS

Vegetarians will do just fine in Vienna, and in Austria's other large cities there are at least a couple of vegetarian restaurants to choose from. In the countryside however, things can get extremely meaty. Many places now offer at least one vegetarian dish, but don't count on it every time; you may have to rely on a combination of salads and side dishes to create a full meal. Note that most soups are made with meat stock.

EATING WITH KIDS

Feeding the little 'uns will prove no problem in Austria; in general, only the very upmarket restaurants have a problem with children. Some restaurants have children's menus but most will be willing to serve smaller portions if you ask nicely.

See p383 for more on travelling with children.

HABITS & CUSTOMS

In general, Austrians are a polite and respectable bunch at the table, and tend to take their time over meals. More often than not, the next course will not be served until everyone at the table has finished, so don't ramble on to your neighbour while the rest of the diners are waiting. Nonsmokers (and some smokers) may be annoyed with smoking habits in restaurants; many smokers won't bat an eyelid lighting up while you're still only half way through your Wiener schnitzel.

Austrians certainly like a drink, and the country has its fair share of teenage binge drinkers and alcoholics, but your average Austrian tends to take his or her time getting sozzled. Every drink bought deserves a *Prost* (cheers) and eye contact with your fellow drinkers; not following this custom is thought of as rude. Even worse, it's believed to result in bad sex for the next seven years.

COOKING COURSES

Places offering cooking courses are rather thin on the ground, but if you're keen to learn how to bread a schnitzel the Austrian way, or roll the perfect *Knödel*, there are a few places in Vienna to check out:

Babettes (Map pp116-17; ☎ 01-585 51 65; www.babettes.at, in German; 04, Schleifmühlgasse 17; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat) A food-lover's dream, with a zillion cookbooks and spices, plus cooking courses to boot.

Hollerei (Map pp116-17; ☎ 01-892 33 56; www.hollerei.at, in German; 15, Hollergasse 9; ☎ Mon-Sat) Conducts regular courses on veg cooking with style.

Restaurant zur Traube (☎ 02738-229 80; kochschule@moerwald.at; Kleine Zeile 13-17, 3483 Feuersbrunn) In rural Feuersbrunn (a short hop from Vienna). Offers seminars and courses almost weekly on Austrian and international cuisine.

Wrenkh Kochsalon & Restaurant (Map pp120-1; ☎ 01-533 15 26; www.wrenkh.at, in German; 01, Bauernmarkt 10; ☎ lunch & dinner) Runs some unusual courses: its *Zurufküche* (cooking calling) consists of lining up an array of ingredients and experimenting in style and dish, while *Kochsalon* courses are group cooking events whose multicourse outcome you enjoy together.

In Styria, try the **Erste Steirische Kochschule** (☎ 03135-522 47; www.kochschule.at, in German; Hauptstrasse 168) in Kalsdorf, or **Gasthof Vitalpension Hubinger** (☎ 03861-81 14; www.hubinger.com; 8633 Etmissl 25) in Etmissl for traditional Austrian cooking courses.

EAT YOUR WORDS

Want to know your *Germknödel* from your *Grammelknödel*? Your *Wiener Bachhendl* from your Wiener schnitzel? Get behind the cuisine scene, by getting to know the language.

Useful Phrases

Can you recommend ...?

<i>Können Sie ... empfehlen?</i>	ker-nen zee ... emp-fay-len
a restaurant	
<i>ein Restaurant</i>	ain res-to-rang
a bar/pub	
<i>eine Kneipe</i>	ai-ne knai-pe

A table for ..., please.

<i>Einen Tisch für ..., bitte.</i>	ai-nen tish für ... bi-te
------------------------------------	---------------------------

I'd like to reserve a table for ...

<i>Ich möchte einen Tisch für ... reservieren.</i>	ikh merk-h-te ai-nen tish für ... re-zer-vee-ren
--	--

(two) people

<i>(zwei) Personen</i>	(tsvai) per-zaw-nen
------------------------	---------------------

(eight) o'clock

<i>(acht) Uhr</i>	(akt) oor
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Do you have ...?

<i>Haben Sie ...?</i>	hah-ben zee ...?
a menu in English	
<i>eine englische Speisekarte</i>	ai-ne eng-li-she shpai-ze-kar-te
vegetarian food	
<i>vegetarisches Essen</i>	ve-ge-tah-ri-shes e-sen

What would you recommend?

<i>Was empfehlen Sie?</i>	vas emp-fay-len zee
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I'd like a local speciality.

<i>Ich möchte etwas Typisches aus der Region.</i>	ikh merk-h-te et-vas ti-pi-shes ows dair re-gyawn
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I'd like the set menu, please.

<i>Ich hätte gerne das Tagesmenü, bitte.</i>	ikh ha-te ger-ne das ta-ges- me-noo bi-te
--	---

What are the daily specials?

<i>Was sind die Tagesspezialitäten?</i>	vas zind dee ta-gez-spe-tsya-lee-te-ten
---	---

Classic dishes and their recipes can be found on the English website www.austrianfoodandwine.com.

Food history, wine glossary and menu guide; it's all here under one website: www.globalgourmet.com/destinations/austria.

Get Elisabeth Mayer-Browne's take on the Austrian kitchen in the *Best of Austrian Cuisine*, published by Hippocrene.

I'm a vegetarian.

Ich bin Vegetarier(in). (m/f) ikh bin ve-ge-tah-ri-e-r/ve-ge-tah-ri-e-rin

Is it cooked in meat stock?

Ist es in Fleischbrühe? ist es in flaish-brü-e

What's in that dish?

Was ist in diesem Gericht? vas ist in dee-zem ge-rikht

I'd like ..., please.

Ich möchte ..., bitte. ikh merkh-te ... bi-te

Can I have some more ... please.

Bitte noch ein ... bi-te nokh ain ...

That was delicious!

Das war sehr lecker! das vahr zair le-ker

The bill, please.

Die Rechnung, bitte. dee rekh-nung, bi-te

Bon appétit.

Güten Appetit. goo-ten a-pe-teet

Cheers!

Prost! prawst!

Menu Decoder**SOUPS & STARTERS**

Frittattensuppe (free-ta-ten-zu-pe) – clear soup with chives and strips of pancake

Leberknödelsuppe (lay-ber-kner-del-zu-pe) – liver dumpling soup

Rindsuppe (rind-zu-pe) – clear beef soup

MAINS

Backhendl (bakh-hen-del) – fried breaded chicken

Bauernschmaus (bow-ern-shmows) – platter of cold meats

Grammelknödel (gra-mel-kner-del) – pork dumplings

Gulasch/Gulas (goo-lash/goo-las) – thick beef soup

Schinkenfleckerl (shin-ken-flek-erl) – oven-baked ham and noodle casserole

Schweinsbraten (shvains-bra-ten) – roast pork

Semmelknödel (ze-mel-kner-del) – bread dumplings

Stelze (shitel-tse) – roast hock

Tafelspitz (ta-fel-spits) – boiled beef, potatoes and horseradish sauce

Tiroler Gröstl (tee-ro-ler grer-stel) – potatoes, onions and flecks of meat fried in a pan

Wiener schnitzel (vee-ner shni-tsel) – breaded veal cutlets (sometimes with pork or turkey)

Zwiebelrostbraten (tswee-bel-rost-bra-ten) – roast beef slices with gravy and fried onions

DESSERTS

Apfelstrudel (ap-fel-stroo-del) – apple strudel

Germknödel (jairm-kner-del) – yeast dumplings with poppy seeds

Kaiserschmarrn (kai-zer-shmar-ren) – sweet pancake with raisins

Marillenknödel (ma-ree-len-kner-del) – apricot dumplings

Mohr im Hemd (morr im hemd) – chocolate pudding with whipped cream and chocolate sauce

Palatschinken (pa-lat-shing-ken) – crepes

Topfenknödel (top-fen-kner-del) – cheese dumplings

Food Glossary**MEAT & FISH**

bacon	<i>Speck</i>	shpek
beef	<i>Rindfleisch</i>	rint-flaish
brains	<i>Hirn</i>	heern
carp	<i>Karpfen</i>	karp-fen
chicken	<i>Huhn/Hendl</i>	hoon/hen-dl

duck	<i>Ente</i>	en-te
eel	<i>Aal</i>	ahl
fish	<i>Fisch</i>	fish
goose	<i>Gans</i>	gans
ham	<i>Schinken</i>	shing-ken
hare	<i>Hase</i>	hah-ze
lamb	<i>Lamm</i>	lam
liver	<i>Leber</i>	lay-ber
minced meat	<i>Hackfleisch</i>	hak-flaish
plaice	<i>Scholle</i>	sho-le
pork	<i>Schweinsfleisch</i>	shvai-ne-flaish
salmon	<i>Lachs</i>	laks
tongue	<i>Zunge</i>	tsung-e
trout	<i>Forelle</i>	fo-re-le
tuna	<i>Thunfisch</i>	toon-fish
turkey	<i>Puter</i>	poo-ter
veal	<i>Kalbfleisch</i>	kalp-flaish
venison	<i>Hirsch</i>	hirsh

VEGETABLES & FRUIT

apple	<i>Apfel</i>	ap-fel
apricot	<i>Marille/Aprikose</i>	ma-ree-le/a-pri-ko-ze
asparagus	<i>Spargel</i>	shpar-gel
banana	<i>Banane</i>	ba-nah-ne
beans	<i>Bohnen</i>	baw-nen
beetroot	<i>Rote Rübe</i>	raw-te- rü-be
cabbage	<i>Kohl</i>	hawl
carrots	<i>Karotten</i>	ka-ro-ten
cherries	<i>Kirschen</i>	kir-shen
corn	<i>Mais</i>	mais
cucumber,		
gherkin	<i>Gurke</i>	gur-ke
garlic	<i>Knoblauch</i>	knawp-lowkh
grapes	<i>Trauben</i>	traw-ben
green beans	<i>Fisolen</i>	fee-zo-len
mushrooms	<i>Champignons/ Schwammerl/Pilze</i>	sham-pee-nyon/ shva-mer/pil-tse
onions	<i>Zwiebeln</i>	tsvee-beln
pear	<i>Birne</i>	bir-ne
peas	<i>Erbsen</i>	erp-sen
peppers	<i>Paprika</i>	pap-ri-kah
pineapple	<i>Ananas</i>	a-na-nas
plums	<i>Zwetschgen</i>	tsvetsh-gen
potatoes	<i>Erdäpfel/Kartoffeln</i>	ert-ep-fel/kar-to-feln
raspberries	<i>Himbeeren</i>	him-bee-ren
spinach	<i>Spinat</i>	shpi-naht
strawberries	<i>Erdbeeren</i>	ert-bee-ren
tomatoes	<i>Paradeiser/Tomaten</i>	pa-ra-dai-ser/to-mah-ten

OTHER ITEMS

bread	<i>Brot</i>	brawt
bread roll	<i>Semmel</i>	ze-mel
butter	<i>Butter</i>	bu-ter
cheese	<i>Käse</i>	kay-ze

chocolate	<i>Schokolade</i>	<i>sho-ko-lah-de</i>
coffee	<i>Kaffee</i>	<i>ka-fay</i>
cream	<i>Schlagobers/ Rahm/Sahne</i>	<i>shlag-o-berz/ rahm/zah-ne</i>
dumplings	<i>Knödel</i>	<i>kner-del</i>
eggs	<i>Eier</i>	<i>ai-er</i>
honey	<i>Honig</i>	<i>haw-nikh</i>
jam	<i>Marmelade</i>	<i>mar-me-lah-de</i>
mustard	<i>Senf</i>	<i>zenf</i>
nut	<i>Nuss</i>	<i>nus</i>
oil	<i>Öl</i>	<i>erl</i>
pepper	<i>Pfeffer</i>	<i>pfe-fer</i>
rice	<i>Reis</i>	<i>rais</i>
salad	<i>Salat</i>	<i>za-laht</i>
salt	<i>Salz</i>	<i>zalts</i>
sugar	<i>Zucker</i>	<i>tsu-ker</i>

COOKING TERMS

baked	<i>gebacken</i>	<i>ge-ba-ken</i>
boiled	<i>gekocht</i>	<i>ge-kokht</i>
crispy	<i>knusprig</i>	<i>k-noo-sprik</i>
fresh	<i>frisch</i>	<i>frish</i>
fried	<i>gebraten</i>	<i>ge-brah-ten</i>
grilled	<i>gegrillte</i>	<i>ge-grilt</i>
homemade	<i>selbst gemacht</i>	<i>selbst ge-makht</i>
roasted	<i>braten</i>	<i>bra-ten</i>
steamed	<i>gedämpft</i>	<i>ge-dempft</i>
smoked	<i>geräuchert</i>	<i>ge-roy-khert</i>
sour	<i>sauer</i>	<i>zow-er</i>
sweet	<i>süß</i>	<i>züs</i>

UTENSILS

ashtray	<i>Aschenbecher</i>	<i>a-shen-be-kher</i>
cup	<i>Tasse</i>	<i>ta-se</i>
fork	<i>Gabel</i>	<i>gah-bel</i>
glass	<i>Glas</i>	<i>glahs</i>
knife	<i>Messer</i>	<i>me-ser</i>
plate	<i>Teller</i>	<i>te-ler</i>
spoon	<i>Löffel</i>	<i>ler-fel</i>
toothpick	<i>Zahnstocher</i>	<i>tsahn-shto-kher</i>

Environment

Landlocked in the heart of Europe, Austria may be small but she's a country magnet, surrounded by Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Despite her diminutive size, she's an astounding natural beauty who revels in diversity: from the green vines of Burgenland to Lower Austria's castle-speckled hills, Tyrol's voluptuous mountains to the pure lakes of Salzkammergut. In topographic terms, it's as though someone chalked a line straight down the middle and asked all the Alps to shuffle to the west and all the flats to slide to the east, so stark is the contrast in this land of highs and lows.

THE LAND

Think of Austria and invariably the first thing to pop into your head are mountains. Of the 83,858 sq km of land squeezed within Austria's borders almost two-thirds are mountainous. The glaciers that began carving up the landscape some 2½ million years ago played a big hand in softly sculpting the country's distinctive shape of mountains, valleys and lakes.

Austria's Alps can be split into three mountain ranges running in a west-east direction. The Northern Limestone Alps, bordering Germany, reach nearly 3000m and extend almost as far east as the Wienerwald (Vienna Woods). The valley of the Inn River separates them from the High or Central Alps, the highest peaks in Austria dwarfed by the majestic summit of Grossglockner (3797m). The Southern Limestone Alps, which include the Karawanken Range, form a natural barrier with Italy and Slovenia.

The rest of the country is a mixed bag of alpine foothills, lowlands and granite highlands. By far the most fertile stretch is the Danube Valley, growing 90% of Austria's food. In the northeast the landscape switches to rolling hills and dense forest, thinning out to the east in the pancake-flat Pannonian plains. What these regions lack in mind-blowing scenery they make up for with mile upon mile of vineyards and farmland.

Austria's greatest feature outside the Alps is the thoroughly un-blue Danube (Donau), flowing west-east from Germany through the Danube Valley and Vienna, and eventually exiting in Slovakia. Joining the Danube as it enters Austria is the turquoise Inn River. To the southeast, the main waterways are the Mur and the Drau.

Aside from rivers, Austria is riddled with lakes and it's hard to move without toppling into one in the Salzkammergut region and Carinthia. The country's most unusual lake is Neusiedler See in Burgenland, Austria's lowest point (115m) and one of Europe's few steppe lakes. It's an outdoorsy haven for ornithologists, water-sport fanatics and cyclists.

WILDLIFE

Austria has abundant wildlife and while you'd be lucky to glimpse an elusive lynx or golden eagle in the Alps, there's a good chance you might spy marmots, chamois and ibex. Bird-watchers flock to the banks of Neusiedler See to spot the 150 different species of birds that breed in the area. During the Europe-Africa migration period, the same number of species drop in on the lake during their flight south.

Animals

The critters of Austria's alpine regions are the most intriguing for visitors. There you'll find the ibex, a mountain goat with curved horns, which was

www.naturschutz.at is a one-stop shop for info on Austria's landscape, flora and fauna. It's in German, but there are a few links to English sites too.

Get your skates on at Neusiedler See. When the salt lake freezes it becomes Central Europe's biggest natural ice rink, beckoning anyone that fancies a teeth-chattering twirl.

Cameras and binoculars at the ready... Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Höhe in the Hohe Tauern National Park is a prime place to spot ibex, chamois and marmots in the late afternoon.

A right pair of love birds, golden eagles stay together for life. See www.birdlife.at, in German, to find out more about these elusive raptors and other Austrian birdlife.

at one stage under threat but fortunately is now breeding again. It's the master of mountain climbing and migrates to 3000m or more come July. The chamois, a small antelope more common than the ibex, is equally at home scampering around on mountain sides. It can leap an astounding 4m vertically and its hooves have rubber-like soles and rigid outer rims – ideal for maintaining a good grip on loose rocks.

The marmot, a fluffy rodent related to the squirrel, is also indigenous to the Alps. It's a sociable animal that lives in colonies of about two dozen members. Like meerkats, marmots regularly post sentries, which stand around on their hind legs looking alert. They whistle once when a predator from the air (like an eagle) and twice when a predator from the ground (such as a fox) is approaching and the whole tribe scurries to safety down a network of burrows. Winged fauna in the Alps include golden eagles, vultures – both bearded and griffin – and a multitude of colourful butterflies.

In the east the picture is completely different. The Neusiedler See, a large steppe lake, is a unique sanctuary for numerous species of bird. Commonly spotted are avocets, Eurasian curlews, yellow wagtails, short-eared owls, great bustards and white storks.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Like most European countries, Austria has its fair share of endangered species, including the country's 'flagship' species below – those that stand out in a list that's far too long. For more information, consult the *Rote Liste* (red list; www.umweltbundesamt.at), a comprehensive list of endangered species collated by the Umweltbundesamt (Federal Environment Agency).

Austria's most endangered species is the *Bayerische Kurzoehrmaus* (Bavarian pine vole), which is endemic to Tyrol and found only in six localities. Following close behind is the *Kaiseradler* (imperial eagle), at one time extinct in Austria but fortunately staging a comeback through re-immigration. The *Triel* (stone curlew), a rare bird found only in eastern Austria, is also under threat, as is the *Europäische Sumpfschildkröte* (European pond terrapin), which inhabits the Danube floodplains. The *Europäische Hornotter* (long-nosed viper) may be a venomous snake at home in Carinthia, but humans are a far greater threat to its survival than its bite will ever be to our survival.

Although still teetering on the brink of extinction, the country's population of brown bears now reaches double figures (estimated at around 15 to 20). This is due to the efforts of organisations like Austria's Brown Bear Life Project and the WWF who have invested millions of euros into bringing the bear back to the Alps. While rarely sighted, brown bears are said to roam in central and southern mountainous regions such as Carinthia and Styria.

Plants

An incredible 47% of Austria is forested, making it one of the most wooded countries in Europe. At low altitudes expect to find shady oak and beech forests; at higher elevations conifers, such as pine, spruce and larch, take over. At around 2200m trees yield to alpine meadows and beyond 3000m, only mosses and lichens cling to the stark crags.

A highlight of the Alps is its flowers, which add a palette of colour to the high pastures from June to September. The flowers here are built to cope with harsh conditions: long roots counter strong winds, bright colours attract few insects and specially developed leaves protect against frost and dehydration. By far the most popular is the edelweiss, which is a white, star-shaped flower found on rocky crags and crevices. Although most alpine

flowers are protected and should not be picked, many young, love-struck men have risked life and limb to bring such a flower to the lady of their choice. Delicate orchids, arnica, alpine roses and purple gentian also carpet the slopes in summer.

Of particular note again is the Unesco biosphere reserve of Neusiedler See, whose western shores are lined with a vast, almost impenetrable belt of reeds.

NATIONAL PARKS

For a country of such extraordinary natural beauty, it may come as a surprise to learn that only 2.9% of Austria falls within the boundaries of national parks. Within this 2.9%, commercial operations such as traditional farming and hunting, are still ongoing. However, the national park authorities have managed to strike a good balance between preserving the natural wildlife and keeping local economic endeavours alive. The website www.nationalparksaustria.at has links to all six national parks and a brochure in English to download.

Of Austria's national parks, Hohe Tauern National Park is the most spectacular and frequented hands-down. Neusiedler See-Seewinkel takes second place, due to its closeness to Vienna and the plethora of water sports activities available there.

Aside from the country's national parks, protected areas and reserves are dotted all over Austria and land protected by nature conservation law totals a more impressive 35.5%, which covers landscapes from forest to the Alps and Pannonian steppe.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

On the whole, Austrians are an ecofriendly bunch who treat their backyard better than most nations. They're well informed about environmental issues and the government, which spends 3% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

The Dreiländereck in Villach, Carinthia, is the point where Austria, Slovenia and Italy meet. It's quite an experience to hike to the summit and kick back in three countries at the same time.

AUSTRIA'S NATIONAL PARKS

Park (area)	Features	Activities	Best Time to Visit	Page
Donau-Auen (93 sq km)	floodplains, meadows, still rivers; beavers, turtles, catfish	walking, cycling, boating	summer	p180
Gesäuse (110 sq km)	mountains, gorges, meadows, forests; owls, eagles, falcons, woodpeckers	rock climbing, hiking, rafting, caving, mountain biking	spring, summer, autumn	p243
Hohe Tauern (1787 sq km)	mountains; ibex, marmots, bearded vultures, golden eagles	hiking, rock & mountain climbing, skiing, canyoning, kayaking, paragliding	year-round	p310
Kalkalpen (210 sq km)	forests, gorges, mountains; lynx, golden eagles, owls, woodpeckers	cycling, hiking, rock climbing, cross-country skiing	year-round	p213
Neusiedler See-Seewinkel (97 sq km)	saline steppe lake, salt marshes; storks, great bustards, avocets, owls	sailing, swimming, cycling, walking, bird-watching	summer	p193
Thayatal (13 sq km)	rocky outcrops, virgin forest; otters, eagles, storks, bats	walking	spring, summer, autumn	p178

on environmental measures, has happily signed international agreements to reduce pollution and preserve natural resources. See the Getting Started chapter (p21) for practical tips on limiting environmental impact.

Recycling is big in this country; Austrians are diligent about separating recycling material from other waste, and the practice is very much ingrained in society. You'll see recycling bins for metal, paper, plastics and glass on many street corners, and most neighbourhoods have stations for hazardous materials. Some glass containers, in particular beer bottles, have a return value that can be claimed at supermarkets; look for *Flaschen Rücknahme* (bottle return) machines.

Measures have been in place for years to protect the fragile ecosystem of alpine regions, yet some forest degradation has taken place due to air and soil pollution caused by emissions from industrial plants, exhaust fumes and the use of agricultural chemicals. The government has moved to minimise such pollutants by banning leaded petrol, assisting businesses in waste avoidance and promoting natural forms of energy, such as wind and solar power. Wind farms are prevalent in the flat plains in the east of the country and home owners are encouraged through tax breaks to install solar panels. Some buses are gas powered and environmentally friendly trams are a feature of many cities.

One of Austria's biggest environmental concerns is not within the country's sphere of control. In 1978, Austrians voted against developing a nuclear power industry, prompting the federal Nuclear Prohibition Law. The Czech Republic thought otherwise, and in 2000 its Temelín nuclear reactor was brought online just 60km from the Austrian border. Many environmentalists were appalled and their concerns were not unfounded; 2002 saw shut-downs, due to faulty valves and a pipe being welded on incorrectly. While no radiation leaks have yet been reported, environmental agencies believe it is only a matter of time. Border blockades and protests flared again in 2007 when the Czech government announced intentions to withdraw from the bilateral Melk Agreement, which monitors the power station's safety and environmental impact. The dispute is ongoing.

Melting ice is a hot topic in the Hohe Tauern National Park. The Pasterze Glacier has shrunk to half its size over the past 150 years and is predicted to disappear entirely within 100 years.

Want to know more about Austrian ski resorts stepping up efforts to save the environment? Check out www.savesnow.com.

GREENER SHADE OF WHITE

In a bid to offset the impact of skiing, plenty of Austrian resorts are now taking the green run by implementing ecofriendly policies. The following are green giants that aim to tread lightly:

- **Lech** (p379) in Vorarlberg scores top points for its biomass communal heating plant, the photovoltaic panels that operate its chairlifts and its strict recycling policies.
- **Zell am See** (p313) launched Austria's first ISO-certified cable car at the Kitzsteinhorn glacier. It operates a free ski bus in winter and runs an ecological tree and grass planting scheme.
- **Kitzbühel** (p351) operates green building and climate policies and is taking measures to reduce traffic and the use of non-renewable energy sources.
- **St Anton am Arlberg** (p362) shows its green streak by creating protected areas to reduce erosion and pumping out artificial snow without chemicals. Its excellent train connections mean fewer cars.
- **Ischgl** (p360) uses renewable energy, recycles in all hotels, lifts and restaurants and has a night-time driving ban from 11pm to 6am.
- **Mayrhofen** (p348) operates its lifts on hydroelectricity, separates all waste and has free ski buses to reduce traffic in the village.

SEPP HOLZER: THE REBEL FARMER

With its steep inclines and average temperature of 4.2°C, Ramingstein in Salzburger Land has been dubbed Austria's Siberia – cold and inhospitable. Yet precisely the reverse is true at Krameterhof, where kiwis, figs and lemons hang heavy on the trees at an elevation of 1500m. The green-fingered brainchild of this alpine Garden of Eden is Sepp Holzer, alias 'the rebel farmer'. His concept is permaculture using self-sustaining agricultural systems. Once planted, Holzer does not weed, water, prune or use pesticides. 'There's no need – nature is perfect', he says. 'It's humans that make the mistakes'.

An inquisitive child, Holzer observed and experimented with nature to discover that: 'every leaf, every stone, every plant, every insect has an important role to play'. Together with his wife, he runs the 50-hectare farm according to self-sufficient ecosystems; there are terraces to reduce erosion and catch rain, rocks to trap and emit heat, and foraging pigs to till the wheat fields. Carrots and lettuces grow wildly here not in ruler-straight lines and the cherries are plump despite 25cm of new snow a few days ago. 'I work with nature, not against it', Holzer shrugs. And the results are clear: 18 times the average yield using 10% of the energy.

Holzer has scattered the seeds of permaculture far and wide, with international projects including a self-sufficient orphanage in Thailand and a recultivation programme in Scotland. But it's not all been a bed of roses back home. 'People have branded me a liar, a mad farmer that says *Guten Morgen* to the rain worms. I don't talk to worms, but I do try to put myself in the place of animals and plants to consider what they like and need.' He has been fined and threatened for planting cereal crops in the forest, but sticks to his guns against monoculture. 'Deer eat bark from randomly chosen trees because they feel trapped and instinctively know that if trees fall, light will allow other species to grow. Others mock me, but my forest is still standing when a storm comes. Anyone that thinks they are above nature or can control it is a fool.'

In his summer seminars (see www.krameterhof.at, in German), Holzer encourages people to abandon textbook theories and open their eyes to what nature is telling them; the philosophy is careful thought, minimal action. 'Children should grow up understanding that earth is not dirt but the foundations of life', Holzer stresses. 'It's time to stop the social brainwashing and show some civil courage. Those that don't are slaves in their own farms', he adds. There's no doubting the wisdom in Holzer's words or the method in his madness. He may be a rebel, but he does have a cause.

With global warming on the increase, Austria's ski pistes are on the decrease. A UNEP report on climate change published in 2007 warned that rising temperatures could mean that 75% of alpine glaciers will disappear within the next 45 years, and that dozens of low-lying ski resorts such as Kitzbühel (760m) will be completely cut off from their slopes by 2030. Forecasts suggest that the snowline will shift from 1200m to 1800m by 2100, a prediction that is supported by recent mild winters in the Alps. As well as the impact on Austria's tourist industry, the melting snow is sure to have other knock-on effects, including erosion, floods and an increased risk of avalanches.

Austria's lucrative ski industry is a double-edged sword; on the one hand resorts face mounting pressure to develop and build higher up on the peaks to survive, while on the other their very survival is threatened by global warming. For many years, ski resorts have not done the planet many favours: mechanically grading pistes disturbs wildlife and causes erosion, artificial snow affects native flora and fauna, and trucking in snow increases emissions. However, many Austrian resorts (see opposite) now realise that they are walking a thin tightrope and are mitigating their environmental impact with renewable hydroelectric power, biological wastewater treatment and ecological buildings.

Take the plunge at Montafon's Mountain Beach (www.mountainbeach.at, in German). The award-winning complex is the last word in eco-bathing, sheltering two enormous pools filled with spring water and cleaned by micro-organisms.

Outdoor Activities

Austria is a great place to get into the outdoors, with a gigantic backyard full of spiky peaks, clear lakes and raging rivers custom-made for vigorous activities. Skiing and walking (p82) are perennial favourites and share the limelight with gravity-defying sports designed to make you scream. Feeling daring? Catch thermals with a parachute or abseil down a waterfall, bounce down the Alps in a snow tube or on the back of a bone-shaking mountain bike.

If that sounds too hair-raising, there's drama to be had in silent moves – swishing through frozen woodlands on cross-country trails and finding your (very big) feet in a pair of snowshoes. Snow or shine, this country is hyperactive.

WINTER

SKIING & SNOWBOARDING

Go to Austria in winter and you'll find that skiing and snowboarding still top the list of ways to amuse yourself with an enormous pile of snow. The Austrian Alps are fine specimens of mountains: high enough for one to hurl down black runs in big resorts like Mayrhofen (p348), low enough to give beginners the skitterbug on the nursery slopes in chocolate-box villages such as Filzmoos (p286). Almost every Austrian you meet has skied since they were knee-high and the average four-year-old will ski circles around you on the slopes. The best skiing is in the western reaches of the country, though most resorts in the Alps have T-bars, lifts and cable cars.

While this book features plenty of skiing information, it's not a dedicated skiing guide. Austria has hundreds of excellent ski resorts and no attempt has been made to cover them exhaustively. Many are now taking steps to improve their green credentials and minimise their impact on the environment (p72). For a detailed rundown of resorts based primarily on skiing criteria, consult a specialist book or magazine, such as the UK's *The Good Skiing & Snowboarding Guide*. More information on ski resorts can be provided by Österreich Werbung (p391) and the resort tourist offices.

Information

The skiing season kicks off in December and lasts till late April in the high-altitude resorts. The biggest crowds descend on the slopes at Christmas-New Year and in February half-term holidays. May to June and late October to mid-December fall between the summer and winter seasons. Some cable cars will be closed for maintenance and many hotels and restaurants will be shut, but you'll avoid the crowds and find prices at their lowest.

Austria offers some of the finest year-round skiing in the Alps at eight glaciers: Dachstein, Mölltaler, Hintertuxer (p349), Pitztaler, Kaunertaler, Sölden (p357), Kitzsteinhorn-Kaprun (p313) and Stubai (p345). However, most alpine glaciers are now receding in the face of global warming, and snow coverage is less secure at lower elevations in early and late season.

Vorarlberg, Salzburger Land and Tyrol are the most popular destinations, but there is also skiing in Upper Austria, Carinthia and even Lower Austria. Ski passes cover the cost of mountain transport, including ski buses between the ski areas. Pass prices for little-known places may be as little as half that hanging in the jet-set resorts. You're usually better off

buying half-/full-/multiple-day passes. Count on around €25 to €40 for a one-day ski pass, with substantial reductions for longer-term passes.

Rental prices for carving skis, stocks and shoes are around €20 to €35 for one day for downhill skiing, with reduced rates offered over longer periods; snowboards are roughly the same as carving skis. Most ski resorts have one or more ski schools. Individual tuition and group lessons are available and will normally set you back around €250/60 per day respectively. The more days you take, the cheaper it gets.

Ski Regions & Resorts

The following are the pick of Austria's ski regions and resorts, but they're just a taste of what's up there. Weekly ski passes are quoted here at high-season rates; check with local tourist offices or turn to the regional chapters for details on possible discounts.

SPORTWELT AMADÉ (SALZBURGER LAND)

Salzburg's Sportwelt Amadé (www.sportwelt-amade.com) lures skiers with a whopping 865km of snow-sure slopes in 25 resorts. Among them are Radstadt (p287) and Filzmoos (p286). Filzmoos lies at the foot of the Dachstein massif and is a low-key, family-oriented resort with gentle skiing and village charm. The ski schools are in the heart of the resort, lift queues are short and the pistes uncrowded. Off-slope activities include 50km of winter walking trails and romantic horse-drawn sleigh rides. A weekly pass is €196.

EUROPA SPORTREGION (HOHE TAUERN NATIONAL PARK)

The vibrant resorts of Zell am See and Kaprun (p312) form the Europa Sportregion (www.europasportregion.info) and share 132km of pistes. The Schmittenhöhe challenges experts on nine black runs, while the gentle slopes of the Maiskogel are suited to families and novices. Out-of-season skiing is possible at Kitzsteinhorn glacier and snowboarders should check out the rails, kickers and boxes at the plateau. With its *belle époque* hotels and attractive lakefront, Zell am See retains an authentic feel unlike many purpose-built resorts. The entire region affords gorgeous views of the glacier-capped Hohe Tauern mountain range. A six-day pass costs €179.

SILVRETTA ARENA-ISCHGL (TYROL)

Located in the Paznauntal, Ischgl (p360) forms part of the Silvretta Arena and is swiftly carving its name as Ibiza in the Alps, thanks to its vibrant après-ski and clubbing. The powder is good, the lifts are ultramodern and the skiing mostly intermediate, with 230km of pistes for powder junkies to play on. Those seeking big air should check out the half-pipe and snowboarding park. The Silvretta Ski Pass costs €247 for seven days; it covers not only Ischgl, but also the neighbouring resorts of Galtür, Kappl and Samnaun (in Switzerland).

KITZBÜHEL-KIRCHBERG (TYROL)

The twin ski resorts of Kitzbühel (p350) and Kirchberg are among the best-known in Austria. Kitzbühel attracts the champagne crowd to the swanky hotels and restaurants in its medieval heart, while Kirchberg is more relaxed. They share 150km of prepared pistes and are linked by the 3S cable car at Pangelstein. A fine mix of intermediate and advanced, the slopes include the nerve-splintering Streif run. Snowboarders are well catered for at Kitzbühler Horn's fun park with a half-pipe, kickers and self-timer course. The only downside is Kitzbühel's comparatively low altitude, which means snow is

A great introduction to the never-ending list of outdoor activities on offer in Austria is the national tourist board's website www.austria.info, in German.

Get your skates on in Vienna for the Friday night skate sessions from May to September. Like-minded bladers meet up at 10pm on Heldenplatz. For route details, see www.fridaynightskating.at, in German.

Tee time! Austria's golfing pros give a whole new meaning to the word 'snowball' when they hit the powder for the World Golf Championships in Abtenau near Salzburg in February.

Get clicking on www.bergfex.com for piste maps and details of every ski resort in Austria, plus info on summer activities such as hiking and mountain biking.

no longer guaranteed. A weekly pass covering this and nearby ski areas (including Wilde Kaiser-Brixental) costs €202.

ZILLERTAL-MAYRHOFEN (TYROL)

Mayrhofen (p348) in the Zillertal combines steep slopes with broad pistes perfect for carving and cruising. Its varied terrain for skiers and boarders includes enough black runs to keep daredevils on their toes. Austria's undisputed king of scary skiing reigns here – the mogul-free and kamikaze-like Harakiri, with a 78-degree gradient that catapults skiers into the unknown (many take one look and judiciously turn back). Even when snow lies thin on the ground in Mayrhofen, the resort's easy access to the Hintertux Glacier means plenty of skiing is always available. The weekly Zillertal Super Ski Pass (€197.50) covers 157km of piste and 49 lifts in the Zillertal area.

ÖTZTAL-SÖLDEN (TYROL)

Sölden (p357) in the Ötztal is one of the country's highest resorts and snow coverage is superb. Most skiers that make it this far have the Big 3 in mind: a trio of 'three-thousanders' that are the ultimate in high-altitude, long-distance skiing. Experienced skiers seeking a leg-burner can attempt the Big 3 Rally, which conquers all three peaks in a marathon 50km, four-hour race. If that seems a little ambitious, the lively resort's 150km of slopes include many red and blue runs. The nearby Rettenbach and Tiefenbach glaciers are great for pre- or late-season cruising. The season here is one of the longest in Austria running from November to May and a weekly ski pass costs €228.50.

ARLBERG (TYROL/VORARLBERG)

Comprising the swish resorts of Lech (p379) and Zürs (p379) in Vorarlberg and devilish St Anton am Arlberg (p362) in Tyrol, the Arlberg (www.skiarlberg.at) features 276km of groomed slopes. Lech and Zürs mainly offer red and blue runs, although there is some trickier off-piste terrain. Thrill seekers head for St Anton to ride the brand-new Galzigbahn gondola, speed down off-piste runs below Valluga and test out Rendl's half-pipe and jumps. The après-ski scene here is unrivalled in Austria. A weekly pass costs €224.

SILVRETTA NOVA-MONTAFON (VORARLBERG)

Silhouetted by Piz Buin (3312m), the Montafon ski area (p378) stretches along a valley in the southeast corner of Vorarlberg. This peaceful region has a clutch of small, laid-back resorts ideal for finding your ski legs on gentle pistes or getting off the well-bashed slopes with ski touring. Serviced by 62 lifts, the 222km of pistes mostly appeal to beginners and intermediates. Alongside downhill skiing, abundant sledding tracks and winter hiking trails make Silvretta Nova-Montafon a family favourite. A weekly pass (€198.50) covers seven resorts, including Schruns/Tschagguns, Gargellen and Gaschurn.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Locally known as *Langlauf*, cross-country skiing in Austria is considerably greener and cheaper than skiing. Skis give you the traction to walk uphill at your own pace and live the beauty of the forest and mountains in slow motion. The two main techniques are the classic lift-and-glide method on prepared *Loipen* (cross-country tracks) and the more energetic 'skating' technique. The basics are easy to master and tracks are graded from blue to black according to difficulty. It costs around €15 to €20 to rent a pair of cross-country skis for the day.

Seefeld (p345) features among Austria's top cross-country skiing destinations, with 262km of tracks crisscrossing the region and a 3km floodlit

Austrian Matthias Zsarsky penned the first skiing manual in 1897, invented the first practical ski binding and organised the first slalom competition in skiing history in 1905.

Weather and avalanche reports in Austria's ski regions are updated daily on www.lawine.at.

BEST SLOPES FOR...

- **Families** Heiligenblut (p319) for its relaxed vibe and Bobo's Kids' Club; Filzmoos (p286) for its central slopes and off-slope activities such as horse-drawn sleigh rides.
- **Snowboarding** For big air it has got to be Sölden (p357), with a half-pipe, two terrain parks and the Big 3 (three mountains above 3000m).
- **Cruising** Kitzbühel (p350) for its perfect blend of blues, reds and blacks.
- **Boozing** Après ski heavyweight? St Anton am Arlberg (p362) wins hands down. Hot contender? Ischgl (p360), dubbed 'Ibiza on skis' for its penchant for Europop and wild inebriation.
- **Snow-sure slopes** Topping 3000m, the Hintertux Glacier (p349) and the Kitzsteinhorn Glacier (p313) offer deep powder for pre- and post-season skiing.
- **Celebrity spotting** Lech (p379) and Zürs (p379) in Vorarlberg have earned their exclusive image with five-star pads welcoming royals, the filthy rich and supermodels on skis.
- **Ultimate scream** Mayrhofen (p348) for the breathtakingly sheer Harakiri run. It's very steep, pitch-black, and there's no turning baaaaaack...
- **Postcard scenery** Eschew the Jägermeister parties in favour of Montafon (p378), a pristine valley with diverse terrain, snug chalets and awesome Piz Buin views.
- **Vista vultures** The views of the glaciated peaks of the Hohe Tauern National Park from the slopes above Zell am See (p312) will blow you away.
- **Cross-country** Seefeld (p345) and Bad Gastein (p320) are perfect for living life in the slow lane with glorious mountain scenery and mile upon mile of cross-country trails.
- **Night skiing** Hermagor (p301) is a great base for skiing Nassfeld's slopes, where one of Europe's longest floodlit runs at 2.2km lures after-dark skiers every Wednesday night.

stretch from Seefeld to Mösern. Zell am See (p312) is hot on its heels with 200km of groomed trails providing panoramic views of the Hohe Tauern mountains. Other great resorts to test your stamina and stride include the Bad Gastein region (p320), combed with 90km of well-marked cross-country trails.

SNOWSHOEING

It's immensely satisfying to make tracks through deep, virgin snow without sinking. Originally little more than strap-on tennis rackets, snowshoes have evolved into lightweight contraptions that allow you to shuffle through twinkling woodlands in quiet exhilaration. Many resorts in the Austrian Alps have marked trails where big-footed snowshoers can head up to the hills. It costs roughly €15 to €20 to hire a set of shoes and sticks for the day.

Prime spots to explore the snowy backcountry include Mayrhofen (p348), with around 45km of prepared trails, and Kitzbühel, (p350) where routes around the Kitzbühel Horn and Reith reveal the resort's tranquil side. During the winter season, guided snowshoe hikes depart from the tourist office at 9.45am from Monday to Friday (register in advance). The treks are €5 or free to visitors with a guest card.

SUMMER

CYCLING & MOUNTAIN BIKING

For many, Austria is best explored with your bum on a seat, freewheeling through the pristine countryside. The country is blessed with miles of well-marked cycle paths that pass through lowlands to the east and

mountains to the south and west. Whether you want to tear down the Alps, pedal through river valleys or ride rings around crystalline lakes, this two-wheel-friendly land has all the right ingredients. Warmer temperatures from May to October beckon cyclists, while downhill mountain bikers head to the Alps from late June to mid-September.

The local tourist offices usually stock brochures and maps on cycling and mountain biking. Cycle clubs are another good source of information; **Argus** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 01-505 09 07; www.argus.or.at, in German; Frankenberggasse 11, Vienna) has offices throughout the country and books (also in English) on the subject. Esterbauer's (www.esterbauer.com, in German) Bikeline books cover Austria's major trails in detail; they are in German but are reasonably easy to navigate. Freytag & Berndt and Kompass hiking maps are reliable sources for cycling, as they invariably have cycle trails marked.

City and mountain bikes are available for hire in most Austrian towns and resorts. Intersport has a near monopoly on rental equipment, offering a selection of quality bikes in 140 stores throughout Austria. Day rates range from €15 to €25 and the seventh day is often free on week rentals. All prices include bicycle helmets and there's a 50% reduction on children's bikes. Those that want to plan their route ahead can search by region and book a bike online (www.intersportrent.at).

Bikes can be taken on Austrian trains ÖBB (see p400). Many of the country's leading resorts have cottoned onto the popularity of downhill mountain biking and now allow cyclists to take their bikes on the cable cars for free or for a nominal charge in the summer season – maximising enjoyment and avoiding the sweat and strain of the uphill slog!

Cycling

The Alps offer a bumpy ride, but Austria has numerous flat trails that are less gruelling and sacrifice none of the splendour. Most of the routes circle lakes or follow the course of rivers and include those outlined following.

BODENSEE TRAIL

Touching base with Vorarlberg, the vast Lake Constance (p369) is easily explored by bike on a 270km cycleway that circumnavigates the lake through Austria, Germany and Switzerland. The route offers wonderful scenery – from forests to apple orchards and vineyards – fleeting views of the Alps and picnic pitstops at pebbly bays. Marked with red-and-white signs, the trail can be split into shorter chunks (see www.bodensee-radweg.com) making it a great option for families.

DANUBE TRAIL

Shadowing the Danube (p164) for 380km from Passau to Bratislava, this route's smooth trails make it popular with easy riders. The trail cuts a path through woodlands, deep valleys and orchards. A highlight is freewheeling past terraced vineyards, lofty cliffs and baroque abbeys in the Wachau. Green-and-white signs indicate the way on both sides of the river. For more details pick up Esterbauer's *Danube Bike Trail* (containing maps and instructions and practical information) or a free copy of the bilingual Donauradweg – Von Passau bis Bratislava.

INN TRAIL

Starting in Innsbruck (p331) and travelling 302km to Schärding, this trail sticks close to the turquoise Inn River. It's basically downhill all the way, passing through Tyrol, Bavaria and Upper Austria. You'll pedal through fertile farmland on Innsbruck's fringes, then alpine valleys dominated by

castles in Kufstein and Bavaria. The final flat stretch zips through quaint villages and rolling countryside to Schärding. The route is well marked, but signage varies between regions.

SALZKAMMERGUT TRAIL

This 345km circular trail explores the lake-studded Salzkammergut, including Hallstätter See (p249), Attersee and Wolfgangsee. It's not exactly flat, but the trail is well marked and only a moderate condition is required. The scenic route contours around lakes set against an alpine backdrop – there's nothing like pausing for a refreshing dip in their waters to relieve saddle sore! To explore the area in greater depth, pick up Esterbauer's *Radtatlas Salzkammergut*. The trail is signposted (R2) in both directions.

TAUERN TRAIL

Taking in some of Austria's most spectacular scenery, the 325km Tauern tour is not technically difficult, but cycling at high altitude requires stamina. It begins at the thundering Krimml Falls (p317), then snakes along the Salzach River with vistas of glaciated Hohe Tauern peaks. Veering north, the trail passes the hilltop fortress of Hohenwerfen and the salt mines of Hallein. The final leg leads you through Salzburg and the Saalach Valley onto gentle pastures around Braunau am Inn and Schärding. The trail is marked with green-and-white signs in both directions.

Mountain Biking

The Austrian Alps are a Mecca to mountain bikers, with its hairpin bends, backbreaking inclines and steep descents. The country offers 17,000km of mountain bike routes, with the most challenging terrain in Vorarlberg, Tyrol, Salzburg and Carinthia. Below is a sample of the tours that lure the super-fit and speedy.

SALZBURGER ALMENTOUR

On this 146km trail, bikers pedal through 30 Almen (mountain pastures) in three days. While the name conjures up visions of gentle meadows, the route involves some strenuous climbs up to tremendous viewpoints like Zwölferhorn peak. Green-and-white signs indicate the trail from Annaberg to Edtalm via Wolfgangsee (p260). Route details and highlights are given online (www.almentour.com, in German).

DACHSTEIN TOUR

Hailed as one of the country's top mountain bike routes; this three-day tour circles the rugged limestone pinnacles of the Dachstein massif and blazes through three provinces: Salzburger Land, Upper Austria and Styria. You'll need a good level of fitness to tackle the 182km trail that starts and finishes in Bad Goisern, pausing en route near Filzmoos (p286). For details, see the website www.dachsteinrunde.at.

SILVRETTA MOUNTAIN BIKE ARENA

Grazing the Swiss border, the Silvretta Mountain Bike Arena in the Patznaun is among the biggest in the Alps, with 1000km of trails; some climbing to almost 3000m. Ischgl (p360) makes an excellent base with a technique park and plenty of trail information at the tourist office. The 15 freeride trails for speed freaks include the Velill Trail, involving 1300m of descent. Tour details are available at www.ischgl-bikeacademy.at, in German.

Plan your two-wheel adventure online at www.radtouren.at, with excellent info in English on cycling routes and bike-friendly hotels in Austria, plus maps, tips and brochures.

Surf www.bike-gps.com for downloadable GPS tours in Austria where you can get dirty on your mountain bike and www.bike-holidays.com for the best places to clean up afterwards.

KITZBÜHEL

Covering 750km of mountain bike trails, the Kitzbühel (p350) region rates as one of Austria's top freewheeling destinations. Routes range from 700m to 2300m in elevation and encompass trial circuits, downhill runs and bike parks. The must-experience rides include the Hahnenkamm Bike Safari from Kitzbühel to Pass Thurn, affording far-reaching views of Grossglockner and Wilder Kaiser, plus the Ehrenbach trail with jumps, drops and natural obstacles.

STUBAITAL & ZILLERTAL

These two broad valleys (p345 and p346) running south from the Inn River in Tyrol are flanked by high peaks crisscrossed with 800km of mountain bike trails. The terrain is varied and the landscape splendid, with gorges, waterfalls and glaciers constantly drifting into view. Highlights feature the alpine route from Mayrhofen to Hintertux Glacier and the dizzying roads that twist up from Ginzling to the Schlegeisspeicher.

PARAGLIDING

Wherever there's a high mountain accessible by cable car and a constant wind, you'll find paragliding and hang-gliding in Austria. It's particularly exhilarating on bright, sunny days in the Alps, when the sky is dotted with people soaring above the pinnacles and floating effortlessly on thermal drafts.

Of the two, paragliding wins the popularity race, simply because the equipment is more portable. Many resorts have places where you can hire the gear, get a lesson, or go as a passenger on a tandem flight. Tyrol is traditionally a centre for paragliding, with narrow valleys and plenty of cable cars. A good place to head is Fly Zillertal (p347) in Zell am Ziller.

CANYONING

If the thought of hurling yourself down crevices and abseiling down frothing waterfalls appeals, you'll love canyoning. This adrenaline-fuelled sport has established itself as one of the most popular activities in the Austrian Alps. Sliding through a gorge requires nerve and effort, but the ice-cold pools at the bottom provide welcome respite. Among the hundreds of crag-riddled destinations calling budding Indiana Joneses are Mayrhofen (p349), the Ötztal (p356) and St Anton am Arlberg (p362). Inquire at local tourist offices about canyoning specialists in the region. Canyoning is graded according to difficulty and length, with prices fluctuating between €45 and €90.

ROCK CLIMBING

It's impossible to have mountains without *Klettern* (rock climbing) and Austria is covered with rock-climbing opportunities. A good introduction for would-be Spidermen or women is the **Österreichischer Alpenverein** (p83), which advises on places to go and runs rock-climbing courses. Peilstein, in the Vienna Woods, is often used for such weekend courses. Other rock-climbing centres include Dachstein in Salzkammergut, Hochkönig near Salzburg, the Hohe Tauern National Park and Wilde Kaiser near Kufstein in Tyrol. Austrian mountaineer Peter Habeler (p89) runs a first-rate climbing school in Mayrhofen (p349), taking groups high up into the Zillertal Alps.

WATER SPORTS

Austria is dotted with more than 6000 lakes and a mammoth number of rivers coursing through its valleys that offer more than enough places to enjoy water sports.

GOING TO EXTREMES

- **Go ahead, jump** Austria's mountains aren't the only high points. To discover Vienna's topsy-turvy side, take a deep breath and leap into oblivion from the needle-thin Donauturm (Danube Tower), the world's highest bungee jump from a tower. Daredevils can also plunge 192m from the Europabrücke bridge spanning the Sill River for a thrilling upside-down bounce.
- **Gone with the wind** Kite-surfing is all the rage on Austria's lakes and it's about as much fun as you can have wearing a wetsuit. For a taste of the extreme water action, make a beeline for Neusiedler See in Burgenland, one of the few steppe lakes in Central Europe. Podersdorf am See is a great base to grab a board and catch the waves.
- **An ice climb** If you thought regular climbing was slippery, try getting a grip on ice climbing! Scaling frozen walls and waterfalls is pure adventure, but you'll need a decent pair of crampons and a good instructor. Slide over to the Stubai Glacier (p345) in Tyrol to give it a go.
- **Mind the gap** This is a tube with a difference – one that glides over hard-packed snow at jaw-dropping speeds. For a change, abandon your skis or sledge for the day and get your hands on one of these robust rings for heaps of fun spinning down the slopes in ski resorts like Sölden (p357) and Mayrhofen (p348).
- **Going down...** If you think paragliding is for wimps, skydiving may be just the ticket. Rolling out of a plane at 4000m and freefalling for 60 seconds before your parachute opens is the ultimate adrenaline rush. Tandem jumps are available all over Austria – from Vienna to Graz and Salzburg (see www.skydive.at for details).

Got some fantastic tips about Austria that you'd love to share with Lonely Planet readers? Create your own **Bluelist** and upload it onto our website – www.lonelyplanet.com.

Zippering across lakes by wind power is the most popular water sport in the country, and the locals aren't bad at, if Olympic medals are anything to go by. Sailing, windsurfing and kite-surfing are all here to be had; the **Österreichischer Segel-Verband** (Austrian Sailing Federation; ☎ 02167-40 243-0; www.segelverband.at, in German; Seestrasse 17b, A-7100 Neusiedl am See) can provide a list of clubs and locations in the country. The Neusiedler See (p193) is the number-one lake for such activities (probably because Vienna is so close), followed by the lakes of Carinthia and Salzkammergut. Tyrol has the Achensee (p350) and Vorarlberg the Bodensee (p369).

Rafting, canoeing or kayaking the white waters of Austria's alpine rivers are other favourite pastimes. Big rivers which support such adrenaline sports include the Enns and Salza in Styria, the Inns, Sanna and Ötztaler Ache in Tyrol and the Isel in East Tyrol. Imst (p358) is a well-known centre for rafting. **Absolute Outdoors** (☎ 03612-253 43; www.rafting.at; Ausseerstrasse 2-4, Liezen) is a reputable company offering trips on all the above rivers.

When the sun's out, there's little that's more invigorating than a dip in one of Austria's lakes. Carinthia is famed for its pure waters, which can heat up to a deliciously warm 26°C in summer; Milstätter See (p307) and Wörthersee (p295) offer open-water swimming and scuba diving with great visibility. Salzkammergut is another prime spot for a summertime splash, in lakes such as Hallstätter See (p249) and Attersee (p259).

Austrians prudish? Nah. Ubiquitous nudist beaches reveal there's nothing they love better than stripping off. Hallstättersee, Milstätter See and even the Danube Island in Vienna are set up for skinny-dippers.

The closest thing to bathing in mineral water is taking a dip in one of Austria's pure lakes; these include Thiersee, Urisee and Plansee in Tyrol.

Find the best place to spread your wings in Austria at www.flugschulen.at; it gives a regional rundown of flight schools offering paragliding and hang-gliding.

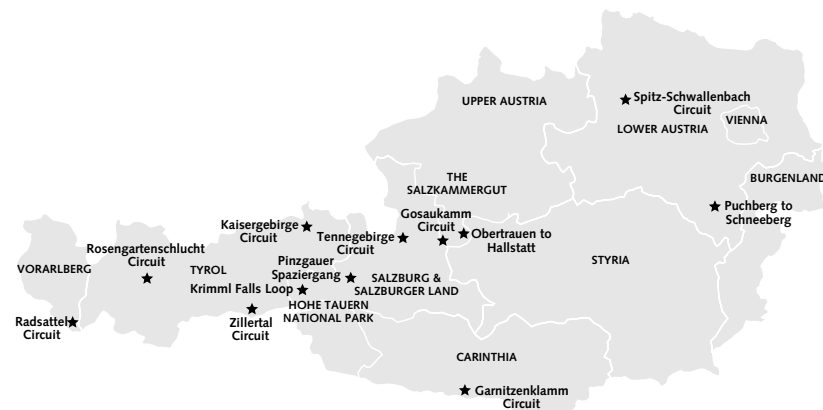
And they call it puppy love... If you thought only Brits were soppy about their pooches, check out the dedicated doggy paddle areas on the beaches at Milstätter See, Klagenfurt and Neusiedler See.

Walking in Austria

With its rugged peaks, crinkly valleys and sparkling rivers, Austria serves up some of Europe's finest landscapes – and the only way to truly discover them is by schlepping a backpack and hitting the trail. To the west the Alps flick out like a dragon's tail, luring hikers to its pointy pinnacles, while to the east the soft tapestry of vineyards and hillocks are tailor-made for lazy ambles. Seeing the morning clouds blanket the mountains, curling up by an open fire after an uphill trudge and witnessing the springtime eruption of violet and pink on alpine pastures are experiences that put hikers' senses on high alert.

Giving a walker the pick of the Alps is like giving a child the run of a sweet shop. Despite its accessibility, this country's high-altitude terrain is still laced with adventure: from flirting with mountaineering on fixed-rope routes in the Tennengebirge to scaling the limestone crags of the Dachstein massif to gazing up at the Hohe Tauern National Park's mantle of glaciers. For families and ramblers seeking something gentler, there are deep gullies, thundering waterfalls and meadows riddled with marmot holes to explore.

But it's the locals that give trekking in Austria its unique flavour. Lithe 70-year-olds nordic walking (walking with ski poles) in the hills and rock climbers limbering up on the north face before breakfast are proof that this land embraces all forms of walking with a passion. Further evidence is the mountain huts perched on every hillside, welcoming walkers with farm-fresh cheese, cool beer and cushy beds. Spending a night in one of these snug refuges is a highlight on any trek – a chance to natter with the locals, savour simple home cooking and delight in tumbling out of your bunk at 6am, just in time to see dawn tint the peaks gold.



GETTING STARTED

Because Austrians are such a well-organised bunch, and many spend their weekends walking in the mountains, an ever increasing number of walking paths are indicated by red-white-red stripes on a handy tree trunk or rock, and regular signs point out the way ahead. The practice of marking mountain trails according to their difficulty started in Tyrol and is becoming more widespread. Paths are coded with the same colours that are used for ski runs: blue for easy, red for moderate (trails are fairly narrow and steep), and black for difficult (these trails are only for the physically fit; some climbing may be required).

Alpine huts make it easy to tackle many long-distance trails with little more than a day pack, but if you're keen to get out and stride during the summer rush hour (July and August) it's advisable to book ahead as the popular places fill up in a flash.

INFORMATION Information Sources

The **Österreich Werbung** (Austria National Tourist Office, ANTO; ☎ 0810-10 18 18; www.austria.info) has offices throughout the world and should be your first port of call. A full list of contact details can be found on its website, along with walking information on everything from themed family jaunts to multi-day treks for serious hikers. It produces the free and up-to-date *Walk Austria Guide*, which you can order online and use to plan your route before setting off. Check out the regional tourist offices for details on province-specific hikes and free walking brochures.

Österreichischer Alpenverein (ÖAV, Austrian Alpine Club; ☎ 0512-595 47; www.alpenverein.at, in German; Wilhelm-Greif-Strasse 15, Innsbruck) is an excellent source for more specific and detailed information. Adult membership costs €48.50 per year, with substantial discounts for students and people aged under 25 or over 60; members pay half-price at alpine huts and receive other benefits including insurance. The club also organises walks but you have to either join the club or be a member of an alpine club in your home country; there is an arm of the club in England, the **Austrian Alpine Club** (☎ 01929-556 870; www.aacuk.org.uk; 12A North St, Wareham BH20 4AG). Of the 1000-odd huts in the Austrian Alps, 241 are maintained by the ÖAV; see p380 for further details.

Two other clubs worth contacting for information are the **Naturfreunde Österreich** (NFÖ, Friends of Nature Austria; ☎ 01-892 35 34-0; www.naturfreunde.at, in German; Viktoriagasse 6, Vienna) and the **Österreichischer Touristenklub** (ÖTK, Austrian Tourist Club; ☎ 01-512 38 44; www.touristenklub.at, in German; Bäckerstrasse 16, Vienna). The first concentrates on Austria's lowlands, while the second has an excellent **library** (☎ 4-7pm Thu). The majority of books on the Alps are in German, but there is an extensive collection of maps, which can be photocopied, and staff are supremely knowledgeable.

Maps

A great overview map of Austria is Michelin's 1:400,000 national map No 730 *Austria*. Alternatively, the **Österreich Werbung** (Austria National Tourist Office, ANTO; ☎ 0810-10 18 18; www.austria.info) can send you a free copy of its 1:800,000 country map.

There are plenty of high-quality walking maps to choose from, and paths are clearly indicated on all of them. The standard references at a 1:50,000 scale are produced by Freytag & Berndt (F&B) and Kompass. Both include small booklets, that list contact details for mountains huts and offering background information on trails. If you prefer larger-scale maps for walking, use the clear yet detailed Alpenvereinskarte 1:25,000 series. Many local tourist offices hand out basic maps that may be sufficient for short, easy walks. See the individual walks for specific map requirements.

The best place to stock up on maps in Austria is at a *Tabak* (tobacconist), newsagent or bookshop. Usually only local maps are available in these outlets, although bookshops in the major cities offer a wider selection. Outdoor-activities shops usually sell a limited variety of walking maps.

Books

The standard English-language walking guidebook to Austria has long been Cecil Davies' *Mountain Walking in Austria*. The book concentrates on the alpine areas of the country, but some route descriptions can be up to 20 years old. For a more contemporary treatment of multi-day routes, try *Walking Austria's Alps Hut to Hut* by Johnathan Hurdle. If you're keen to identify the local flora, Kompass publish *Alpine Flowers*, a pocket-sized guide complete with colour illustrations.

WHEN TO WALK

While the wildflowers and tinkling cowbells make summer (June to September) a top choice for *wandern* (walking), the sprightly Austrians don't let the dust gather under their boots the rest of the year – they accessorise. Deep powder? Snowshoes. Ice? Crampons. Slippery autumn leaves? A snazzy pair of walking sticks. Of course, if you're planning multi-day hikes in the Alps, summer is probably your only option, as Alpine huts only open from mid-June to late September.

The busiest months are July and August, when snowfields above 2000m melt and the weather is mostly fine. Spring offers fewer crowds and everything begins to bloom at lower altitudes. Autumn, too, is quieter and is a fantastic season to glimpse the mountains wrapped in a cloak of gold and crimson. Even winter walking isn't out of the question in the Alps; many resorts now cater to nonskiers with prepared *Winterwanderwege* (winter trails), and making tracks through

squeaky snow with a crisp blue sky overhead is quite something.

If there's one rule of thumb in the Alps, it's to never take the weather for granted. It may *look* sunny but conditions can change at the drop of a hat – hail, lightning, fog, torrential rain, you name it – so the trick is to pack layers and check the forecast before embarking on long hikes at high altitudes. Taped regional Alpine weather reports can be heard on ☎ 0990-911566 81. Tourist offices also display and/or provide mountain-weather forecasts, while web forecasts also available on website of the **ÖAV** (www.alpenverein.at, in German).

WHAT TO TAKE

A light pack full of little necessities is the secret to happy hiking. It's tough walking on an empty stomach, so make sure you have enough carbohydrate-rich food for the day (including emergency rations) and at least 1L of water per person to avoid dehydration. High-energy foods such as nuts, dried fruits, bread, cheese and cured meats are ideal.

HUT-TO-HUT HIKING

One of the joys of hiking in Austria is spending the night in a mountain hut. These trailside refuges make great bases for exploring the wilderness without sacrificing creature comforts. The highly evolved system means you're hardly ever further than a five- to six-hour walk from the next hut, which removes the need to lug a tent, camping stove and other gear that weighs hikers down. Most huts have a *Gaststube* (living room), a convivial spot that hums with the chatter of ruddy-cheeked walkers, comparing notes and clinking glasses. With a belly full of dumplings and schnapps, you retreat to your comfy bunk and hope you haven't picked the one next to a champion snorer!

Austria has more than 1000 huts, over 500 of which belong to the **Österreichischer Alpenverein** (ÖAV, Austrian Alpine Club; ☎ 0512-59547; www.alpenverein.at, in German; Wilhelm-Greil-Strasse 15) or **Deutscher Alpenverein** (DAV, German Alpine Club; www.alpenverein.de, in German). Huts in popular areas are more like mountain inns, with restaurant facilities, drying rooms and even hot showers (normally at an extra charge). Accommodation is in communal dorms called *Matrazenlager*, two- or four-bed rooms, or in the *Notlager* (emergency shelter – wherever there's space) if all beds have been taken. Blankets and pillows are provided but you might need to bring your own sleeping sheet. The lunchtime and evening menu is usually hearty and good value. Members of the ÖAV can order the *Bergsteigeressen* – literally 'mountaineer's meal' – which is low in price but high in calories, though not necessarily a gastronomic treat! On average, hikers should budget €8 to €10 for a basic meal with a drink. It's also sensible to carry tea or coffee, as *Teewasser* (boiled water) can be purchased from the hut warden.

Most huts open from mid-June to mid-September when the trails are free of snow; the busiest months are July and August, when advance bookings are recommended. Members of the ÖAV are entitled to a discount of up to 50% on the cost of overnight accommodation at ÖAV and DAV huts, so if you plan to undertake a hut-to-hut tour in Austria it's worth joining the UK section (p83); however, allow two months for your application to be processed. The ÖAV publishes the *ÖAV Hut Book for Austria* (in German, with key words in English), a comprehensive book on huts, with contact details and opening times. Consult p380 for further accommodation information.

Take lightweight layers that you can put on or take off to warm up or cool down. The basics include a breathable T-shirt, fleece, loose-fitting trousers, sturdy walking boots and waterproofs. For high-altitude hikes, it may also be worth packing a hat, gaiters, thermals, gloves and walking sticks. The sun can be extraordinarily deceptive in the mountains; while the air temperature may be subzero, the rays are still powerful and sunscreen is essential to avoid the lobster-skin and panda-eye look. Also consider taking a torch, first-aid kit, compass, mobile phone and a whistle for emergencies.

WALK DESCRIPTIONS

The times and distances in this chapter are provided only as a guide. Times are based on the actual walking time and do not include stops for snacks, taking photos, rests or side trips. Be sure to factor these in when planning your walk. Distances should be read in conjunction with altitudes – significant elevation can make a greater difference to your walking time than lateral distance. Grading systems are always arbitrary; however, having an indication may help you choose between walks. Easy refers to a short walk on gentle terrain, medium denotes challenging terrain and longer distances, while difficult indicates walks with long distances, significant elevation change and high-altitude or glacier travel.

RESPONSIBLE WALKING

The popularity of walking puts great pressure on Austria's natural environment, particularly the fragile ecosystem of the Alps. To minimise impact and help preserve Austria's ecology, consider the following tips when walking.

Trail Etiquette

Greeting your fellow walkers with a cheery *Servus* (Hello) and observing a few etiquette basics will stand you in good stead.

- On narrow paths, ascending walkers have right of way over those descending.
- Always leave farm gates as you find them. In summer low-voltage electric fences are set up to control livestock on the open alpine pastures; where an electric fence crosses a path, it usually has a hook that can be easily unfastened to allow walkers to pass through without getting zapped.
- The days of plucking edelweiss to woo your sweetheart are long gone. Alpine

wildflowers look lovelier on the mountainsides and many of them are protected species.

- Moving too close will unnerve wild animals, distracting them from their vital summer activity of fattening up for the long winter.

Rubbish

- The idea is to carry out what you have carried in, including easily forgotten items such as tinfoil, orange peel, cigarette butts and plastic wrappers. Empty packaging weighs very little.
- Burying rubbish is not recommended as digging disturbs soil and ground cover, and encourages erosion. Buried rubbish will more than likely be dug up by animals, who may be injured or poisoned by it. It also takes years to decompose, especially at high altitudes.
- Minimise the waste you carry out by taking minimal packaging or unpacking small-portion packages and combining their contents in one container before your trip. Take reusable containers or stuff sacks.
- Condoms, tampons and sanitary pads should also be carried out, despite the inconvenience, as they burn and decompose poorly.

Human Waste Disposal

- Make an effort to use toilets in huts and refuges where provided.
- Where there is no toilet, bury your waste. Dig a small, 15cm-deep hole at least 100m from any watercourse; consider carrying a lightweight trowel for this purpose. Cover the waste with soil and a rock. Use toilet paper sparingly and bury that too. In snow, dig down beneath the soil; otherwise your waste will be exposed when the snow melts.
- Contamination of the local water sources by human faeces can lead to the transmission of giardiasis, a human bacterial parasite. It can cause severe health risks to other walkers, local residents and wildlife.

Erosion

- Mountain slopes and hillsides, especially at high altitudes, are prone to erosion. It's important to stick to existing

LONG-DISTANCE TRAILS

Austria's extensive hut network is ideal for those keen to do some serious trekking in the Alps. The website of the **Österreichischer Alpenverein** (ÖAV, Austrian Alpine Club; ☎ 0512-595 47; www.alpenverein.at, in German; Wilhelm-Greil-Strasse 15) has a dedicated section on the country's 10 *Weitwanderwege* (long-distance trails), which stretch from 160km to 1200km and showcase different areas of Austria's stunning landscape. Accessible from mid-June to late September, the following trails are a taste of what's on offer.

- **Adlerweg** – Exploring Tyrol's finest scenery, the 280km Adlerweg (Eagle Trail) starts in St Johann near Kitzbühel (p350) and scales the Karwendel massif, before traversing the limestone crags of Wilder Kaiser and eventually landing in St Anton am Arlberg (p362). You'll need to be in good condition to attempt this challenging three- to four-week hike, with highlights including rugged peaks, waterfalls, ice caves and hilltop castles. See www.adlerweg.tirol.at for trail information and maps.
- **Berliner Höhenweg** – This 42km trail begins in Ginzling (p350) and quickly gains altitude (the highest point is 3133m). There are bewitching views of the Zillertal Alps towering over the trail and the turquoise Schlegeisspeicher below. Some mountaineering experience is required as snow patches are not uncommon and there are several passes to tackle. The hike takes three to four days to complete. Use Kompass 1:25,000 map No 37 *Mayrhofen – Tuxer Tal Zillergrund*.
- **Arnoweg** – The 1200km Arnoweg rates among Austria's best long-distance walks, making a circuit around Salzburger Land that takes roughly two months to complete. The official start and finish point is Salzburg (p266), but many walkers follow only the southerly stretch of the walk, which leads through the glacial landscape of the Hohe Tauern National Park (p310). The route ascends to 3106m, so a decent level of fitness is required. Rother Wanderführer map *Arnoweg Der Salzburger Rundwanderweg* covers the trail. See www.arnoweg.com for more details.
- **Stubai Höhenweg** – Austria's showpiece hut-to-hut route, the Stubaier Höhenweg starts at Neustift in Stubaital. You'll need a good level of fitness to tread the well-marked 120km circuit, which affords tremendous vistas of hanging glaciers, rocky ridges and wild alpine lakes. Every section of the seven- to nine-day route involves battling at least one pass, and many sections have fixed wire ropes to assist with difficult steps. Buses run from Innsbruck to the Stubaital (p345). Pick up Kompass 1:50,000 map No 83 *Stubai Alpen – Serleskamm*.

tracks and avoid short cuts that bypass a switchback. If you blaze a new trail straight down a slope, it will turn into a watercourse with the next heavy rainfall and eventually cause soil loss and deep scarring.

- If a well-used track passes through a mud patch, walk through the mud; walking around the edge will increase the size of the patch.
- Avoid removing the plant life that keeps topsoils in place.

SAFETY & EMERGENCIES

Most walker deaths are directly attributable to fatigue, heat exhaustion, and inadequate clothing or footwear. A fall resulting from sliding on grass, scree or iced-over paths is a common hazard; watch out for black ice.

In high-Alpine routes, avalanches and rock falls can be a problem.

As long as you stick to the marked route, it's hard to get lost in Austria, where most trails are signposted and well mapped. Study the weather forecast before you go and remember that weather patterns change dramatically in the mountains. Increase the length and altitude of your walks gradually, until you are acclimatised to the vast Alpine scale.

That said, where possible don't walk in the mountains alone. Two is considered the minimum number for safe walking, and having at least one additional person in the party will mean someone can stay with an injured walker while the other seeks help. Inform a responsible person, such as a family member, hut warden or hotel receptionist, of your plans, and let them know when

you return. Under no circumstances should you leave marked trails in foggy conditions. With some care, most walking routes can be followed in fog, but otherwise wait by the path until visibility is clear enough to proceed.

The standard Alpine distress signal is six whistles, six calls, six smoke puffs – that is, six of whatever sign you can make – followed by a pause equalling the length of time taken by the calls before repeating the signal again. If you have a mobile phone, take it with you. **Mountain rescue** (☎ 140) in the Alps is very efficient but extremely expensive, so make sure you have insurance.

TYROL & VORARLBERG

ZILLERTAL CIRCUIT (TYROL)

Duration Five to six hours

Distance 11km

Difficulty Medium

Nearest Town Mayrhofen (p348)

Summary A high-level circuit that leaves a big impression, with relatively easy hiking providing tremendous views over the azure Schlegeisspeicher (Schlegeis Reservoir) to the Zillertal Alps.

The Zillertal Alps reward walkers with mesmerising views of flower-strewn meadows, gin-clear streams and frosted peaks. This scenic loop begins by climbing above the turquoise Schlegeisspeicher to join the high-altitude Berliner Höhenweg trail (opposite) at its westernmost point. It's a great mix of everything this mountainscape has to offer: babbling brooks, 3000m pinnacles, high meadows and pine woodlands. The highlight is the precipitous balcony trail that links two alpine huts. Although the route involves 850m of ascent and descent, the path is well graded and mostly gentle; however, you should use care and judgement in bad weather. Kompass 1:25,000 map No 37 *Zillertaler Alpen – Tuxer Alpen* covers the walk in detail.

Getting to/from the Walk

The Schlegeisspeicher is 25km southwest of Mayrhofen and is accessed by the twisting Schlegeis Alpenstrasse toll road, which is open from May to the end of October and costs €10 for a car. Alternatively, buses run between Mayrhofen and the reservoir (one

way €5.20, one hour, seven daily). The walk starts and finishes at the car park beside the reservoir. For details on transport to/from Mayrhofen, see p350.

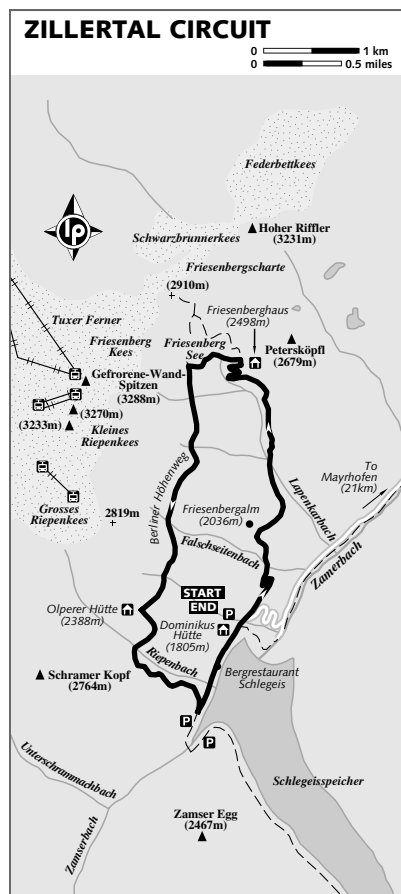
The Walk

The circuit starts at the Schlegeisspeicher, which impresses with its sheer scale and colour – it seems like a glittering turquoise gemstone dropped into a sea of ice white pinnacles. From the northeast end of the car park, take the well-worn trail signed to the **Dominikus Hütte** (☎ 05286-52 16; mattresses/beds €19/25; ☞ mid-May–late Oct). The turn-off for this hut comes just 100m along the path, but you should stick to the right and head towards the Friesenberghaus. The trail is shown by red-and-white markings on the rocks, and it soon begins its gradual ascent through shady mixed forest. If you peer back, there are views of the mountains, which rise like the bows of a ship above the glacially cold reservoir.

Weaving through pine trees, the trail soon reaches two streams that flow swiftly over water-worn rocks; both are crossed via wooden footbridges. Pause to dangle your toes in the tingling water before continuing through the forest and past slopes that are speckled with wildflowers such as delicate alpine roses and purple gentian in summer. As the rocky trail snakes upwards, the scenery shifts to fields of dwarf pines, moss-clad slabs, and waterfalls that streak the rugged mountain faces silver. The clang of cowbells and the high-pitched whistle of marmots interrupt quiet contemplation on these upper reaches.

After roughly 45 minutes, you approach the tree line near the wooden cabin at **Friesenbergalm** (2036m). The trail flattens out here to traverse high meadows punctuated by tarns, which are rimmed by tufts of silky cottongrass and reflect the towering pinnacles above. Continue around a shoulder and enter a broad valley overshadowed by the immense bulk of the Hoher Riffler (3231m). Affording superlative views of the peaks crowning the horizon, the snaking path is well graded and largely constructed from rock slabs.

It is a further one- to 1½-hour ascent from the Friesenbergalm to Friesenberghaus, passing through boulder-strewn meadows that give way to patches of scree and the gurgling Lapenkarbach (Lapenkar Stream), which meanders through the valley. If you're lucky, you might spot chamois here, though you're



more likely to bump into sheep and cows grazing on the pastures. The trail continues to wind uphill in a series of long bends until the Friesenberghaus slides into view. A series of tight switchbacks completes the climb to the hut, which is scenically perched above the valley.

Situated under the glowering face of Hohe Riffler and above a lake that remains ice-bound well into the summer months, the stone-built Deutscher Alpenverein (DAV; German Alpine Club) **Friesenberghaus** (☎ 0676-749 7550; mattresses/beds €16/22; ☞ mid-Jun–late Sep) is a popular base for long-distance hikers. It's a fine spot for a cool beer or a bowl of goulash before tackling the rest of the walk. After a little refreshment, take time out to appreciate the views across

the valley to magnificent peaks including the Grosser Grainer (3201m) – Zillertal locals nickname it the Grauer (Grey) because of its steely colour – and its smaller sidekick, the Kleiner Grainer (2952m).

Retrace your steps for 50m and turn right along the path signposted to the Olperer Hütte and the Berliner Höhenweg. This begins by descending slightly to cross the outlet stream of the lake, then makes a steep but mercifully short ascent up the rocky slope on the other side. You may need to cross a few patches of snow near the start, which are generally easy to negotiate. Use your hands here for a short section of very easy scrambling. The ascent ends at a path junction; turn left and begin to contour across the mountainside ahead.

The next 1½ hours are spent following a wonderful balcony trail that leads under the 3000m-high glaciers of the Gefrorene-Wand-Spitzen. You'll definitely want to have your camera handy here, as there are fantastic vistas of the azure Schlegeisspeicher and the spiky peaks of the Zillertal Alps. The high-Alpine trail is part of the three- to four-day **Berliner Höhenweg** route, which starts in Ginzing and makes a circuit around the head of the valley. This section makes for interesting and easy-going walking, descending gently as it traverses rock-studded slopes and providing uninterrupted views of the reservoir.

Around two hours from the Friesenberghaus, the 2388m **Olperer Hütte** (☎ 05285-626 71; mattresses/beds €18/24; ☞ early Jun–early Sep) is suddenly revealed, though another stream crossing on wooden planks is necessary before you reach it. The hut is currently being rebuilt from scratch and is scheduled to reopen to walkers in 2008. From here, there are sterling views of the glacier-capped peaks of the Olperer and Zillertal Alps. As well as resident chickens, the hut is home to several Haflinger horses – a beautiful breed of mountain horse unique to this region.

After reaching this point, it's downhill all the way – pass in front of the hut and continue your steady descent to the reservoir. The path begins with more lovely scenery as it winds gently over grassy hummocks and crosses several ice-cold streams. The trail then steepens slightly and zigzags down beside a stream to the road (1½ hours from the Olperer Hütte). Turn left and follow the road for 1km to return to the damside parking area where you started.

ROCKET MAN: PETER HABELER

Celebrated Austrian mountaineer and ski instructor Peter Habeler was born in Mayrhofen in 1942 and has been scrambling up the glaciated peaks of the Zillertal Alps since the tender age of six. His one-time climbing partner Reinhold Messner said famously of Habeler: 'He's like a sky rocket – really impressive once the fuse is lit.'

By the age of 21, Habeler was a qualified mountain guide and rapidly gaining a reputation as a bold and talented climber. He began a partnership with Messner in the 1960s and together they pushed the boundaries of mountaineering. They soon applied their remarkable Alpine skills to race up the eight-thousanders of the Himalaya and pioneer the first ascent of Everest without supplementary oxygen in 1978. 'We climbed quickly and travelled light, taking only the bare essentials,' Habeler enthuses. 'Other climbers said it was suicide, but we knew that if Sherpas could reach 8500m, Everest was only a couple of hundred metres higher.'

'Extreme Alpinism has always been my goal and I was lucky enough to have fantastic teachers – the best there is,' he says emphatically. He believes, though, that respect for the mountains is declining. 'Alpinism is not about having the latest equipment or proving a point; it's about technique, condition and the ability to predict. There is freedom in the mountains but also restriction.' His secret? 'Taking the time to acclimatise is vital. We spent a couple of months at Everest base camp before making the ascent. Climbers should adapt to the mountains, befriend them. They are not enemies that need to be conquered. It's all about understanding your boundaries and those of the environment. Knowing when to call it a day.'

Today Habeler still stands out as a mountaineer: lean, chiselled and incredibly fit for his age. His passion for climbing is deeply rooted in what he affectionately calls his playground, the Austrian Alps, where he grew up and now runs a guiding company, Ski School Mount Everest (p349). He spends a lot of his time leading tours of the Zillertal Alps and speaks of his love for the Olperer (3476m) and his 'little Everest', the Ahornspitze (2976m). When he's not at home in Mayrhofen, Habeler occasionally pops over to Nepal to guide an expedition or dashes across to Hohe Tauern to climb Grossglockner. It seems there is no keeping this man of the mountains still.

KAISERGEIRGE CIRCUIT (TYROL)

Duration Six to seven hours

Distance 18km

Difficulty Medium

Nearest Town Kufstein (p354)

Summary Deep ravines, meadows full of wildflowers and the perpendicular turrets of the Kaisergebirge leave walkers awestruck on this high-altitude hike.

The soaring limestone spires of the Kaisergebirge may not count among Austria's highest peaks, but they are undoubtedly some of its most spectacular. Rising abruptly from the valley floor, these distinctive peaks make perfect walking territory. This six- to seven-hour hike passes through beautiful deciduous forest and flower-dotted Alpine pastures before traversing the dizzying Bettlersteig, and affords vistas of both the Wilder Kaiser (Wild Emperor) and the gentler Zahmer Kaiser (Tame Emperor), divided by the fertile Kaisertal (Kaiser Valley). Sturdy footwear and waterproofs are recommended. You can pick up a basic map at the Kufstein tourist office or invest in the more detailed Kompass 1:

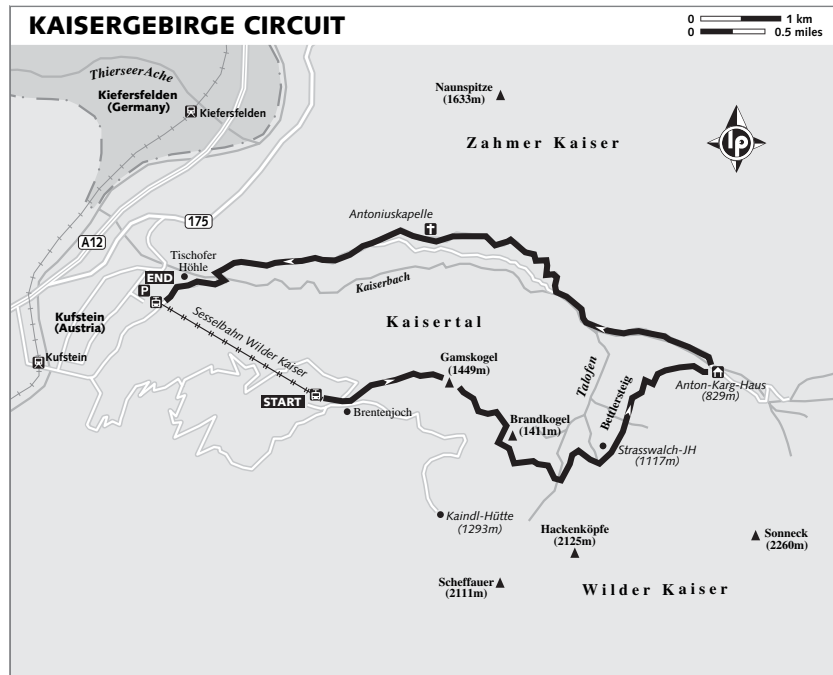
25,000 map No 9 Kufstein-Walchsee-St Johann in Tirol.

Getting to/from the Walk

The trailhead is Breitenjoch, at the top station of the Sesselbahn Wilder Kaiser in Kufstein (p355). There is a car park at the bottom of the lift (per day €2), or buses 1 and 2 run every 20 minutes from Kufstein to Kaisertal (one way €0.80), five minutes' walk from the bottom station of the chairlift. For full details on getting to/from Kufstein, see p355.

The Walk

The route begins on a high with a giddy ride on a creaking 1970s chairlift, which saves walkers plenty of legwork and certainly gets the adrenaline flowing. The lift glides over slopes wooded with beech and larch trees that are particularly spectacular in autumn when they turn shades of gold, amber and russet. As you approach the top station, the limestone pinnacles of the frost-polished Wilder Kaiser massif come into view.



From the top of the chairlift at **Brenntenjoch**, take the narrow trail that veers left and leads downhill through Alpine meadows that are filled with purple thistles and gentian in summer. The zigzagging descent is easy and there are fine views of limestone columns dusted with snow ahead. Bear left onto the well-made path signed for Gamskogel, which initially winds through cool pine and beech forest. A glance left reveals the Kaisertal and pointy Naunspitze (1633m). After roughly 25 minutes, you reach a glade where you can spy Scheffauer (2111m) and Hackenköpfe (2125m).

Continue your gradual ascent on a rocky path, clambering over knobbly roots that form a natural staircase through the forest. The trail steepens on the final climb up to **Gamskogel** (1449m), approximately 50 minutes from the start of the trek. This is chamois territory and close encounters are quite common. At the summit, you are rewarded with stupendous 360-degree views of the rolling Zahmer Kaiser to the north and jagged Wilder Kaiser to the south. Take time out from your hike to relax and enjoy the wonderful pano-

rama of the Nördliche Kalkalpen (Northern Limestone Alps).

The woodland trail begins its descent to the Bettlersteig via a path bordered by dwarf pines and blueberry bushes that cling to crags. To the left is a sheer cliff that drops abruptly to the valley floor; to the right the Kaindl-Hütte drifts into view. The track now runs like a vein through the undulating *Alm* (Alpine meadow) studded with heather and bracken. A slight incline gives way to shady beech and maple forest, and brings the Wilder Kaiser ever nearer; its chiselled north face and rock formations now appear incredibly close.

Around 1½ hours from Brenntenjoch is the infamous **Bettlersteig**, the route's toughest and most exhilarating stretch, which traverses a narrow wind-buffeted ridge. While sure-footedness and a head for heights are the only real prerequisites for attempting this stretch, caution should be exercised in bad weather, when the rock becomes slippery and dangerous. Otherwise, it's easily negotiated via the cables and metal rungs hammered into the rock face that create a real-life high-altitude game of snakes and ladders. The scenery to

the north is awesome: a ravine carpeted in luxurious shades of green and the imposing rocky summits of Zahmer Kaiser.

With the arduous bit behind you, the Bettlersteig heads on through beech and fir forest, and crosses the clear Talofen stream. This is about the closest you'll get to the north face of Wilder Kaiser, with its solid wall of limestone thrusting skywards and turrets crowding the horizon. Keep an eye out for chamois and deer in the forest on your way down to Strasswalch youth hostel, where an enormous fir tree provides respite from the midday heat. Further along the Bettlersteig, a trail heads right to **Sonneck** (2260m), a challenging and rewarding ascent for those with suitable experience and climbing equipment.

After another hour of traversing streams and negotiating switchbacks, walkers are generally glad to reach **Anton-Karg-Haus** (☎ 05372-625 78; mattresses/beds €17/22; ☒ May–mid-Oct) for a well-earned rest. The terrace is a pleasant spot for lunch when the sun's out, while a mug of *Milchkaffee* (milky coffee) with homemade shortbread is bound to boost hikers' spirits when the weather is drab.

It's a gentle and scenic 2½ hour descent to Kufstein from here. Tracing the meandering Kaiserbach (Kaiser River), the track leads steadily through the narrow Kaisertal and provides new perspectives of Gamskogel and the surrounding precipices – from this side you can appreciate how steep they really are! There is little change in elevation on the trail, which passes through beech forest and a tunnel hewn out of the rock face. Around an hour from Anton-Karg-Haus, look out for a path on the right that detours to **Antoniuskapelle**, a photogenic 16th-century chapel that is prized for its baroque sculptures.

An hour further on, an easily missed sign points the way to the **Tischofer Höhle**. This 40m-deep karst cave has a long and fascinating history; bones and fossils of *Ursus spelaeus* (cave bear) have been unearthed here, which are believed to date back around 26,000 years to the Pleistocene epoch. When Tyrol went to war in 1809, the cave was also used as a secret hideaway for the freedom fighters.

From the cave, the route continues downhill past overhanging crags and trees forming arches. As you descend, there are great views over Kufstein, and the clang of cowbells in the dairy farms below brings you gently back to civilisation. Finally, the path veers left along

a road and crosses a field to the car park at the chairlift.

ROSENGARTENSCHLUCHT CIRCUIT (TYROL)

Duration Three hours

Distance 5km

Difficulty Easy

Nearest Town Imst (p358)

Summary This family-oriented walk has plenty of highs: from climbing a dramatic gorge to racing in a roller coaster to plunging into an Alpine lake.

This three-hour walk is one of Imst's hidden gems and is ideal for families seeking to stretch their legs in summer. The circuit begins by scaling the 200m-high Rosengartenschlucht (Rose Garden Ravine), where boarded walkways make for an easy ascent and the vertiginous views of a cascading river are memorable. The trail then weaves through shady pine forest, providing fine views of the Lechtaler Alps, and reaches a grotto with a glittering blue pool. Before descending to Imst, there is a chance to cool off in the pure waters of a tree-fringed lake and to pick up speed on one of the world's longest Alpine roller coasters. The walking is gentle, but sturdy footwear is recommended as some sections can get slippery.

For more details on this walk, pick up the 1:25,000 *Imst–Gurgltal* map from the tourist office (see p358) opposite the Johanneskirche in central Imst.

Getting to/from the Walk

The walk starts and finishes at the Johanneskirche (St John's Church), just across from the tourist office in central Imst. From here, there are signs to the Rosengartenschlucht, and the trail is well marked and easy to follow. For details on public transport services operating to/from Imst, see p358.

The Walk

The circuit begins on the path behind the frescoed Johanneskirche in Imst and shadows the crystal-clear Schinderbach (Schinder River) upstream to the entrance of the Rosengartenschlucht. On the right-hand side of the trail, take note of the unusual **Berghäusl**, cavelike dwellings that have been hewn out of the sheer rock face. Soon you'll catch your first glimpse of the river, which gushes through a narrow ravine gouged out during the last ice age. The cool, damp environment here

supports a tremendous array of flora and fauna; as well as maple, ash, alder and larch trees are rarer species such as the red-winged wallcreeper bird and the wayfaring tree.

The wooden footbridge traversing the river is the first in a series of many that zigzag to the top of the gorge. From this low-level perspective, the scale of the cataract is impressive – vertical dolomite and limestone cliffs tower above, and a torrent of water cascades into pools that glint turquoise in the sun. The climb is gradual and easy, though care should be taken on some sections where rocks are loose underfoot and wooden planks are slippery; cables are occasionally provided to ensure a good grip. After roughly 20 minutes, the chasm narrows and the walk becomes more dramatic – you'll be ducking under overhanging rock faces, contouring around the cliffs and ascending steps carved into the rock. From the bench at **Schöne Aussicht** there are jaw-dropping views of the ravine above and below.

As you pass the fast-flowing river and charcoal grey cliffs speckled with moss, ferns and lichen, the trail twists through two tunnels hollowed out of the rock face that act as resonating chambers for the vibrations from the rumbling water. The fissure narrows further still to barely a slit, and it's almost possible to reach out and touch the other side. Light begins to flood the scene as you emerge at the **Holzbrücke** bridge after around 45 minutes; it's an excellent vantage point above the gorge and rapids, so have your camera handy.

After leaving the gorge, continue straight ahead on the well-prepared trail signed to **Hochlmst.** Still following the course of the Schinderbach, the sandy track cuts a path through fragrant pine forest and low scrub, providing panoramic vistas of the surrounding Lechtaler Alps, including the jagged peak of Muttekkopf (2774m) and the wooded slopes of Hahntennjoch (1884m). With a bit of luck, you'll hear the cuckoos and woodpeckers that inhabit these woodlands.

A steady and gentle climb leads up through the forest and affords snapshot views of the verdant meadows and snowy summits ahead. Around an hour from the start of the walk, you'll emerge at the **Blaue Grotte**, a cave pool that turns a striking shade of blue when the sun hits it. The history of the grotto dates back 2000 years to when Romans searched these cliffs for semiprecious metals. Shortly after, the path veers right towards Hoch-Imst and

passes a stream flanked by a pebbly beach. Pause on the narrow forest trail to take a refreshing dip in the Badesee, an aquamarine lake ringed by fir trees; it's a peaceful and beautiful spot to while away the hours on a lazy summer afternoon.

Arriving in Hoch-Imst, approximately 1½ hours from the start of the walk, the real fun begins for kids. The **Alpine Coaster** (☎ 05412-663 22; Hoch-Imst 19; adult/child €9.70/7.80; 🕒 10am-5pm May-Sep, 10am-5pm Thu-Sun Oct) is billed as the world's longest Alpine roller coaster and offers a thrilling ride down the mountains. A gondola shuttles passengers uphill to the starting point, where they board self-controlled bobs to catapult 3.5km downhill, negotiating tricky bumps and hairpin bends. If ever there was an incentive to get the little 'uns to walk, surely this must be it!

From here, take the path next to the Sonneck apartments that skirts around the edge of houses and runs parallel to the Fit 2000 track (a fitness trail through the forest that is popular with joggers and nordic walkers). The trail soon begins its gradual and steady descent through fir and pine forest, where blueberries ripen on the bushes in summer. About halfway down, the **Wetterkreuz** comes into view; this cross atop a craggy hillock affords sweeping views across the rooftops of Imst, the broad Gurgltal and the snow-capped mountains that rise beyond.

Aside from occasional slippery roots and rocks, the forest trail is easy walking and winds down to **Am Bergl**, home to the tiny but beautiful Lourdeskapelle (Lourdes Chapel). On the way back down to Imst, culture vultures should also take a peek at the Pestkapelle, a chapel commemorating victims of the 17th-century plague epidemic, and the whitewashed Laurentiuskirche, one of Tyrol's oldest churches, which has a wood-shingle roof and relics dating from the 5th century. This path leads to the Kreuzweg, a centuries-old pilgrim route that eventually brings you back to the Johanneskirche.

RADSATTEL CIRCUIT (VORARLBERG)

Duration Five to six hours

Distance 15km

Difficulty Medium

Nearest Town Bielerhöhe (p378)

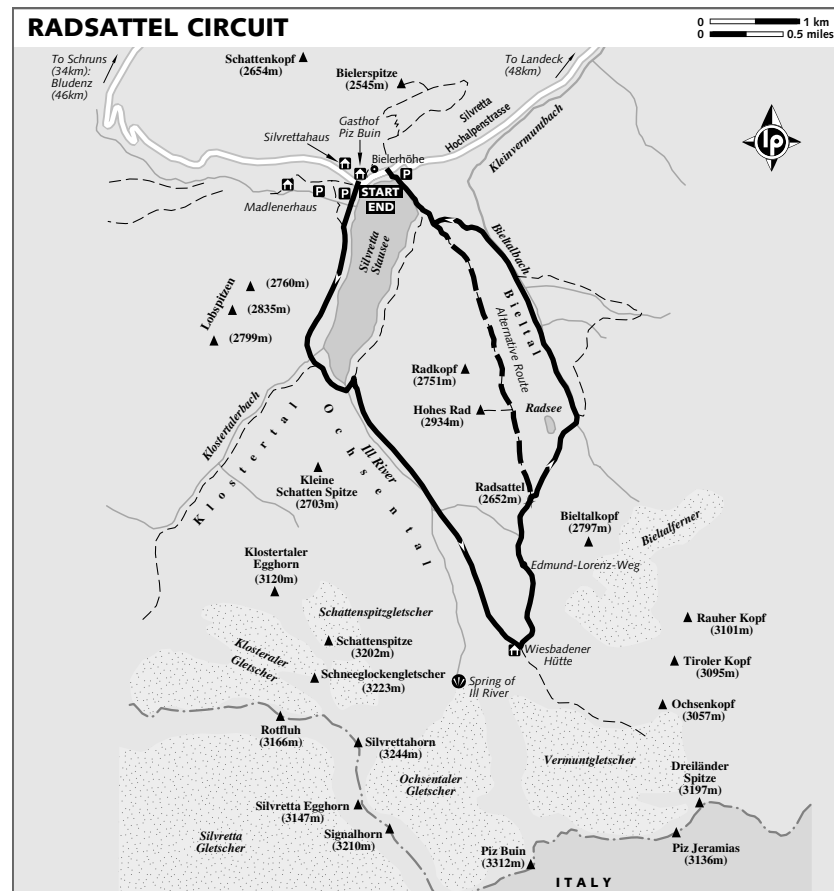
Summary A scenic mountain circuit exploring two valleys linked by a pass. Highlights include fabulous glacier scenery and rushing meltwater streams.

This scenic route makes a circuit of two of the valleys near the turquoise Silvretta Stausee reservoir, climbing over the Radsattel at 2652m to cross from one valley to the other. The 700m of ascent and descent means that it's not exactly a walk in the park, but it is relatively straightforward and there are great scenic rewards. The approach route brings you face-to-face with the mighty Piz Buin (3312m), the highest peak in the Silvretta range. Higher up, there are views of shimmering glaciers and long sections of path routed alongside tumbling alpine streams. An alternative finish offers experienced walkers the option of scrambling to the rocky summit of Hohes Rad (2934m). Kompass 1:50,000 map No 41 *Silvretta Verwall-*

gruppe and F&B 1:50,000 map No 373 *Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse – Piz Buin* both cover the route, but *Alpenvereinskarte* 1:25,000 map No 26 *Silvretta**gruppe* is more detailed.

Getting to/from the Walk

The circuit starts at the Silvretta Stausee. Situated at the top of the Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse toll road (car €11.50), the reservoir straddles the border of Vorarlberg and Tyrol at an altitude of 2034m. Bielerhöhe is the name given to the pass at the top of the Hochalpenstrasse, adjacent to the Silvretta Stausee. Frequent buses run between Partenen and Bielerhöhe in summer (p378).



The Walk

From the Silvretta Stausee car park, walk over the dam and join the well-worn path that skirts around the reservoir's western shore, pausing to admire the views of the milky green lake framed by brooding peaks. Here you'll catch your first glimpse of the cone-shaped Hohes Rad (2934m), which you will be walking around later. A sign warns that stiletto-heeled shoes are not appropriate footwear! The path rounds the southern end of the lake, first crossing a bridge over the fast-flowing Klostertaler Bach; keep to the shoreline as you follow the route. Soon you'll traverse the glacially cold **Ill River**, which cuts a path through the Ochsentäl Valley at the southeastern corner of the reservoir. Shortly after the second bridge you reach a junction. Turn right here and start up the trail signed to the Wiesenbadener Hütte.

The path to the hut is wide and follows the east bank of the Ill towards the arrow-shaped peak of **Piz Buin** (3312m) at the head of the valley. The climb is steady throughout and the scenery offers plenty of distraction; at least four magnificent glaciers come into view as you gain height: to the west Schattenspitzgletscher (3202m) and Schneeglockengletscher (3223m), and up ahead the Vermuntgletscher and the heavily crevassed Ochsentäl Gletscher suspended above the valley and glistening ice blue.

The gradual ascent continues and reaches the **Wiesbadener Hütte** (☎ 05558-42 33; mattresses/beds €15/20; ☞ mid-Jun–early Oct) and its small adjacent chapel around two to 2½ hours from the start. Nestled at the foot of Piz Buin and just a stone's throw away from the spring where the Ill rises, this alpine hut is a great place to unwind on the sunny terrace, refuel with a bite to eat and enjoy the panoramic vistas of the surrounding snow-dusted mountains and glaciers.

At the back of the hut, signs attached to a concrete shelter indicate the Radsattel to the left. Following the Edmund-Lorenz-Weg, the path is now much narrower and rougher underfoot, and is marked by red-and-white paint splashes. Zigzag steeply up the slope behind the hut and cross a small stream. Keep right on the opposite bank and climb a rise topped by a large cairn. The path can now be seen rising and dipping across the undulating terrain up to saddle itself. Cross the outlet of

a shallow pool before making the final steep climb to the narrow **Radsattel**, where a sign marks the Vorarlberg-Tyrol border (one to 1½ hours from the hut).

Drop steeply down the rocky, boulder-strewn eastern side of the pass, possibly crossing a couple of small snowfields near the top. There are great chances of spotting ibex up here (some of them are quite tame), so keep an eye out for their distinctive backward-curving horns. You will pass several small lakes and then the **Radsee**, a sparkling jewel-like lake fringed by greenery, on your way down to the Bieltal (Biel Valley). While this valley is less dramatic than the previous one, the smaller path and lack of hut makes it feel more remote, and it's certainly tempting to linger beside the bubbling Bieltalbach on the valley floor, flanked by meadows where cows graze.

Follow the path along the west bank of the stream all the way to the mouth of the valley, where an extraction unit takes the water from the river and the path widens into a vehicle track. Continue west to the banks of the Silvretta Stausee and turn right along the lake. Once back at the main road turn left and follow the pavement for about 300m to return to the car park where you started (1½ to two hours from the Radsattel).

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE: VIA HOHES RAD

2½ to three hours, 6.5km, 280m ascent, 980m descent

For a more challenging end to the route, turn left (north) at the Radsattel instead of dropping down into the Bieltal. The path contours around the eastern slopes of **Hohes Rad** (some patches of snow may need to be crossed) before climbing over a spur and reaching a signed junction. The path straight ahead drops down to Bielerhöhe and joins the described route shortly before it reaches the Silvretta Stausee. The path to the left scrambles up the rock to the cross that marks the summit of Hohes Rad. Hands will definitely be needed for balance over this section, but the route is marked with red paint splashes throughout. The breathtaking 360-degree views from the top make the extra effort worthwhile: Piz Buin and the pointed peak of Silvrettahorn (3244m) loom large on the horizon. Return to the junction and turn left to the Bielerhöhe to complete the circuit.

SALZBURGER LAND & SALZKAMMERGUT

GOSAUKAMM CIRCUIT (SALZBURGER LAND)

Duration Two days

Distance 22km

Difficulty Medium

Nearest Town Filzmoos (p286)

Summary A satisfying circuit that circumnavigates a limestone massive. It features towering rock pinnacles, a 200m pass and high forest trails.

Gosaukamm is the name given to the most westerly massif in the Dachstein range, a compact group of serrated limestone peaks containing seven summits over 2000m high. The scenery is reminiscent of the Italian Dolomites to the south: pinnacles and spires tower above sheets of scree and there is one section of magnificent limestone pavement. The lower slopes of the massif have vegetation, however, and this circuit undulates around the tree line. As the path circumnavigates the massif, the scenery alternates between pine forest and stark, rocky terrain.

The itinerary given here is for a two-day walk, and much of the climbing comes on the first day of the walk. The most challenging terrain comes around the Steigpass (2016m), the highest point of the circuit. The ascent to the pass involves a series of ledges and gullies with moderate exposure. Cables are in place for security and most fit walkers should be able to negotiate the section, with a little care.

The porous limestone rock of the Dachstein range means that natural water sources are few and far between. On this route, the huts provide the only reliable sources of water. Make sure to fill up with enough water at each hut to last you until you arrive at the next one. F&B 1:50,000 map No 281 *Dachstein – Ausseerland – Filzmoos – Ramsau* covers the route. Alternatively, for more detail, use the Alpenvereinskarte 1:25,000 map No 14 *Dachsteingebirge*.

Getting to/from the Walk

The Filzmooser Wanderbus runs regular shuttles between Filzmoos and Hofalm (€3.50, 15 minutes, five daily Sunday to

Friday) from the end of May to the end of October. Regular bus services are provided by Postbus between Filzmoos and Eben (adult/child €2.70/1.40, 20 minutes, six daily Monday to Friday, three daily Saturday), where there are connections to Salzburg.

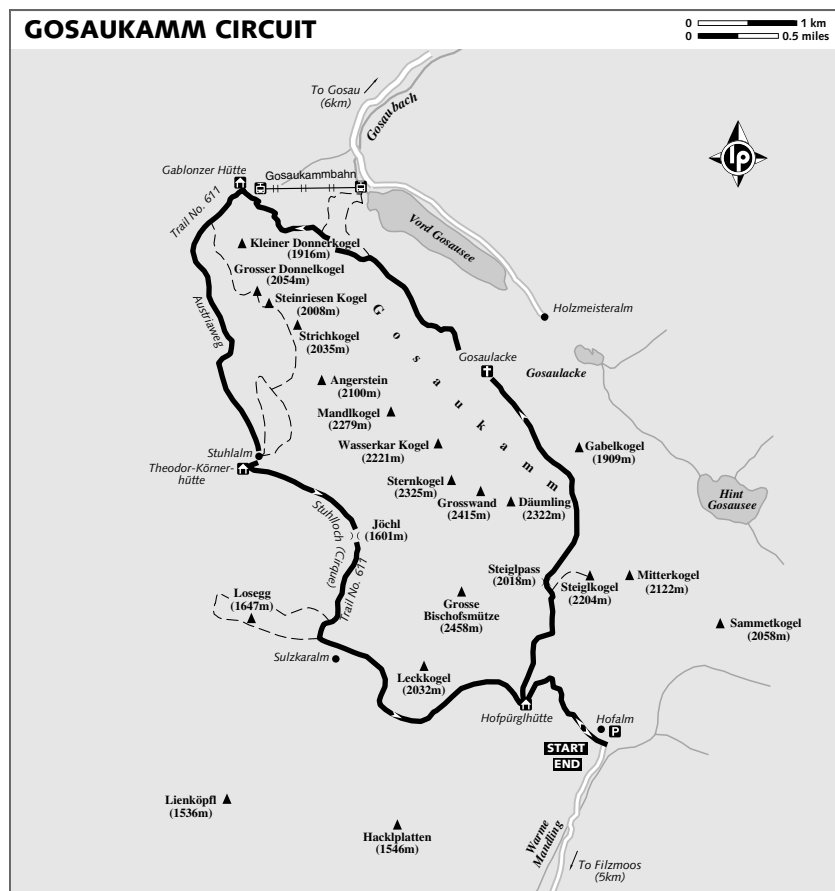
This route can also be accessed from the north, starting and finishing at the Gosausee, 7km south of Gosau village. The advantage of starting here is that you can use the **Gosaukambahn** (☎ 06134-84 00; one way/return €7.30/10.70; ☞ 8.15am–4.50pm mid-May–Oct) to gain 550m in height and arrive directly at the Gablonzer Hütte.

The Walk

DAY 1: HOFALM TO GABLONZER HÜTTE
Five to six hours, 10km, 1120m ascent, 880m descent

From the Hofalm car park, take the path that leads north past two restaurants. Follow signs for the Hofpürglhütte, veering right after the second restaurant to begin climbing up to the left of a white limestone gully. The path is steep for most of the way, though the gradient eases somewhat towards the end. After climbing for about an hour you reach a junction at the top; turn left and continue for 200m if you want to take a break on the scenic terrace of the large **Hofpürglhütte** (☎ 06453-83 04; mattresses/beds €16/22; ☞ Jun–early Oct). Perched high on a grassy hillock, the hut commands tremendous views of the jagged turrets that frame the horizon.

To continue the route retrace your steps and continue straight ahead at the junction where you joined the path to the hut, following signs to the Steigpass. The path to the pass can be seen zigzagging up the rock wall ahead, though you must descend across a shallow cirque before you start the climb. Photographers will want to capture the distinctive profile of the **Grosse Bischofsmütze** (2458m) on the left-hand side; shaped like a bishop's mitre, this is the highest peak in the Gosaukamm range. The ascent begins over loose stones but crosses the crags themselves in the upper reaches, negotiating the most challenging terrain of the entire circuit. You are likely to need your hands for balance as you cross rock ledges and mount stony steps, and a moderate amount of exposure keeps your attention on the task at hand. Fortunately cables are in place for security where required.



Around one hour from the Hofpürglhütte, you arrive at the **Steigpass** (2018m), where you may have to traverse the occasional snowfield, even in summer. You are now right up amongst the pinnacles and spires on the main ridge of the Gosaukamm massif, and the views are impressive in both directions: Grosse Bischofsmütze, Däumling (2322m), Gabelkogel (1909m) and the formidable glaciated peaks of the Dachstein massif are all visible. It's little wonder that for many walkers, the pass is the highlight of the circuit.

The trail continues to cross the pass and begins to descend gradually though a wonderful lunar landscape of limestone pavement and escarpments. You descend several rock steps and one small gully, but the obstacles serve

as entertaining distractions rather than real challenges. The path eventually weaves out of the rock, and continues to descend gently through pine and larch woodlands, which are a riot of colour in autumn. Around one hour from the pass you reach a small, triangular-roofed memorial chapel, the **Gedenkkapelle**, in a clearing to the left of the path. The memorial commemorates all those who have perished in the mountains of the area, and in particular the 18-year-old first female ascendant of the nearby Däumling pinnacle, who died during the descent.

Continue to weave through the wood, passing several cabins. The deep green waters of the Gosausee soon come into view to the right and the switchbacks steepen into

a steady descent. Keep an eye open for the junction signed to the Gablonzer Hütte. Turn left onto a much fainter trail (a sure sign that most walkers descend to the Gosausee here) and traverse the slopes to join the main Gosausee–Gablonzer path.

This well-trodden path begins by climbing steeply but eases as it passes through a grove of beech trees. Join a gravel track at the top of the climb, turn left and continue for 200m to the **Gablonzer Hütte** (☎ 06136-84 65; mattresses/beds €18/24; ☞ Jun–mid-Oct), around 1½ to two hours from the memorial chapel. The sunny terrace of the hut has a great view southeast to the ice-capped summit of Hoher Dachstein (2995m), which is the highest peak in the Dachstein range.

DAY 2: GABLONZER HÜTTE TO HOFALM 4½ to 5½ hours, 12km, 360m ascent, 600m descent

Begin by climbing the hillock directly opposite the entrance to the hut, following the signs to Austriaweg and Theodor-Körner-Hütte (trail No 611). At the top of the hill, veer right, pass through a metal turnstile, and begin to descend gently through shady fir, pine and larch forest. The path picks a way through the vegetation and re-emerges at the open pasture around the Stuhlmalm. Here you join a broad track, turn left and pass a cluster of wooden huts, where refreshments, food and accommodation are available. Continue along the track for a further 500m to reach the picturesque **Theodor-Körner-Hütte** (☎ 0664-916 6303; mattresses/beds €10/14; ☞ Jun–mid-Oct), 1½ to two hours from the start.

From the Theodor-Körner-Hütte, return along the access track for 100m and veer right onto a footpath signed to the Hofpürglhütte. A descent brings you into a cirque bordered by dwarf pines, Stuhllach, where jagged limestone pinnacles begin to dominate the skyline once more. Contour around the base of the cirque and you will be presented with the most exciting part of the day's route: a steep, zigzagging climb between the sheer rock walls of a narrow gully. Your passage through this dramatic ravine is eased by a long flight of steps and occasional sections of cable. The **Jöchl** (1601m), at the top of the gully, is reached around 40 minutes after leaving the Theodor-Körner-Hütte.

The path now makes an undulating traverse across a series of meadows, passing over sev-

eral spurs and keeping left at four trail junctions. Alpine roses and gentian bloom on this high grassland in early summer, and there's a chance you'll glimpse chamois and marmots. A final shoulder is rounded and the Hofpürglhütte comes into sight on a ridge ahead. Contour across to the hut, arriving 1¼ to 1½ hours after leaving the Jöchl.

To return to the Hofalm, retrace your original ascent route from day one (45 minutes). If you plan to return to Filzmoos by foot, however, you may prefer to take the path that leaves from the front terrace of the Hofpürglhütte and descend gently through woodland before joining the Hofalm road for the final few kilometres to the village; if you chose this option, add one to two hours to the day's duration.

TENNENGEIRGE CIRCUIT (SALZBURGER LAND)

Duration Eight to nine hours

Difficulty Medium to difficult

Distance 15km

Nearest Town Werfen (p285)

Summary A high-altitude trail around a vast limestone plateau. Highlights include enthralling climbs, steep descents and memorable views of the Hochkönig massif.

Slung high above Werfen, the Tennengebirge is a karst plateau that is wild, isolated and beautiful in its austerity. Trekking through this surreal landscape of rounded heights, snow-filled cirques and sheer cliffs is a one-off experience. If you're keen to get off the well-trodden track, this day hike offers challenging walking involving almost 1000m of ascent and some scrambling. Walkers should have a good head for heights and be sure-footed for the initial climb and steep descent; undertaking this trek alone is not recommended.

Snowfields mean that this hike is best attempted from July to early September, and an early start is essential. Aside from emergency shelters, there is very little up here, so you should pack enough food and water for the day. Paths are waymarked, but you'll need a proper map, such as Kompass 1: 50,000 map No 15 *Tennengebirge Hochkönig*, and possibly a compass.

Getting to/from the Walk

Take the cable car (one way €4.50) to Achsenkogel and walk roughly 15 minutes uphill to the trailhead. The trek starts on the

right-hand side of the path winding up to Eisriesenwelt. For further details on getting there and away, see p285.

The Walk

Heading up on the path between the cable-car top station and Eisriesenwelt, take the narrow trail on the right, signed Steig (trail No 212), towards Leopold-Happisch-Haus, indicated by a red-and-white stripe on the rocks. The hardest climbing of the day's trek starts here with loose rocks underfoot, a steep incline, and a breathtakingly sheer 1000m drop to your right. While the going isn't easy, the awesome views more than compensate: below, the Salzach River snakes through pastures that form a rich patchwork of greenery, while ahead the towering limestone cliffs are scored with crevices and riddled with caves. The sign *Steinschlag Möglich* reminds hikers to keep their distance from the cliffs because of falling rocks.

The precipitous track contours around the cliff face, passing slopes covered in dwarf pines, and affording head-spinning views of the valley below and the summits above, in-

cluding **Hühnerkrall** (2289m). Sporadic cables ensure safety, but sure-footedness and a sturdy grip are needed as you clamber up and over the rocks. This exposed section of the trek is undoubtedly exciting, but it can be torturous under a blazing sun, so it's advisable to tackle it early. The zigzagging ascent quickly gains elevation and involves some easy scrambling. The icing on the cake, however, is climbing two (slightly wobbly!) ladders that scale the vertical rocks and get the adrenaline pumping. The trail crosses piles of scree and passes a memorial on the left-hand side, which commemorates two mountaineers who lost their lives here in 1994.

Around two hours from the trailhead, there's a sense of achievement upon reaching the magnificent karst plateau, a vast, grey desert of undulating limestone where snowfields often linger till summer. The Jagdhütte emergency shelter lies to the left, but you should sidle right and follow the signs for Leopold-Happisch-Haus. Bordered by dwarf pines and tussock grass, the path traverses the plateau and leads gently up natural steps hewn into the rock. When clouds cast

shadows across the contours of this rugged and starkly beautiful landscape, the effect is otherworldly.

The trail climbs further and, glancing back, the jagged pinnacles of the Hochkönig range are visible. Roughly three hours into the hike, keep an eye out for the sign to Vord-Streitmandl (trail No 229). This track continues to scale the ridges of the plateau, but is now waymarked with a red dot in a white circle (similar to the Japanese flag). It can be tricky to stay on the path if there are snowfields, as the markings are sometimes obscured, so particular care is needed when traversing the bowl-shaped depressions and cirques. Though challenging, the walking here is extremely satisfying and the far-reaching views reveal the Alps tumbling down to the flats, including the twin peaks of Hühnerkrallkopf (2403m) and Hochpfeiler (2410m) to your left.

The trail soon emerges in front of the dramatic **Lehnender Stein** (2400m) precipice, which provides heart-stopping views of the valley below. These cliffs are home to nesting eagles and, while you may spot one if you're lucky, you're far more likely to hear their high-pitched screech. Another pleasant half-hour is spent wandering past steely turrets before weaving up a rocky path to the exposed and wind-buffed peak of **Rauchcheck** (2430m), the highest mountain in the Tennengebirge range. The amazing views from the summit, marked by a silver cross, make all the puffing and panting worthwhile: the 360-degree panorama of the Northern Limestone Alps is difficult to drag yourself away from.

Around six hours from the start of the hike, it's all downhill on the trail veering right signed to **Grieskar-Mahdegg**. While the prospect of skipping down the hillside may seem like a breeze after all that climbing, the tough descent is designed to test tired legs and is easily underestimated. The track zigzags down a deep ravine, where care is needed climbing over weatherworn limestone dotted with fissures and sinkholes. Look back to admire the spectacular trio of horned peaks: Grosses Fieberhorn (2276m), Kleines Fieberhorn (2152m) and Hochthron (2362m).

The trail descends relentlessly for roughly another hour, traversing rocks and a ladder before culminating in a series of tight switchbacks down extremely steep slopes of scree and boulders. The fabulous vistas of the **Hochkönig** massif's pinnacles crowding the

horizon bolster waning spirits and there are good chances of sighting the nimble-footed chamois that inhabit these upper reaches. It's quite a relief to catch sight of the first dwarf pines speckling the slopes, as these signal your gradual approach to the tree line.

The relief at reaching the tree line is overwhelming – finally earth that does not slip or slide! The narrow trail now weaves through pine forest and becomes much flatter and easier, though the gnarled roots and leaning trees can be a bit of an obstacle course. After a steady hour-long march, the **Alpengasthof Mahdegg** sails into view. Keep your eyes peeled for the small sign indicating the trail (trail No 43) that will take you back to the starting point, which winds through shady beech and fir forest, and provides snapshot views of Werfen. Eventually the path brings you out onto the road to Eisriesenwelt; turn right, and the car park is about 10 minutes' stroll. The alternative is to take the zigzagging route (trail No 33) from Alpengasthof Mahdegg down to central Werfen, which takes just under an hour.

OBERTRAUN TO HALLSTATT (SALZKAMMERGUT)

Duration Six to seven hours

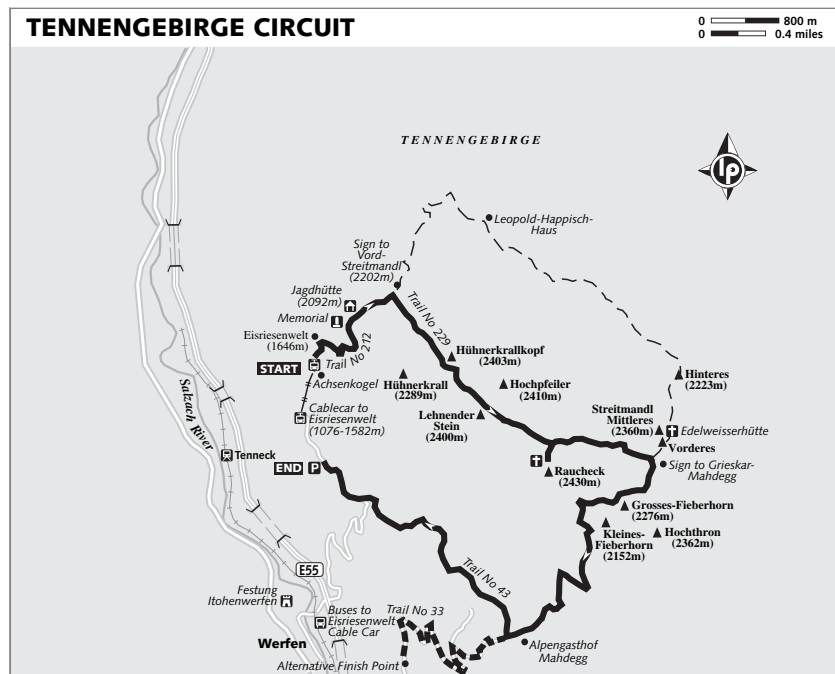
Distance 18km

Difficulty Easy to medium

Nearest Town Obertraun (p252)/Hallstatt (p250)

Summary A picturesque and spectacular walk around the shores of the pristine Hallstätter See (Lake Hallstatt) against a backdrop of towering mountains, with opportunities for swimming.

The Hallstätter See is a magnificently pristine lake in the Salzkammergut region, surrounded by soaring peaks and providing excellent opportunities for summer swimming. Few trails in Austria match this circuit for lakeside beauty. The walk initially follows the shore of the lake along the easy and mostly level Ostuferwanderweg (Eastern Shore Hiking Trail) from Obertraun, joins the historic Soleweg (Brine Pipeline Trail) at the northern end of the lake, then continues along this winding and spectacular trail past a waterfall to Rudolfsturm, a scenic lookout-restaurant above Hallstatt. The section along the eastern shore can be done any time of year and in any conditions, while the Soleweg requires a good level of fitness, good shoes and a reasonable head for heights. Children will need careful



supervision in this section. The Soleweg section should be attempted in winter only in good conditions and with appropriate clothing.

Getting to/from the Walk

This walk begins in Obertraun and heads anticlockwise around the lake. It is also possible to start at Rudolfsturm in Hallstatt. From Obertraun train station, follow the line north-west along Bahnhofstrasse for 200m, cross the line and veer right. The trail begins just after the ferry terminal, 10 minutes' walk from the tourist office.

The Walk

After leaving Obertraun, follow the trail above the lake shore around the forested **Sechserkogel**, with its rocky outcrops. If you are combining a hike with a swim, the bluff is one of the more attractive places for swimming off rocks, although it's best approached from the water itself. However, there are plenty of other opportunities to paddle or swim along the eastern shore.

After 1.5km the trail leads across the Hallstatt train station and, shortly after, continues

along a walkway attached to the rock face above the water. This is the deepest section of the Hallstätter See (125m). This part of the walk affords some splendid views up the lake between the wonderfully carved rock faces flanking the valley, petering out at the northern tip of the lake at the settlement of Steeg and the mouth of the Traun River.

From the walkway, the trail continues along a gravel path among riverbank acacias, pines, larch, fir and beech. This is also a botanical theme path, so the vegetation is often marked along the way. Keep left at the fork in the trail (and at all forks on this section). From here it is about another 15 minutes' walk along the water's edge to **Seeraunzn** (☎ 0676-433 12 63; Obersee 41; mains €5.50-12; ☞ 10am-8pm Easter Sun-Oct), a lakeside restaurant that is a great place to recover strength for the tougher Soleweg leg of the walk.

About 1½ hours into the Ostufurweg section the trail approaches Steeg and joins a small access road leading under the railway line. Follow the trail left and around. At the T-junction, Strandbadstrasse runs left under the railway line again to the **Steeg public beach**.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF PILGRIMS

A historic path, the Pilgrim's Way (Pilgerweg), connects St Gilgen and St Wolfgang via the western shore of the Hallstätter Sea (Lake Hallstatt). In the past pilgrims followed this path to honour St Wolfgang, the bishop who was said to have founded the church in St Wolfgang village by throwing his axe from the Falkenstein hill into the valley below and building the church on the spot where it fell.

The walk takes half a day and maps are available from the tourist offices in St Wolfgang and St Gilgen. The path starts from Furberg, near St Gilgen, and climbs the Falkenstein (795m) before continuing through the village of Reid to St Wolfgang. Apart from the fairly steep climb to the top of the Falkenstein, the walk isn't too strenuous (remind yourself that many pilgrims did it with lentils in their shoes or naked with iron rings around their necks as a sign of penance!). There are various things to see along the way, including a stone that still apparently bears the marks of the St Wolfgang's buttocks. It became as soft as wax in a miracle sent by God to allow the saint to rest his weary bones.

This (clothed) beach area has sunbathing platforms, a diving board and a children's slide. Beyond this (across the creek) is the rather swampy but lovely **FKK naturist beach**. Experienced swimmers can shorten the walk by tackling the 500m across the mouth of the Traun River (don't forget to bring your watertight bag and check out the water temperature first). If you do this, aim for the small clearing at the camping ground. You will need to walk back towards the power station from there to resume the walk.

Walkers should backtrack from the beach to the T-junction and keep going straight before turning left at the fork with the traffic mirror and crossing the small bridge. Here the Salzkammerweg (trail No A17) ascends into a grove of trees above the cliffs, or alternatively you can take the road (Arikoglstrasse) at the foot of the cliffs. After about 750m, those taking the cliff path will reach the road; head left and about 100m later turn right into the trail at the orchard. Walkers following Arikoglstrasse should turn left into this trail at this orchard; follow it around to the B166 main road.

This section is the least attractive part of the walk, but the lovely beer garden at riverside **Steegwirt** (☎ 06135-8302; Au 12; mains €8-12; ☞ 10am-9pm, closed Tue Nov-Mar) offers relief.

From Steegwirt, cross the Traun River, follow the road south for about 150m past the hydroelectric power station and turn right onto Salzstubenweg. This ascends for another 150m to join the **Soleweg** to Hallstatt.

Forget all about low lakeside trails now. The Soleweg (also called in parts Soleleitungsweg) follows the precarious path hacked into the Ramsau mountains between 1597 and 1607

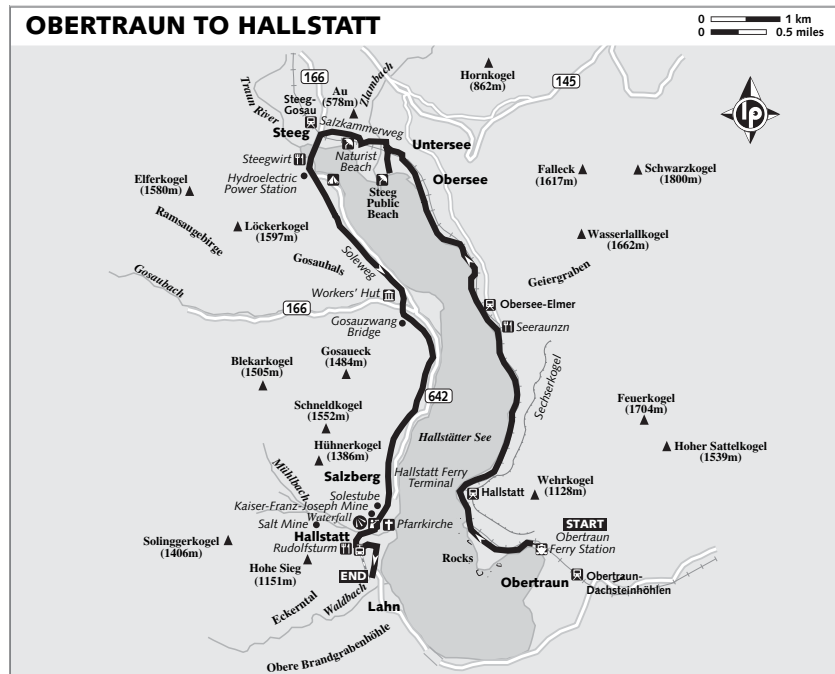
for a pipeline, which transports brine from the nearby salt mines. It is reputed to be the oldest in the world and was originally made from hollowed-out tree trunks fitted together.

Approximately 1.5km from the point where you join the Soleweg, the trail leads past a small **workers' hut** (admission free; ☞ summer), which contains a small exhibition (in German) on the pipeline and salt in the region. Just after this is one of the walk highlights: the 43m-high **Gosauzwang** bridge spanning a gorge carved out by the **Gosau** (Gosau Brook).

Sections of the walk after the bridge require care in parts, especially the stretch from a 2.5km marker to the turn-off to Hallstatt. In several places you will need to duck beneath rocks and avoid dripping water while making sure you keep your distance from the steep edges of the path. But the rewards here are many, with some great views to the lake.

The trail divides at the 1km marker the trail divides. The path to the left leads 500m down into Hallstatt, emerging behind the 15th-century **Pfarrkirche** (p251). If you're approaching the trail from the opposite direction, this is an easy entry point, but you will miss the sensational views from the Rudolfsturm.

The trail to the right becomes steep and narrower, passing a **Solestube**, where the volume and pressure of brine in the pipes is controlled. As you ascend, Hallstatt can be glimpsed below through the trees. About 300m after a steep climb, you reach a **lookout** and the **Kaiser-Franz-Joseph mine**. Steps from here lead past a **waterfall**, where the Mühlbach tumbles down a rock face towards Hallstatt. Finally, after crossing an iron bridge and negotiating more steps, this dramatic trail



reaches a grand climax at **Rudolfsturm** (☎ 06134-20677; Am Salzberg; dishes €4.50-16; ☞ 9am-6pm May-Oct). The fort, built in the 13th century to protect the salt mines, today offers fine food and views from its hilltop location, 800m above the lake. The historic **salt mine** and archaeological area are just a short walk west of here. To end your walk, the **funicular** (one-way adult/child/family €5.10/3.10/10.80) – or alternatively a switchback trail – take you down to Hallstatt.

HOHE TAUERN NATIONAL PARK REGION

PINZGAUER SPAZIERGANG

Duration Five to six hours

Distance 19km

Difficulty Easy to medium

Nearest Town Zell am See (p312)

Summary Easy walking on grassy ridges allows you to enjoy the fantastic views into the Hohe Tauern National Park without serious effort.

This perennially popular day hike in the Kitzbühel Alps combines gentle walking with wonderful Alpine scenery. Sun-dappled woodlands soon thin out and give way to high pastures that are a delight to walk through. To the south is a host of snow white peaks to ogle, including the glaciated summits of Grossglockner and the pyramid-shaped Kitzsteinhorn, while to the north the limestone turrets of the Kaisergebirge and Watzmann slide into view.

In its entirety, the Pinzgauer Spaziergang stretches 32km from the summertime boating playground of Zell am See in the east right across the crest of the range to Mittersill in the west. Covering the second stretch from Schmittenhöhe to Saalbach, this five- to six-hour amble takes in the highlights of the trek without the hard slog. It's generally easy to stick to the trail, but Kompass 1:30,000 map No 30 *Zell am See – Kaprun* might come in handy.

Getting to/from the Walk

The walk starts from the top station of the **Schmittenhöhebahn** (☎ 06542-789-0; one way €16; ☞ 9am-5pm mid-May–mid-Jun, 8.30am-5pm mid-Jun–Oct) in Zell am See. Gondolas depart roughly every half hour. For details on public transport connections to/from Zell am See, go to p316.

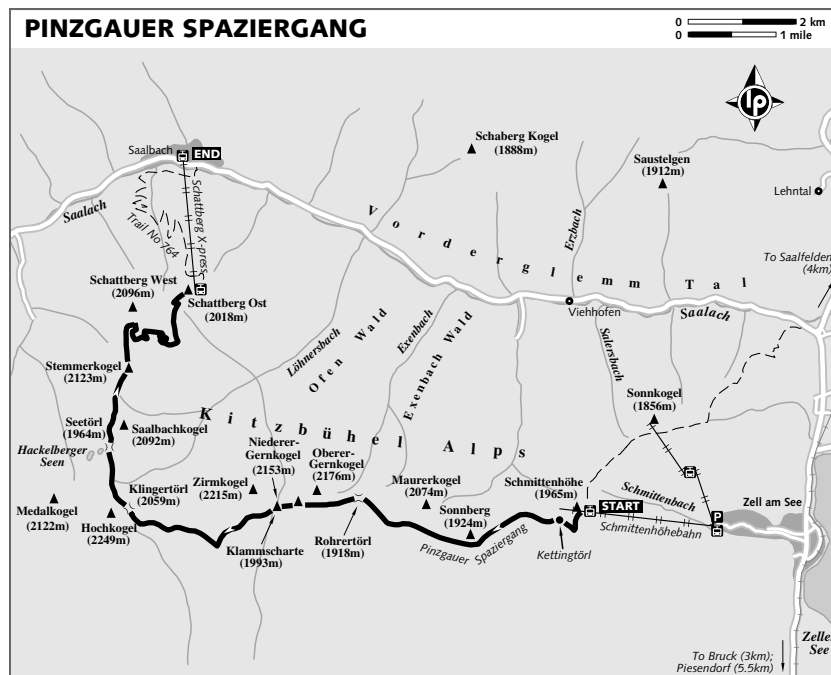
The walk finishes at the bottom station of the **Schattberg X-press** (☎ 06541-62 71 10; one way €6.90; ☞ 9-11.45am & 1-4.15pm mid-Jun–Sep), located right on the main road in Saalbach. Bus 680 runs every hour from Saalbach to Zell am See (€3.70, 30 minutes); the last bus departs at 7.15pm.

The Walk

From the top station of the Schmittenhöhebahn (1965m), follow the signs to Saalbach and the Pinzgauer Spaziergang. The views are immediately spectacular: to the east the glistening Zeller See is a blotch of inky blue on the Salzach Valley more than 1000m below, while to the south the 3000m summits and pearly-white glaciers of the **Hohe Tauern National Park** spread out before you. The well-prepared trail gently descends a ski slope flanked by fir trees, passes a chairlift and emerges at Kettingtörl. A slight incline brings you to a flat ridge bordered by heather and bilberry bushes, commanding views across undulating alpine pastures.

Waymarked by a red-and-white stripe, the path soon narrows. Following the ridge trail through fir forest studded with deep blue tarns, your gaze is often drawn left to a stunning line-up of snowy peaks including Austria's highest, Grossglockner (3798m), and the glistening Kitzsteinhorn glacier (3203m) in the foreground. This view, subtly changing all the time, remains with you for the most of the walk. You soon emerge out of the forest onto a stony trail, where the panorama opens up to the south and the landscape is a patchwork of heather, dwarf pines and ponds that reflect the scenery above. From here, you'll catch your first glimpse of the rounded summit of **Maurerkogel** (2074m), which is still dusted with snow in early summer.

It's now an easy amble along a snaking track through pastures where cows graze peacefully and colourful wildflowers such as gentian and alpine roses bloom. After nearly an hour of walking, the track contours around the southern slopes of the Maurerkogel and you'll see the knobbly summit of Oberer-Gernkogel (2175m) ahead. Continue along the path, crossing the occasional meltwater stream, and you'll spy the wooden hut at Sonnenbergalm on the left-hand side. It's now a short and painless ascent to the saddle of **Rohrertörl** (1918m), where you can contrast the snow-free rocky limestone ranges to the



north, such as the chiselled Kaisergebirge range, with the more distinctly alpine, glaciated Hohe Tauern peaks to the south.

Passing two junctions, continue along a fine balcony trail that begins by contouring around the base of Oberer-Gernkogel and gently mounting the slightly lower **Niederer-Gernkogel** (2153m), before making its way down the other side to Klammscharte (1993m). If you're attempting this walk in early season, there is a high possibility that you will have to traverse a few snowdrifts. You're now at the foot of Zirmkogel (2215m) which, if you have the will and expertise, can be climbed in little more than an hour. The rocky trail cuts a path through high meadows carpeted with gold-tinged tussock grass and punctuated by boggy tarns. The sharp peak of Hochkogel (2249m) draws ever nearer.

The narrow trail now runs like a vein through mountains whose mottled greenery resembles a tortoise shell. Shortly you'll reach a small hut near a cool stream that is a great spot to take a break. Around four hours from the start of the trek, the path veers right and ascends a fairly steep incline to **Klingertörl**

saddle (2059m), where a sign next to a stile indicates the way to Saalbach. Temporarily leaving behind the mesmerising views of the Hohe Tauern peaks, traverse the base of cliffs that sweep down from the summit of the Hochkogel and descend for a short while to the wide grassy col of Seetörl (1964m), a nice place to linger and survey the petrol blue lakes of Hackelberger Seen.

Walk north from here, either climbing directly over the summit of the Saalbachkogel (2092m) or contouring around its western slopes. The same option is repeated for the slightly higher **Stemmerkogel** (2123m) where, looking back, there is a final chance to bid farewell to the frosty pinnacles of the Hohe Tauern National Park. Head down the ridge of the mountain and continue towards Schattberg – look right and you'll be able to trace the entire day's trek, including the starting point at Schmittenhöhe. The trail now skirts around the base of Schattberg West before making a final ascent to the top station of the Schattberg X-press gondola down to Saalbach.

If you'd prefer to return to **Saalbach** on foot, however, follow the signs at Schattberg-Ost

onto a path (trail No 764) that weaves gently down a ski slope before descending more steeply through fir and pine forest. This trail emerges onto the main road to the village centre; if you choose this option, add one to 1½ hours to the day's duration.

KRIMML FALLS LOOP

Duration Four hours

Distance 15km

Difficulty Easy

Nearest Town Krimml (p317)

Summary This half-day walk takes in Europe's highest waterfall, open meadows and a little-known Celtic trail. Expect mostly gentle walking and dramatic views all the way.

This four-hour walk explores the 380m-high Krimml Falls (Krimmler Wasserfälle) in all their splendour. The first stretch passes through lush forest, pausing at viewpoints for close-up views of the three-tiered falls. The scenic trail then twists up to the Krimmler Achenal, an alpine valley sliced in two by the bubbling Krimmler Ache and set against a backdrop of 3000m-high peaks. Looping back, you'll travel on a Celtic trade route, where sturdy footwear is needed to negotiate a rocky, root-strewn trail that can become slippery when wet. The going is generally easy on the well-marked trail, which makes it a favourite with families and vista vultures.

Getting to/from the Walk

The walk begins and ends at the ticket office, approximately 10 minutes' stroll from the car park, which costs €4 per day. For further details on transport to/from Krimml, see p318. Should you get tired, a taxi will set you back €6.50 per person from the upper falls or €8 per person from Hölzlahneralm; bookings must be made by telephone (☎ 06564-83 27).

The Walk

From the ticket office (p317), the trail ascends gently through mixed forest of fir, larch and birch. The raging falls nurture a special microclimate here – take note of ostrich ferns, spongy moss and lichen in myriad shades of green, which thrive in this damp atmosphere. Before you actually see the falls, you'll hear their rumble. Soon your attention will be drawn to the lower level of the falls, the **Unterer Achenfall**, which plummet 140m through a steep-sided gorge and are enshrouded in mist. The bronze ibex statue

is a superb vantage point for photos, so have your camera ready.

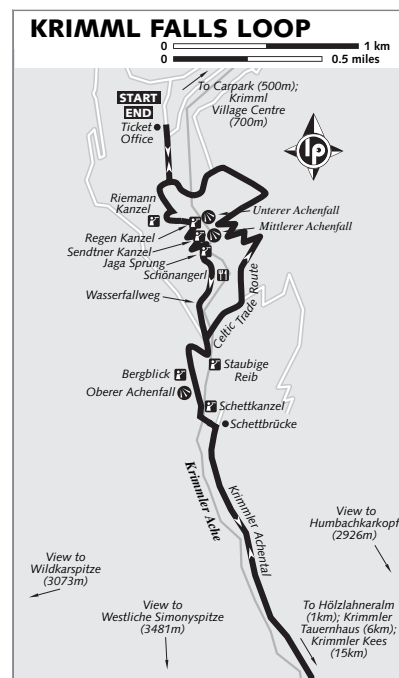
The Wasserfallweg (Waterfall Path) continues to weave uphill in a series of long loops, and the well-graded trails make for easy walking. This area is a protected nature reserve and signs remind walkers that they should stick to the track. Wandering through shady forest carpeted in clover and bilberry bushes, you'll glimpse the falls on the approach to the first proper viewpoint, **Riemann Kanzel** (1110m), around 15 minutes from the start. Here you'll be rewarded with awe-inspiring views of the falls, which thrash against the jagged cliffs and illuminate the dark green forest with their brilliance.

The path soon begins to steepen, and tight switchbacks lead up through woodlands, affording fleeting glimpses of the village of Krimml in the valley below. A steady incline brings you to a number of lookout points that grant close-up views of the glinting falls, which are often arched by a rainbow when the sun shines. These include the Regen Kanzel, hung in a fine misty spray, and the precipitous Sendtner Kanzel, where the waterfall seems close enough to reach out and touch it.

After roughly 30 minutes you'll catch sight of the second tier of the falls, the 100m **Mittlerer Achenfall**; while they are not as high as the lower and upper falls, this detracts nothing from their drama. Between Jaga Sprung (1220m) and Staubige Reib (1330m), the zig-zagging trail becomes steeper at each bend, contouring around slopes dotted with craggy boulders that shimmer with minerals. By the time you reach Schönangerl, you might need a quick break and this is the perfect spot to kick back with a drink on the terrace, rest your legs and soak up the fabulous views.

At Bergerblick (1390m), you begin your approach to the third tier of the falls, **Oberer Achenfall**, which tumble 140m through a vertical wall of granite. The sheer force of the frothing water is impressive, and the ascent to the final lookout point, Schettkanzel (1460m), is also likely to leave you breathless on a hot summer's day. Approximately an hour from the starting point, you emerge at the top of the falls at Schettbrücke, where the cool forest gives way to open pastures and the Krimmler Ache River runs swiftly over smooth rocks.

Above the falls, the trail flattens and continues to shadow the wild glacial river, making its way through the U-shaped **Krimmler**



Achenal, a highland valley that seems a million miles away from the tourist hordes far below. In June and July, the meadows here are ablaze with wildflowers and you'll spend as much time staring at the ground as you do up ahead; keep an eye out for yellow cowslips, bell-shaped gentian and swaths of bright pink alpine roses. Although the track is reasonably crowd-free, you'll probably bump into a few hikers en route who'll cheerfully bid you *Grüss Gott* (Good day).

About 15 minutes from the falls, 3000m-high peaks begin to slide into view, including the snow-capped Wildkarspitze (3073m) to the west. But the mountains dominating the horizon aren't the only big rocks here – the sea of dwarf pines edging the left-hand side of the path is strewn with huge boulders and bizarre rock formations. Looking right, however, your attention is drawn to the mooing Pinzgauer cows that graze the pastures and the fast-flowing Krimmler Ache. The feeling of peace in this valley is sublime and it's little wonder that it has been dubbed a mini Alaska.

Around two hours from the start of the walk, the fluttering Austrian flag at

Hölzlahneralm (see p317) is like a beacon for weary walkers. Filled with local characters, this rustic hut is a charming place for lunch and a deserved rest; tuck into the homemade *Kaspressknödel* (cheese fritters) with a glass of creamy buttermilk. It's worth taking time here to appreciate the glaciated landscape that unfolds ahead, including the Humbachkarkopf (2926m), the Westliche Simonyspitze (3481m) and the Krimmler Kees glacier, whose meltwaters feed the Krimml Falls. In the early morning and evening, this is prime terrain for animal spotters, as it has a healthy population of marmots, Haflinger horses and chamois.

Retrace your steps along the valley and back to the falls, following the way you came until you reach a fork in the path before Schönangerl. Turn right to reach one of the day's highlights, a little-known **Celtic trade route**, built in about 2000 BC and restored in 1985. Mind your step on the rocky, root-strewn path that twists down through lichen-clad fir trees. This silent area affords an entirely different perspective of the falls and deer can often be seen or heard rustling through the trees. At the bottom, you'll have the final chance to feel the spray of the waterfall from riverbanks daubed with golden marsh marigolds. Make your way across the wooden footbridge and back to the starting point.

CARINTHIA

GARNITZENKLAMM CIRCUIT

Duration Three hours

Distance 6km

Difficulty Medium

Nearest Town Hermagor (p301)

Summary This hike leads through the first two sections of Garnitzenklamm (Garnitzen Gorge) past spectacular waterfalls and pools, returning through mountain forest.

Situated in a province famous for its rugged mountain landscapes, the 6km-long Garnitzenklamm is considered to be the prettiest gorge in Carinthia. The trail follows the course of the Garnitzenbach (Garnitzen Brook) and is officially open between the months of June and September. Although this walk is often possible at other times of year, the path is even more slippery than usual – very good shoes are needed for this walk at

the best of times – and local authorities warn it is at your own risk. The first two sections are also suitable for children, but kids should be carefully supervised and anyone who suffers from vertigo may encounter problems. Difficult stretches have chains or iron bars to hold onto. After strong rainfall, it is inadvisable to attempt sections 3 and 4. At the end of section 2 is a *Notunterstand* (emergency shelter). All bridges should be crossed one person at a time. Admission to the gorge is €2.50/1 per adult/child.

Getting to/from the Walk

The trailhead is 2.5km southwest of Hermagor, above the small settlement of Möderndorf. From the tourist office in Hermagor take the B111 southwest (left at the fork) and turn left again at the ÖAMTC office. From here continue another 2km through Möderndorf, and across the railway line and bridge to the information stand at the start of the gorge.

The Walk

The walk begins at the lower section of the gorge at an altitude of 612m, where there is an information stand and the Klammwirt restaurant, which has outdoor seating summer that is the perfect spot to gather your strength for strenuous climb ahead. The early section of the walk, which ascends the gorge left of the stream on pebbly ground, is also geologically the oldest (you will see boards along the way explaining the geology), dating back about

460 million years. The youngest stone (at the top of the gorge at an altitude of 1125m) was formed about 200 million years ago and the gorge itself is the product of erosion over about 10,000 years.

Section 1 leads around a **weir** and artificially constructed **waterfall**, as well as rock pools in which it's possible to paddle in the chilly waters. About 30 minutes into section 1 of the gorge, the first **bridge** comes into view. The gorge has been attracting hikers since the late 19th century, but maintaining the trail and crossings is difficult because of flooding. In 2003 five bridges were swept away and replacements had to be flown in and lowered into place by helicopter. This bridge was rebuilt in 2004 (cross it one person at a time); it's worth pausing in the middle for a first view of the gorge from above the water.

After this crossing, the trail ascends steeply on rocks and you pass a tree with an odd root system swelling above the ground. A second bridge follows, and the final leg of section 1 and the early stages of section 2, which begins after **Idawarte**, have some pretty rock formations, spectacular cascades and narrow, bubbling pools flanked with lush vegetation.

From Idawarte the trail crosses another bridge and leads past waterfalls near **Franzenswarte** and along the northern side of the gorge. As the trail ascends, the gorge narrows and the level of difficulty increases. Sections of the trail running along the north side to the next bridge crossing some 500m upstream can get extremely slippery and re-

quire care. Parts of the trail have been cut into the cliffs to provide access and have a chain you can hold onto, while other parts run along natural ledges.

Shortly before the end of section 2 of the gorge, the last bridge of this walk is reached. This marks the end of the gorge section of this circuit walk. If you are not walking the entire gorge, cross the bridge just before the end of section 2 and follow Steinernder Weg (trail No 116) for about 1km through some pretty deciduous forest until it joins trail No 410 at the **cross**, where you turn right towards **St Urbani**, some 500m from the junction; this small chapel is set picturesquely in the woods, and has some simple frescoes. The chapel is also a vantage point for more good views over the gorge. From St Urbani, follow the trail through the lush deciduous forest until it rejoins the forestry road. This ends at the road from Möderndorf, just north of the information booth.

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE: SECTIONS 3 & 4 OF GARNITZENKLAMM

If you decide to continue along the gorge, sections 3 and 4 require another 1½ hours in all and involve several steep climbs before you reach the end – at **Klause** – at an altitude of 1125m. It's a spectacular walk at a higher level of difficulty. If you want to hike these sections, instead of turning right and crossing the bridge, continue past the emergency shelter. About 1km further on, the trail crosses a forestry track at the end of section 3, where you have another opportunity to leave the gorge trail; to do this, follow the forestry road north for about 3km and exit back onto the circuit trail (trail No 410).

the Viennese, who come here to hike its lush forests and spectacular grassy plateau. Rising to 2076m, it is also easily reached by a narrow-gauge cog railway in the summer months. The first section of this trail follows yellow and green markers alongside the railway line for approximately 7km to Baumgarten station (1398m), leaves the railway line for most of the remaining 3km, and finishes at the mountain station (Bergstation). From here the 7km Plateauwanderung (Plateau Hike) begins to the summit of Schneeberg. The entire hike should only be attempted between April/May and October/November, when the ascent is free of snow; sections of the trail can get a bit slippery in the wet and weather can be changeable. Check the railway timetable for departure times if you are completing one section by rail, and be prepared for all weather conditions.

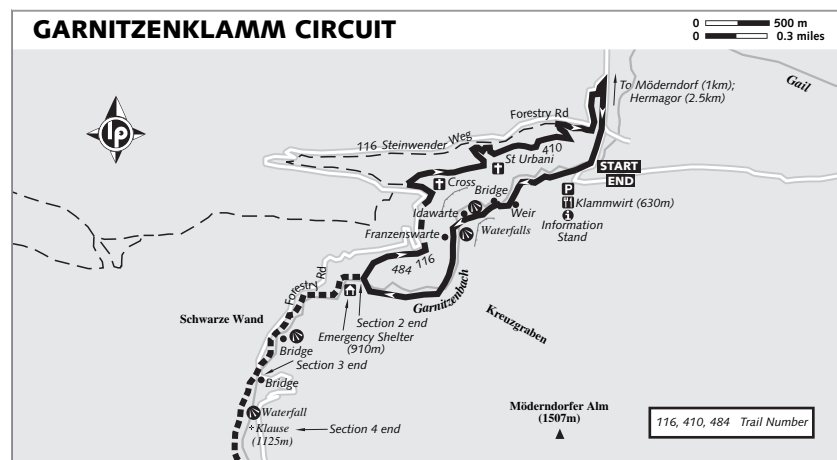
Getting to/from the Walk

The trailhead is a 10-minute walk north of the railway station in Puchberg. From the train station, follow Bahnstrasse southwest for about 200m until the end, turn right at the T-junction and follow this road until you arrive at the railway line. The trail begins here.

The Walk

From the trailhead, take the path running along the left-hand side of the railway line. After a few hundred metres it crosses the track (watch out for trains!) and follows the course of the line on the right-hand side for most of the hike to Baumgarten station. You will find the trail sublime and picturesque in these early stages, consisting mostly of a forestry track that clings to the side of the Niederer Hengst range. The vegetation in this section is predominantly mixed evergreen and deciduous forest of spruce, beech and some oak. As you climb and wind through the forest you notice views starting to open up into the Hengsttal (Stallion Valley) on the east. After about one hour and a climb of 435m you reach **Hengsthütte** ☎ 02636-21 03; www.hengsthutte.at; Hochschneeberg 1; beds €25; ☑ Tue-Sun May-Oct, Sat & Sun Nov-Apr), where there are spectacular views into the valley and mountains.

The vegetation shows signs of the higher altitude here, with larch and pine trees becoming more frequent. The trail continues along the right of the railway line for another 30



LOWER AUSTRIA

PUCHBERG TO SCHNEEBERG

Duration 7½ hours

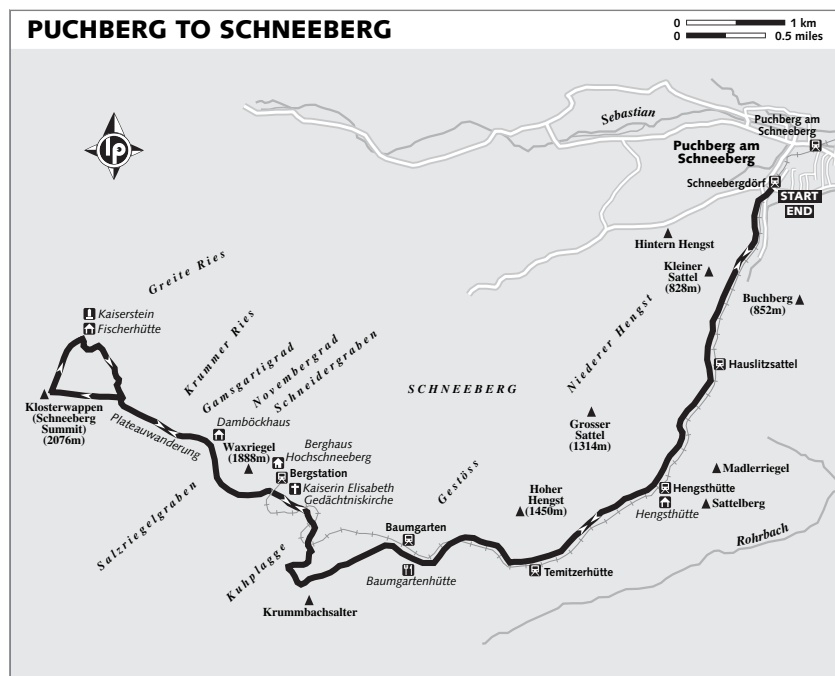
Distance 17km

Difficulty Easy to medium

Nearest Town Puchberg am Schneeberg (p187)

Summary This scenic hike follows the route of a railway line through changing forest landscapes, while the plateau section of the hike also offers tremendous views.

Schneeberg is Lower Austria's highest mountain and is the most popular among



or 40 minutes before crossing the track and leading to the café at Baumgarten station, **Baumgartenhütte** (☎ 02636-2107; Hochschneeberg 5; light mains €6-8; ☒ daily when train runs). With an evocative game-hunting interior, it's a good spot for a first rest. Few places in the world look like this, and it fills with forestry workers (and train passengers), who step inside to indulge in Baumgarten's famous *Buchtl*, a sweet leavened pastry.

With a *Buchtl* in your belly, follow the yellow trail along the stone embankment of the railway line before crossing the track. From now on you need to keep to the trail marked yellow. A red trail leading to Herminensteig goes off to the right just after the railway crossing; do not take this.

The yellow trail sticks closely to the line for about 200m, then leaves it and ascends through forest that was burned out in bushfires in the 1980s. Gradually you leave the tree line altogether, and the path becomes steep, rocky and uneven. If you are not an experienced hiker, you might find this section difficult in the wet. There are no steep drops, however, and the trail is well marked.

This section is also one of the most panoramic, with magnificent views to Hoher Hengst (1450m) and the valley around Puchberg in the northeast. Finally, about one hour after leaving Baumgarten and about three hours into the walk, you arrive at the stone **Kaiserin Elisabeth Gedächtniskirche**, built in honour of Empress Elisabeth and consecrated in 1901. Across from this is the Bergstation. The first section of the walk ends here.

The **Plateauwanderung**, marked in green and later yellow, starts from the station (1795m) and climbs gently along the side of Waxriegel mountain. A few minutes into the walk you have a wonderful view of what lies ahead: the **Klosterwappen** (Schneeberg summit), whose summit is marked with a cross, and the Fischerhütte perched delicately in the distance. After 20 minutes you reach **Damböckhaus** (☎ 02636-2259; www.damboeckhaus.at; Hochschneeberg 8; mattresses/beds €17/23; ☒ May-Oct), situated at an altitude on 1810m. This is a good place to nip in for sustenance and the host's speciality – game goulash – before you tackle the summit; dishes cost €7 to €9.

About 15 minutes from Damböckhaus the path forks and you follow the trail (marked yellow) to the left to the peak. Not surprisingly, this section is the steepest climb on the trail, rising 225m over 1.5km. About 45 minutes after leaving the fork, you reach the summit. Enjoy the splendid panorama if the weather is good and gather your strength.

The Plateauwanderung has one final section, which takes you along the ridge north for 15 minutes towards **Fischerhütte** (☎ 02636-2313; Hochschneeberg 9; mattresses/beds €10/16; ☒ Apr-Oct), on the cusp of the plateau. Near the hut is the **Kaiserstein**, commemorating royal hikes by Kaiser Franz I in 1805 and 1807. From Fischerhütte, complete the circuit on the plateau by taking the direct trail (green) for 40 minutes back past Damböckhaus, and from there walk another 20 minutes to the Bergstation. You can now return to Puchberg by train or, if you would like to stay overnight on the mountain in a pension, the comfortable **Berghaus Hochschneeberg** (☎ 02636-2257; berghaus.hochschneeberg@aon.at; Hochschneeberg 7; s/d €24/48) is situated conveniently close to the Bergstation.

SPITZ-SCHWALLENBACH CIRCUIT

Duration 4½ hours

Distance 11km (round circuit back to Spitz)

Difficulty Easy to medium

Nearest Town Spitz (p172)

Summary This is an easy hike in the Danube Valley through vineyards and forest to hilltop castle ruins. It continues through a nature park and returns via the Danube Cycle Path.

The Wachau region in the Danube Valley is one of the most spectacular river landscapes in Europe. Lush forests and picturesque vineyards cling to high valley walls and crags, while rustic *Heurigen* (wine taverns; ask at the tourist office in Spitz which ones are open) offer the chance to sample local wines direct from the cellar door. Although most towns in the Wachau have hiking trails, this circuit offers the advantage of hiking in almost any weather conditions, and brings together the best qualities of the Wachau: pretty vineyards, deciduous forest, great views of the Danube and a historic castle ruin. Even young children will find the section to the foot of the castle manageable. The climb to the castle and the trail through the nature park to Schwallenbach

are more difficult; here leaves on the path can make it slippery in the wet. Don't stray too far off this path as cliffs are located beyond the trees.

For more details on this walk, pick up the 1:35000 Naturerlebnis Wachau Wandern & Radfahren map (€1) from the tourist office (see p172).

Getting to/from the Walk

The trailhead is on the northern outskirts of Spitz at Rotes Tor, a medieval city gate. From Marktplatz in the centre of Spitz, follow Rote-Tor-Gasse to the right, then go right again at the school gate. Signs point the way.

The Walk

Even as you approach the trailhead from Marktplatz, you pass through small vineyards and an orchard. The Wachau region is famous for its *Marillen* (apricots), which are worked into jams, liqueurs and heady schnapps. Once you arrive at the trailhead you will also see why **Rotes Tor** is considered one of the best spots to take in the view.

Follow the path through the stone portal and into the forest. It's important to keep left at the first fork and follow the blue trail (trail No 10) leading towards Huthof. The path takes you through forest of birch, pine and occasional oak trees; after about 600m a new view over the valley opens up, and you reach a bench and **small cross**.

From here the trail changes direction significantly for the first time by leaving the blue trail and making a switchback southwest up the hill. As the path straightens out, some wooden boxes appear in the forest. These are used for feeding game, and after a while you come across a *Hochstiz* (hunting stool) used by the local forest hunters to wait for their unsuspecting game. More importantly, though, watch out for snakes in this section of forest as they tend to loiter around the woodpiles.

After a fairly moderate climb for another 600m you reach the crest of a ridge that extends up to the 700m-high Buchberg to the north; between the trees there are lovely views of the serpentine **Danube** (Donau).

The trail follows the swath cut into the lower reaches of Buchberg and gradually descends again, offering spectacular views over to the terraced **Michaeler Berg** in the east. At the next fork keep to the right, going in the direction of Erholungswald Jagdriedl; just after this

TREKKING WITH LLAMAS

One of the more interesting hikes with llamas in Lower Austria is along a section of the Jakobsweg (Jacob's Path). A two-day trek along this pilgrim's trail begins in Stift Göttweig (near Krems An Der Donau; p167) and goes via the monastery Maria Langeegg – where you stay overnight – to Melk. This two-day trek involves about six hours walking each day along pretty forest trails and costs a very reasonable €65 in a group of 15 people. **Donau Niederösterreich Tourismus** (☎ 02713-300 60 60; www.donau.com) handles bookings and can tell you more about the hike.

another view opens up, this time over the rooftops of Spitz to the Danube.

From here keep following the trail marked yellow, which leads down towards Radlbach, once a separate town but today a part of Spitz. As the trail heads in a more northerly direction, views shift from the Danube and Spitz to the side valley, the Spitzer Graben (Spitz Basin); from a bluff you get an interesting view of this river valley closed off on three sides by densely wooded mountains. This is a good place to unpack a lunch, and a bottle of local wine or juice.

Continue along the yellow trail (trail No 5) into the gully and across Radlbach (Radl Brook) then stay on the forestry track (yellow; trail No 6) alongside the brook all the way into Radlbach settlement, where there are more vineyards and **Heurigen**. As you walk around Rauch Emma (one of the vineyards), **Burgruine Hinterhaus** (Castle Ruin Hinterhaus) appears in the distance on the bluff.

From Radlbach, go left along the main road and right across the bridge. At the road marked Auf der Wehr, go left again. A sign warns that the climb ahead is steep – and it's serious. The degree of difficulty increases in this section, and for good reason: the approach to the fortress, which was first mentioned in official documents in 1243, was planned in

such a way that attackers stormed it with the right side of the body exposed to the castle defenders. This is typically the side of the body unprotected by a shield in battle. Despite this crafty piece of fortress building and landscape design, the castle gradually fell into disuse from the 1460s. To get to the castle, follow the signs along Weitwanderweg 05.

Views from the castle are superb, and this is a good place to rest up before tackling the second section of the walk. This section takes you through the lush **Jauerling Naturpark** (Jauerling Nature Park) towards Schwallenbach, a small town about 3km from the castle. To walk it, backtrack from the castle and take trail No 6/605 (marked in red) up into the forest. It's another steep climb and will require good shoes in the wet. Walk along the trail through the forest for about 500m, following red-and-yellow markers (trail No 7) until you see the fence; the trail divides here. Take the yellow trail (trail No 7), which winds along the top of **Teufelsmauer** (Devil's Wall) through dense forest, with occasional glimpses over the Danube Valley. After walking for about an hour, you descend gradually through vineyards towards Schwallenbach, from where you have the choice of taking a train or bus back to Spitz or completing the circuit by following the bicycle path alongside the Danube to Spitz.

Vienna



Few cities in the world glide so effortlessly between the present and the past like Vienna. Its splendid historical face is easily recognised: grand imperial palaces and bombastic baroque interiors, museums flanking magnificent squares and, above all, the Hofburg – where the Habsburg rulers lived, loved and married into empires.

But this historical aspect often makes us forget that Vienna is also one of Europe's most dynamic urban spaces. Just a stone's throw from Hofburg, the MuseumsQuartier houses some of the world's most provocative contemporary art behind a striking basalt façade. Outside, a courtyard buzzes on summer evenings with throngs of Viennese drinking and chatting. Nearby, restaurants brim with imbibers enjoying the pleasures of wine and food, while across the yard a museum café pulsates with beats.

It is a reminder that the city of Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, Schubert, Strauss, Brahms, Mahler and Schönberg is also the Vienna of Falco, who immortalised its urban textures in song. It's also a place where sushi and Austro-Asian fusion restaurants stand alongside the traditional *Beisl*. In this Vienna, it's okay to mention poetry slam and Stephansdom in one breath.

Throw in the mass of green space within the confines of the city limits (almost half the city expanse is given over to parkland), the 'blue' Danube cutting a path just to the east of the historical centre and the Wienerwald (Vienna Woods) creating much of Vienna's western border and you also have a capital with a great outdoors.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Scaling **Stephansdom** (p124), Vienna's glorious Gothic cathedral and beloved icon
- Savouring the bombastic pomp of **Schloss Schönbrunn** (p135) and the views from its gardens
- Immersing yourself in Vienna's textures on a night or day ramble along **Gumpendorfer Strasse** (p134)
- Hanging out in the **MuseumsQuartier** (p130), an art space spiked with bars and alive with urban energy
- Being provoked by naked bodies smeared with salad (among other modern art flourishes) at the Vienna's **MUMOK** (p130)



■ POPULATION: 1.54 MILLION

■ AREA: 415 SQ KM

■ HIGHEST ELEVATION: HERMANNSKOGEL 542M

■ AREA CODE: 01

HISTORY

Vienna was probably an important trading post for the Celts when the Romans arrived around 15 BC. They set up camp and named it Vindobona, after the Celtic tribe Vinid. The settlement blossomed into a town by the 3rd and 4th centuries, and vineyards were introduced to the surrounding area.

In 881 the town, then known as 'Wenia', surfaced in official documents and over the ensuing centuries control of Vienna changed hands a number of times, before the Babenbergs gained the upper hand (see p30). The Habsburgs inherited it, but none of them resided here permanently until Ferdinand I in 1533; the city was besieged by Turks in 1529 (p37).

Vienna was a hotbed of revolt and religious bickering during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation and suffered terribly through plague and siege at the end of the 17th century. However, the beginning of the 18th century heralded a golden age for Vienna, with baroque architecture, civil reform and a classical music revolution.

Things turned sour at the beginning of the 19th century – Napoleon occupied the city twice, in 1805 and 1809 (p30). His reign over Europe was brief, and in 1814–15 Vienna hosted the Congress of Vienna in celebration. Vienna grew in post-Napoleon Europe and in 1873 hosted its second international event, the World Fair. The advent of WWI stalled the city's architectural and cultural development and, by the end of the war, the monarchy had been consigned to the past (p32).

The 1920s saw the rise of fascism, and by 1934 civil war broke out in the city streets. The socialists were defeated and Vienna's city council dissolved. Austria was ripe for the picking, and Hitler came a-harvesting; on 15 March 1938 he entered the city to the cries of 200,000 ecstatic Viennese.

Vienna suffered heavily under Allied bombing, and on 11 April 1945 advancing Russian troops liberated the city. The Allies joined them until Vienna became independent in 1955, and since then it has gone from the razor's edge of Cold War to the focal point between new and old EU member nations.

ORIENTATION

Vienna occupies 415 sq km in the Danube Valley, with the Wienerwald (Vienna Woods) forming a natural border to the north and

west. The Danube (Donau) River flows north-east to southwest through the city. Vienna's heart, the Innere Stadt (inner city; 1st District), is south of the river on a diversion of the Danube, the Danube Canal (Donaukanal). It's encircled on three sides by the Ringstrasse, or Ring, a series of broad roads sporting an extravaganza of architectural delights. The Ring is at a distance of between 1.75km and 3km from the Gürtel (literally, 'belt'), a larger traffic artery that is fed by the flow of vehicles from outlying autobahns.

Stephansdom (St Stephen's Cathedral), with its slender spire, is in the heart of the Innere Stadt and is Vienna's principal landmark. Leading south from Stephansplatz station is Kärntner Strasse, an important pedestrian street that terminates at Karlsplatz, a major public transport hub.

The Danube runs down a long, straight channel, built between 1870 and 1875 to eliminate flooding. This was supplemented 100 years later by the building of a parallel channel, the Neue Donau (New Danube), creating the Donauinsel (Danube Island) recreational area. The original Alte Donau (Old Danube) loops north of the Neue Donau to enclose the Donaupark, Vienna International Center (UNO City, home to the UN), beaches and water-sports centres. Squeezed between the Danube Canal and the Danube is the Prater, a large park and playground of the Viennese.

Most hotels, pensions, restaurants and bars are in the Innere Stadt or west of the centre between the Ringstrasse and the Gürtel.

Maps

The free tourist office Vienna map shows bus, tram and U-Bahn routes, has a separate U-Bahn plan, and lists major city-wide sights. It also has a blow-up of the Innere Stadt. For a street index, Freytag & Berndt's 1:25,000 fold-out map (€7.99) is available at most bookshops.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

British Bookshop (Map pp120-1; www.britishbookshop.at; ☎ 9:30am-6:30pm Mon-Fri, 9:30am-6pm Sat) Weihburggasse (☎ 512 19 45; 01, Weihburggasse 24); Mariahilfer Strasse (☎ 522 67 30; 07, Mariahilfer Strasse 4) The largest selection of English novels, guidebooks, reference and teaching books.

Freytag & Berndt (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 86 85; www.freytagberndt.at; 01, Kohlmarkt 9; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri,

9am-6pm Sat) For maps and travel guides; stocks its own and competitors' maps.

Shakespeare & Co (Map pp120-1; ☎ 535 50 53; www.shakespeare.co.at; 01, Sterngasse 2; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat) Has a strong range of eclectic, literary, academic and art books; also literary and hard-to-find titles in English. Friendly staff.

Thalia (Map pp116-17; ☎ 595 45 50; 06, Mariahilfer Strasse 99; ☎ 9:30am-7pm Mon-Wed, 9:30am-8pm Thu & Fri, 9:30am-6pm Sat) A good range of travel books, maps and a small range of English fiction.

Emergency

See Quick Reference on the inside front cover for nationwide emergency numbers for ambulance, doctor, fire and police.

Police station (Map pp120-1; ☎ 313 10; 01, Deutschmeisterplatz 3; ☎ 24hr)

ViennaMed hotline ☎ 513 9595; ☎ 24hr) Information in English and German on local doctors.

Women's Emergency Line (Frauennotruf; ☎ 71 719; ☎ 24hr)

Internet Access

Vienna has dozens of places offering public access to online services. Free access is available at Flex (p153) and rhiz (p150; free after 9pm), which has a couple of terminals. Bücherei Wien (right) also has free internet access; rock up with your passport and log on.

Internet cafés charging around €2 to €4 per hour include:

BigNet (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 2939; 01, Hoher Markt 8-9; ☎ 9am-11pm) Centrally located in the Innere Stadt.

Speed Connect (Map pp120-1; ☎ 526 60 77; 01, Lerchenfelder Strasse 13; ☎ 10am-midnight Mon-Fri, noon-midnight Sat & Sun) Smoky internet café and call centre.

Speednet Café (Map pp116-17; ☎ 892 56 66; 15, Europlatz, Westbahnhof; ☎ 7am-midnight Mon-Sat, 8am-midnight Sun) Bustling internet café inside Westbahnhof with Skype.

Internet Resources

About Vienna (www.aboutvienna.org) General website with cultural and sightseeing information.

City of Vienna (www.wien.gv.at) Comprehensive government-run website.

Falter (www.falter.at, in German) Online version of the ever-popular *Falter* magazine (right).

Vienna Online (www.vienna.at, in German) Site with info on parties, festivals and news.

Vienna Tourist Board (www.wien.info) The first port of call for any visitor.

Left Luggage

Westbahnhof, Südbahnhof and Franz-Josef-Bahnhof have **left-luggage lockers** (per locker €2-3.50; ☎ 24hr).

Libraries

Bücherei Wien (Map p122; ☎ 4000 84500; www.buechereiwien.at; 07, Urban-Loritz-Platz; ☎ 11am-7pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat) The city library, straddling the U6 line.

Nationalbibliothek (Map pp120-1; ☎ 534 10 397; www.onb.ac.at; 01, Josefsplatz 1; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, till 9pm Thu) National library with huge reference and lending sections.

Media

For gay-specific publications see boxed text, p140.

City (in German) Like a downsized *Falter*; weekly paper with entertainment listings.

Falter (www.falter.at, in German) Weekly magazine; best resource for political commentary and entertainment listings in every genre imaginable.

Medical Services

The following *sKrankenhäuser* (hospitals) have emergency rooms open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Allgemeines Krankenhaus (Map p122; ☎ 404 00; 09, Währinger Gürtel 18-20)

Hanusch-Krankenhaus (Map pp114-15; ☎ 910 21-0; 14, Heinrich-Collin-Strasse 30)

Lorenz Böhler Unfallkrankenhaus (Map pp116-17; ☎ 331 10; 20, Donaueschingenstrasse 13)

Unfallkrankenhaus Meidling (Map pp116-17; ☎ 601 50-0; 12, Kundratstrasse 37)

If you require a *Zahnarzt* (dentist) after hours call ☎ 512 20 78 (recorded message in German only); likewise if you need an *Apotheken* (pharmacy) outside shop hours, dial ☎ 1550 (in German only).

Money

Banks and currency exchange offices are located around town, but compare commission rates before changing money. *Bankomats* (ATMs) are found everywhere, including at the train stations and airport; most shut down at midnight.

The money exchange and banking services office in Westbahnhof keeps hours from 7am to 10pm daily. The bank at Südbahnhof is open 8am to 6pm weekdays and 8am to 4pm Saturday.

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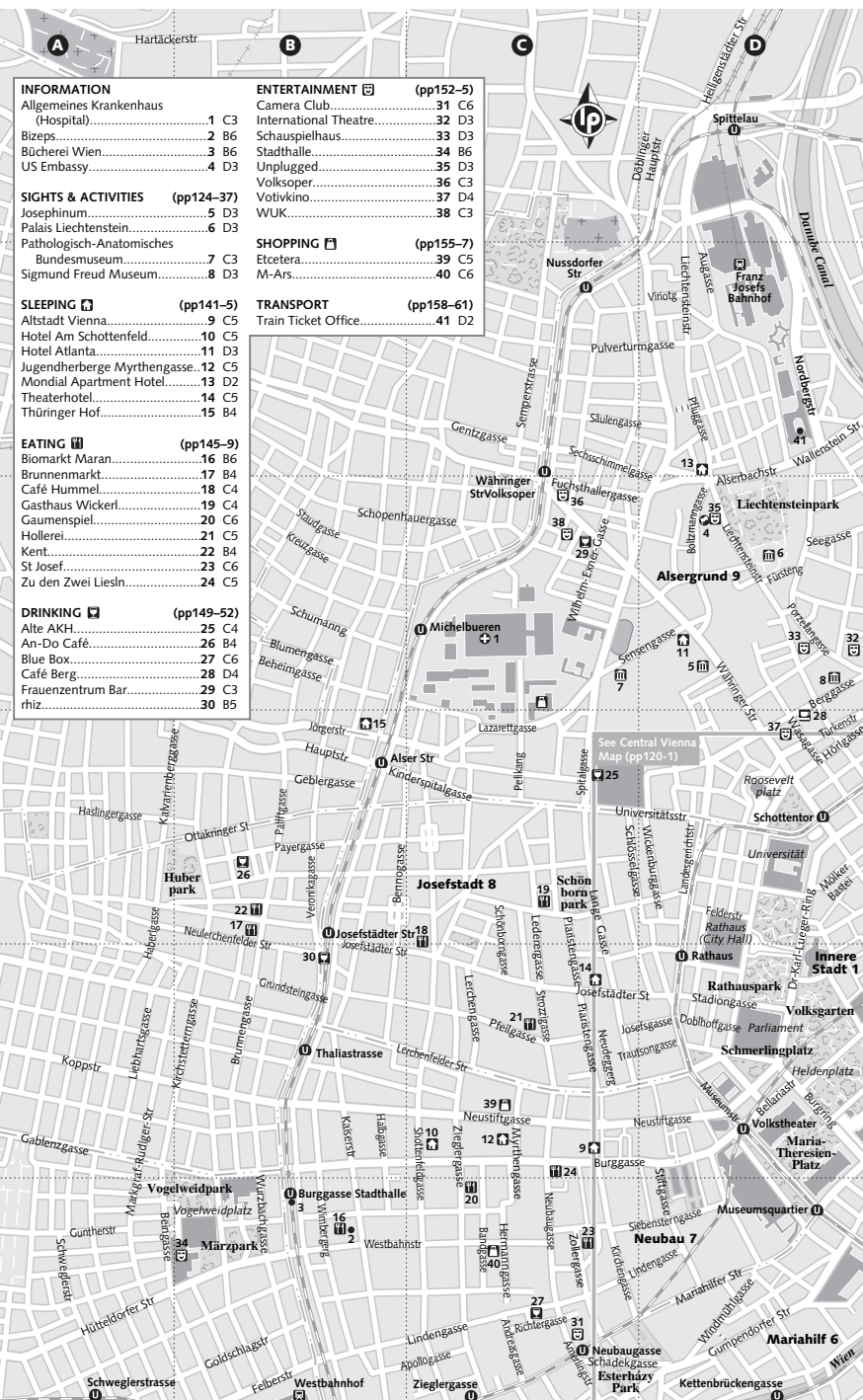
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Commissions on American Express cash and travellers cheque services vary; see the Directory (p389).

Post

Franz-Josefs-Bahnhof Post Office (Map p122; ☎ 0577 677 1090; 09, Althanstrasse 10; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat & Sun)

Main post office (Map pp120-1; ☎ 0577 677 1010; www.post.at; 01, Fleischmarkt 19; ☎ 6am-10pm)

Südbahnhof post office (Map pp116-17; ☎ 0577 677 1103; 10, Wiedner Gürtel 1b; ☎ 7am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat & Sun)

Westbahnhof post office (Map pp116-17; ☎ 0577 677 1150; 15, Europaplatz; ☎ 7am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9am-8pm Sat & Sun)

Tourist Information

Airport Information Office (☎ 6am-11pm) Located in the arrival hall.

ADDRESSES

Vienna is divided into 23 *Bezirke* (districts), fanning out in approximate numerical order clockwise around the Innere Stadt. Note that when reading addresses, the number of a building within a street *follows* the street name. Any number *before* the street name denotes the district. The middle two digits of postcodes correspond to the district. Thus a postcode of 1010 means the place is in district one, and 1230 refers to district 23.

City Hall Information Office (Map pp120-1; ☎ 525 50; www.wien.gv.at; 01, Rathaus; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri) Provides information on social, cultural and practical matters, and is geared as much to residents as to tourists.

Jugendinfo (Map pp120-1; ☎ 1799; www.jugendinfo.wien.at; 01, Babenbergerstrasse 1; ☎ noon-7pm Mon-Sat) Tailored to ages 14 to 26; tickets for a variety of events at reduced rates and tips on the young alternative scene in Vienna.

VIENNA IN...

Two Days

Start your day with a *melange* (coffee; specific to Austria) and *butter-semel* (butter-roll) at a traditional Kaffeehaus (coffee house). Jump on tram 1 or 2 and circle the **Ringstrasse** (p128) for a brief but rewarding informal tour of the boulevard's buildings. Get out at Kärntner Strasse and wander towards the heart of the city where the glorious Gothic **Stephansdom** (p124) awaits. Make your way to the **Hofburg** (p125) and its **Prunksaal** (p126) before crossing the Ringstrasse to the **Kunsthistorisches Museum** (p128), home to a breathtaking art collection. Recharge the batteries at one of the many **Innere Stadt restaurants** (p145) before attending a performance at the **Staatsoper** (p152).

Day two could begin with a visit to the imperial palace **Schönbrunn** (p135), before heading to the **MuseumsQuartier** (p130) and its **Leopold Museum** (p130), a treasure-chest of Austrian artists. Take an early dinner at Vienna's celebrated market, the **Naschmarkt** (p149), then cross the city for a ride on the **Riesenrad** (p131) in the **Prater** (p131). Finish the day with local wine and food at a **Heurigen** (p151).

Four Days

After fulfilling the two-day itinerary, start the third day with an exploration of the **Schloss Belvedere** (p132), an unequalled baroque palace, before lunching at **Zu den Zwei Liesln** (p147). Walk off that monstrous Wiener schnitzel in the **Ringstrasse Gardens** (p128) before viewing Klimt's sumptuous *Beethoven Frieze* in the **Secession** (p129). If there's time, make for **Kahlenberg** (p137) to beat the setting sun. End the night in one of the **Gürtel's progressive bars** (p150) or the plethora of night spots in and around the Naschmarkt.

If you're still up for unfathomable art collections in regal surroundings, a visit to the **Albertina** (p127) or **Palais Liechtenstein** (p132) is a must on the fourth day. This is a city where 'macabre' and 'imperial' comfortably exist in the same sentence, so an afternoon trip to the **Kaisergruft** (p127) should follow. Spend your last evening in one of the city's music houses, such as the **Konzerthaus** (p152) or **Musikverein** (p152), experiencing the music of Beethoven or Mozart where it was originally played.

Tourist Info Wien (Map pp120-1; ☎ 211 14-555; www.wien.info; 01, Albertinaplatz; ☎ 9am-7pm) Vienna's main tourist office, with a ticket agency, hotel booking service, free maps and every brochure you could ever want for.

WienXtra-Kinderinfo (Map pp120-1; ☎ 4000 84 400; www.kinderinfo.wien.at; 07, Museumsplatz 1; ☎ 2-7pm Tue-Thu, 10am-5pm Fri & Sat) This child-friendly tourist office has loads of information on kids activities and a small indoor playground.

Travel Agencies

American Express (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 4004; 01, Kärntner Strasse 21-23; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri; exchange office also 10am-1pm Sat) Travel section and financial services, and will hold mail (not parcels) free of charge for up to one month for Amex cardholders.

Österreichisches Verkehrsbüro (Map pp120-1; ☎ 588 00 100; www.verkehrsbuero.at, in German; 04, Friedrichstrasse 7; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) Major national agency that sells DSG boat tickets and organises almost everything under the sun.

STA Travel Call Centre (Map 120-1; ☎ 401 48 60 00; 09, Garnisonsgasse 7; ☎ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Thu, 8.30am-5.30pm Fri, 10am-5pm Sat) Call centre only, with ticket collection.

Travel Shop Rilkeplatz (Map 120-1; ☎ 502 43-0; www.statravel.at; 04, Rilkeplatz 2; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri) STA has discounted flights for students and helpful staff that speak English. There are three other shops in the city.

SIGHTS

Most of Vienna's top attractions are inside the Innere Stadt or within 10 minutes' walk of its boundaries. The Innere Stadt is best tackled on foot as it's a maze of narrow one-way and pedestrian-only zones. The rest of the city is easily managed by public transport or, if you're feeling fit, by bicycle.

MORE FOR YOUR MONEY

If you're planning on doing a lot of sightseeing in a short period, consider purchasing the **Wien-Karte** (Vienna Card; €18.50), which provides 72 hours of unlimited travel plus discounts at selected museums, attractions, cafés and shops. It comes with an information brochure and is available from hotels and ticket offices.

The Kunsthistorisches Museum and its associated museums are covered by Gold, Silver and Bronze tickets. The **Gold ticket** (€23) allows entry to the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Schatzkammer, Neue Burg museums, Museum für Völkerkunde, Wagenburg in Schönbrunn and the Theaternmuseum. The **Silver ticket** (€21) covers everything the Gold ticket does, minus the Wagenburg. Third place **Bronze** (€19) will get you into the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Schatzkammer, Neue Burg museums and the Museum für Völkerkunde.

The City of Vienna runs some 20 **municipal museums** (www.museum.vienna.at) scattered around the city, all of which are included in a free booklet available at the Rathaus. Permanent exhibitions in all are free on Sunday.

VIENNA'S MUSEUMS

Vienna's top museum spots for:

- Contemporary art and Vienna Actionism – **MUMOK** (p130)
- The dark side – **Pathologisch-Anatomisches Bundesmuseum** (p139)
- European old masters and new – **Kunsthistorisches Museum** (p128)
- Gesamtkunstwerk (quiet gardens, architecture and Austrian art) – **Schloss Belvedere** (p132)
- Children – **Zoom** (p139)
- Treasures and reliquaries – **Schatzkammer** (p126)

Innere Stadt

The Innere Stadt is a timeless and magical place where Vienna's past swirls and eddies in narrow ways and atmospheric cobblestone streets. The city centre district is a Unesco World Heritage site. Though well trodden, it rewards close exploration, and if crowds distract then try exploring the streets at night.

STEPHANS DOM

The most beloved and recognisable structure in all of Vienna is the Gothic masterpiece **Stephansdom** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 515 52-3520; www.stephanskirche.at; 01, Stephansplatz; admission free, guided tours adult/student & child €4/1.50; ☎ 6am-10pm Mon-Sat, 7am-10pm Sun, tours in English 3.45pm Apr-Oct) or Steffl (little Stephen) as the Viennese call it.

The cathedral was built on the site of a 12th-century church, of which the surviving

Riesentor (Giant's Gate), main entrance and Heidentürme (Towers of the Heathens) are incorporated into the present building. These are Romanesque, but the cathedral's most distinctive features date from it being rebuilt in the Gothic style from 1359.

Dominating the cathedral is the skeletal **Südturm** (adult/student & child €3/1; ☎ 9am-5.30pm), rising 136.7m and completed in 1433 after 75 years of work. Negotiating 343 steps brings you to a cramped viewing platform for a stunning panorama of Vienna. Originally this should have been matched on the north side by a **companion tower** (adult/student €4/1.50; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Apr-May & Sep-Oct, 8.30am-6pm Jul & Aug, 8.30am-7pm Nov-Mar), accessible by lift, but the imperial purse withered and when the Gothic style went out of fashion its incomplete tower was topped off with a Renaissance cupola in 1579. The **Pummerin** (boomer bell), Austria's largest bell and weighing in at a hefty 21 tonnes, was installed in 1952.

Look closely at decorations and statues on the exterior of the cathedral: at the rear the agony of the Crucifixion is well captured, while the glorious **tiled roof** shows dazzling chevrons on one end and the Austrian eagle on the other.

Taking centre stage inside is the magnificent Gothic **stone pulpit**, fashioned in 1515 by Anton Pilgram. The expressive faces of the four fathers of the church (the saints Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory and Jerome) are at the centre of the design, but the highlight is Pilgram himself peering out from a window below. He also appears at the base of the organ loft on the northern wall, seemingly holding up the entire organ on his narrow shoulders. The baroque **high altar** in the main chancel depicts the stoning of St Stephen; the left chancel contains a winged altarpiece from Wiener Neustadt, dating from 1447; the right chancel houses the Renaissance-style red marble tomb of Friedrich III.

The cathedral's **Katakomben** (catacombs; adult/student €4/1.50; guided tour every 15 or 30min 10-11.30am & 1.30-4.30pm Mon-Sat, 1.30-4.30pm Sun) house the remains of plague victims, kept in a mass grave and a bone house. Also on display are rows of urns containing the organs of the Habsburgs. One of the many privileges of being a Habsburg was to be dismembered and dispersed after death: their hearts are in the Augustinerkirche in the Hofburg and the rest is in the Kaisergruft (p127).

HOFBURG

Nothing symbolises the culture and heritage of Austria more than its Hofburg (Imperial Palace; Map pp120-1). The Habsburgs were based here for over six centuries, from the first emperor (Rudolf I in 1273) to the last (Karl I in 1918). The Hofburg owes its size and architectural diversity to plain old one-upmanship; new sections were added by the new rulers, including the early baroque **Leopold Wing** (Map pp120-1), the 18th-century **Imperial Chancery Wing** (Map pp120-1), the 16th-century **Amalia Wing** (Map pp120-1) and the Gothic **Burgkapelle** (Royal Chapel; Map pp120-1).

The oldest section is the 13th-century **Schweizerhof** (Swiss Courtyard; Map pp120-1), named after the Swiss guards who used to protect its precincts. The Renaissance Swiss gate dates from 1553. The courtyard adjoins a larger courtyard, **In der Burg** (Map pp120-1), with a monument to Emperor Franz II adorning its centre. The palace now houses the offices of the Austrian president and a raft of museums.

Kaiserappartements

The **Kaiserappartements** (Imperial Apartments; Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 75 70; 01, Innerer Burghof, Kaisertor; adult/student/child €9.90/8.90/4.90; ☎ 9am-5pm, 9am-5.30pm Jul & Aug), once occupied by Franz Josef I and Empress Elisabeth, are extraordinary for their opulence, fine furniture, tapestries and bulbous crystal chandeliers; only Schloss Schönbrunn (p135) matches the sheer extravagance of these apartments. The highlight of the adjoining **Hoftafel und Silberkammer** (Court Tableware and Silver Depot), a collection of porcelain and tableware, is a 30m long Mailänder Tafelaufsatz (Milan Table Piece). Admission to the apartments includes an audio guide plus entry to Hoftafel und Silberkammer and Sisi.

Sisi

Occupying the first six rooms of the Kaiserappartements and included in the entry price, **Sisi Museum** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 75 70; 01, Innerer Burghof, Kaisertor; ☎ 9am-5pm, 9am-5.30pm Jul & Aug) is devoted to the life of Austria's Empress Elisabeth, often called 'Sisi'. A reconstruction of the luxurious coach that carried her on many a journey is one highlight, but it's the details that give a feel for the life of the empress: a reconstruction of the dress she wore on the eve of her wedding, plus her sunshade, fans and gloves.

Schatzkammer

The **Schatzkammer** (Imperial Treasury; Map pp120-1; ☎ 525 24-486; 01, Schweizerhof; adult/student/child/family €8.10/7.50/3.50/20; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Mon) is a spectacular collection of secular and ecclesiastical treasures. The sheer wealth on display is staggering: Room 7 alone contains a 2860-carat Colombian emerald, a 416-carat balas ruby and a 492-carat aquamarine; Room 11 holds the highlight of the Treasury, the 10th-century imperial crown with eight gold plates and precious gems; while Room 8 contains a 75cm-wide bowl carved from a single piece of agate, and a narwhal tusk, 243cm long and once claimed to have been a unicorn horn. The Sacred Treasury tops it off with rare religious relics, and the dubious claim to have fragments of the True Cross, one of the nails from the Crucifixion and one of the thorns from Christ's crown.

Lipizzaner Museum

The **Lipizzaner Museum** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 525 24-583; www.lipizzaner.at; 01, Reitschulestrasse 2; adult/student & child/family €5/3.60/10; ☎ 9am-6pm) focuses on the famous white stallions of the Spanische Hofreitschule (Spanish Riding School; below). A cross-breed of Spanish, Arab and Berber horses, the Lipizzaner were first imported from Spain (hence 'Spanish') by Maximilian II in 1562, and in 1580 a stud was established at Lipizza (hence 'Lipizzaner'), now in Slovenia. Text is in English, but the content is a little thin. Windows allow a view directly into the stallion stables, albeit obscured by thick glass and fine mesh.

Spanische Hofreitschule

For the real thing, cross the street to the **Spanische Hofreitschule** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 90 31; www.srs.at; 01, Michaelerplatz 1; admission €31-165; ☎ performances 11am Sun mid-Feb-Jun & Sep-Dec, extra performances Fri & Sat). These graceful stallions perform an equine ballet to a programme of classical music while chandeliers shimmer from above and the audience cranes to see from pillared balconies. Tickets can be ordered through the website, but be warned that performances are usually booked out months in advance. Unclaimed tickets are sold about two hours before performances, so you might try asking at the office about cancellations. Training or movement programmes are open to the public at various times. The most regular is the 'Morgenarbeit' **Morning Training** (adult/student

& child/family €12/6/24; ☎ 10am-noon Tue-Sat Feb-Jun & mid-Aug-Dec) session. For these, tickets can be bought the same day at gate 2, Josefsplatz in the Hofburg. Queues are very long early in the day, but most people have disappeared by around 11am, when you can often get in quickly. It's a fairly dull affair, and photos aren't allowed at any sessions, so if you want one try waiting to see the horses cross between the school and the **Stallburg** (stables), which usually happens on the half-hour.

Nationalbibliothek

Austria's flagship library, the **Nationalbibliothek** (National Library; Map pp120-1; ☎ 534 10 397; www.onb.ac.at; 01, Josefsplatz 1; adult/student & child/family €5/3/9; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, till 9pm Thu) contains an astounding collection of literature, maps, globes of the world and other cultural relics; its highlight, though, is the **Prunksaal** (Grand Hall), a majestic baroque hall built between 1723 and 1726. Commissioned by Karl VI (whose statue is under the central dome), it holds some 200,000 leather-bound scholarly tomes. Rare volumes (mostly 15th century) are stored within glass cabinets, with books opened to beautifully illustrated pages of text. The central fresco, by Daniel Gran, depicts the emperor's apotheosis.

Neue Burg Museums

An ensemble of three museums occupy part of the **Neue Burg** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 525 24-484; 01, Heldenplatz; adult/student & child/family €8/6/16, audio guide €3; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Mon). The **Sammlung Alter Musik Instrumente** (Collection of Ancient Musical Instruments) is the best of the bunch and contains instruments in all shapes, sizes and tones. The **Ephesos Museum** features artefacts from Ephesus and Samothrace donated (some say 'lifted') by the Sultan in 1900 after a team of Austrian archaeologists excavated Ephesus in Turkey. Last but not least is the **Hofjagd und Rüstkammer** (Arms and Armour), with a fine collection of ancient armour dating mainly from the 15th and 16th centuries.

Museum für Völkerkunde

The **Museum für Völkerkunde** (Ethnological Museum; Map pp120-1; ☎ 534 30-0; www.ethno-museum.ac.at; 01, Heldenplatz; adult/student & child/family €10/7.50/20; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Mon) has rotating exhibitions while being renovated (expected to finish in 2009). Its permanent collection of folk art from around the world includes an Aztec

feather headdress once worn by Montezuma. (Note that entry to the Neue Burg museums and Museum für Völkerkunde have this combined price during exhibitions.)

ALBERTINA

Once used to house imperial guests, the **Albertina** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 534 83-544; www.albertina.at; 01, Albertinaplatz 3; adult/student/child €9.50/7/3.50; ☎ 10am-6pm, to 9pm Wed) is now home to an astoundingly rich collection of graphic art. It contains 1½ million prints and 50,000 drawings, including 145 Dürer drawings (the largest in the world), 43 by Raphael, 70 by Rembrandt and 150 by Schiele. There are more by Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Rubens, Bruegel, Cézanne, Picasso, Klimt, Matisse and Kokoschka, and of course only a fraction of the collection is on display at any one time. Exhibitions, which normally follow a theme or artist, are changed every three months and also feature works from other collections.

HAUS DER MUSIK

The four floors of the **Haus der Musik** (House of Music; Map pp120-1; ☎ 516 48; www.hdm.at; 01, Seilerstätte 30; adult/student & child €10/8.50, half-price 5-9pm Tue; ☎ 10am-10pm) are devoted in one form or another to music. All descriptions are in English and German. The 1st floor pays homage, rather briefly, to the Vienna Philharmonic.

The 2nd floor is where the fun begins; the **Sonosphere** section delves into the physics of sounds and uses touch screens and loads of hands-on displays to explain the mechanics of sound. Here you can test the limits of your hearing and play around with sampled sounds and record your own CD (€0.99 per song, plus €2 for CD and cover). The 3rd floor features the stars of Vienna's classical music – Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Strauss and Mahler all receive a room apiece. Best of all is the 'virtual conductor', where a video of the Vienna Philharmonic responds to a conducting baton and keeps time with your movements. Floor 4 has experimental and electronic music, which you can also modify. Singing trees, sound sticks and beeping buttons are just some of the hands-on 'instruments' at your disposal.

KAISERGRUFT

The high-peaked **Kaisergruft** (Imperial Burial Vault; Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 68 53; www.kapuziner.at/wien; in German; 01 Neuer Markt; adult/student/child €4/3/1.50;

☎ 10am-6pm), beneath the Kapuzinerkirche (Church of the Capuchin Friars), was instigated by Empress Anna (1585-1618), and her body and that of her husband, Emperor Matthias (1557-1619), were the first to be placed here. Since then, all but three of the Habsburg dynasty members found their way here (in bits and pieces), the last being Empress Ziti in 1889. The only non-Habsburg to be buried here is the Countess Fuchs.

The royals' fashion extends even to tombs: those in the vault range from the unadorned to the ostentatious. By far the most elaborate caskets are those in 18th-century baroque pomp, such as the huge double sarcophagus containing Maria Theresia and Franz I. The tomb of Charles VI has been expertly restored. Both were the work of Balthasar Moll (p54).

JÜDISCHES MUSEUM

The **Jüdisches Museum** (Jewish Museum; Map pp120-1; ☎ 535 04 31; www.jmw.at; 01, Dorotheergasse 11; adult/student & child €6.50/4; ☎ 10am-6pm Sun-Fri), taking up three floors of Palais Eskeles, uses holograms and an assortment of objects to document the history of the Jews in Vienna, from the first settlements at Judenplatz in the 13th century up to the present. The ground floor is filled with the Max Berger collection – a rich compilation of Judaica mainly dating from the Habsburg era. Temporary exhibitions are presented on the 1st floor, with the 2nd floor dividing its space between more temporary exhibitions and 21 holograms depicting the history of the Jewish people in Vienna.

A combined ticket of €10/6 for adult/student and child (bring ID) allows entry to the **Stadttempel** (Synagogue; Map pp120-1; ☎ 535 04 31; www.jmw.at; 01, Seitenstettengasse 4; adult/student & child €3/2; ☎ guided tours 11.30am & 2pm Mon-Thu) and the Museum Judenplatz (below).

MUSEUM JUDENPLATZ

The **Museum Judenplatz** (Jewish museum; Map p120-1; ☎ 535 04 31; www.jmw.at; 01, Judenplatz 8; adult/student & child €4/2.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Sun-Thu, 10am-2pm Fri) focuses on excavated remains of a medieval synagogue (1421) once situated on Judenplatz. The basic outline of the synagogue can still be seen and a small model of the building helps to complete the picture. Documents and artefacts dating from 1200 to 1400 are on display, and spacey interactive screens explain Jewish culture. On Judenplatz is Austria's first Holocaust memorial, the 'Nameless Library'.

This squat, boxlike structure pays homage to the 65,000 Austrian Jews who were killed during the Holocaust.

ANKERUHR

The picturesque **Ankeruhr** (Art Nouveau clock; Map pp120-1; Hoher Markt 10-11) was created by Franz von Matsch in 1911 and commissioned by the Anker Insurance Co. Over a 12-hour period, figures such as Josef Haydn and Maria Theresia slowly pass across the clock face – details of who's who are outlined on a plaque on the wall below. Join the mass of tourists at noon when all the figures trundle past in turn, and organ music from the appropriate period is piped out.

Other interesting sights in the Innere Stadt: **Beethovenhaus** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 535 89 05; 01, Mörker Bastei 8; adult/student & child €2/1; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-6pm Tue-Sun) Beethoven's residence from 1804 to 1814 (he apparently occupied some 60 places in his 35 years in Vienna) where he composed Symphonies 4, 5 and 7 and the opera *Fidelio*, among other works. You can listen to works and view some memorabilia.

Mozarthaus Vienna (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 1791; 01, Domgasse 5; adult/student/child €9/7/3; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun) Three floors covering Vienna during Mozart's era, the musician himself and this former residence, where he penned *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Neidhart-Fresken (Map pp120-1; ☎ 535 90 65; 01, Tuchlauben 19; adult/child €2/1, free Sun; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-6pm Tue, 2-6pm Fri-Sun) The oldest extant secular murals in Vienna dating from 1398, retelling the story of the minstrel Neidhart von Reuenthal (1180–1240) in lively and jolly scenes.

Ruprechtskirche (St Rupert's Church; Map pp120-1; 01, Ruprechtsplatz) The oldest church in Vienna, first documented in 1137. Unfortunately it's rarely open to the public.

Ringstrasse

Emperor Franz Josef was largely responsible for the monumental architecture around the Ringstrasse (Ring). In 1857 he decided to tear down the redundant military fortifications and exercise grounds and replace them with grandiose public buildings in a variety of historical styles. Work began the following year and reached a peak in the 1870s. The stock market crash in 1873 put a major dampener on plans, and other grand plans were shelved due to lack of money and the outbreak of WWI. The Ring is easily explored on foot or bicycle; if you've not the time, jump on tram 1 or 2, both of which run the length of the boulevard and offer a snapshot of the impressive architecture.

PARLAMENT

The neoclassical façade and Greek pillars of **Parlament** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 40 110-2570; www.parlin.kom.gv.at; 01, Dr-Karl-Renner-Ring 3; tours adult/student & child €4/2; ☎ tours 10am, 11am, 2pm, 3pm & 4pm Mon-Fri, 10am, 11am, noon & 1pm Sat) are the work of Theophil Hansen in 1883 and make a striking impression; it's complemented by the beautiful **Athena Fountain** situated in front of the building. Athena is flanked by statues of horse breaking (though some would say horse punching).

RATHAUS

The neo-Gothic **Rathaus** (City Hall; Map pp120-1; ☎ 525 50; www.wien.gv.at; 01, Rathausplatz; ☎ tours 1pm Mon, Wed & Fri), which was modelled on Flemish city halls, steals the Ringstrasse show. Its main spire soars to 102m, if you include the pennant held by the knight at the top. You're free to wander through the seven inner courtyards but you must join a guided tour to catch a glimpse of the interior, with its red carpets, gigantic mirrors and frescoes.

KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM

The **Kunsthistorisches Museum** (Museum of Fine Arts; Map pp120-1; ☎ 525 240; www.khm.at; 01, Burgring 5; adult/student & child/family €10/7.50/20, audio guides in English €3; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, 10am-9pm Thu) ranks among the finest museums in Europe, if not the world, and should not be missed. The Habsburgs were great collectors, and the huge extent of lands under their control led to many important works of art being funnelled back to Vienna.

Rubens was appointed to the service of a Habsburg governor in Brussels, so it comes as no surprise that the museum has one of the best collections of his works. The collection of paintings by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525–69) is also unrivalled. In the building itself, the murals between the arches above the stairs were created by three artists, including a young Klimt (1862–1918; northern wall), painted before he broke with neoclassical tradition.

See the website for details of free tours on special topics.

Ground Floor

In the west wing is the Egyptian collection, including the burial chamber of Prince Kaninisut and mummified animal remains. The Greek and Roman collection here in-

cludes the Gemma Augusta cameo made from onyx in AD 10.

The east wing contains sculpture and decorative arts covering a range of styles and epochs. This is closed for renovation in 2008 and 2009; when it reopens the collection will include 17th-century glassware, ornaments and lavish clocks from the 16th and 17th centuries.

First Floor

The **Gemäldegalerie** (Picture Gallery) on this floor is the most important part of the museum and features Bruegel, Dürer, Rubens, Rembrandt and many others. All works are labelled in English and German.

The **East Wing** is devoted mainly to German, Dutch and Flemish paintings. The exact locations of paintings change somewhat, but one room is set aside for the Bruegel collection, amassed by Rudolf II. A recurrent theme in Bruegel the Elder's work is nature, as in *The Hunters in the Snow* (1565). A gallery also displays the warm, larger-than-life scenes of Flemish baroque. The motto in *The Celebration of the Bean King* by Jacob Jordaens (1593–1678), a rollicking painting depicting revellers raising their glasses, translates as 'None resembles a fool more than the drunkard'. Works by Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) feature prominently among the German painters. His brilliant mastery of colour is perhaps best illustrated in *The Adoration of the Trinity*, originally an altarpiece.

The paintings by the mannerist Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1527–93), in rooms dedicated to Italian painting in the 15th and 16th century, use a device well explored later by Salvador Dalí (1904–89) – familiar objects arranged to be perceived in a new light. Dramatic baroque scenes of Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), who brought together northern European and Italian traditions, are showcased among the 17th-century Flemish painters, and several self-portraits by Rembrandt can be found among the 17th-century Dutch painters.

The **West Wing** contains evocative works by Titian (1485–1576), a member of the Venetian school. Never too far away is *The Three Philosophers* (1508), which is one of the few properly authenticated works by Giorgione (1478–1510). Also part of the 15th- and 16th-century Italian collection is Raphael's (1483–1520) harmonious and idealised *Madonna in the Meadow* (1505) –

its triangular composition and the complementary colours are typical features of the Florentine high Renaissance. It's interesting to compare this with Caravaggio's (1571–1610) *Madonna of the Rosary* (1606), housed in the collection of Italian paintings from the 17th and 18th century, in which the supplicants' dirty feet illustrate a new realism in early baroque. The 18th-century Italian painter Bernardo Bellotto (1721–80) was commissioned by Maria Theresia to paint scenes of Vienna. Several are on show here, and some of these landscapes, such as a view from Belvedere, break away from faithful representation of the landscape.

NATURHISTORISCHES MUSEUM

The **Naturhistorisches Museum** (Museum of Natural History; Map pp120-1; ☎ 52177-0 www.nhm-wien.ac.at; 01, Burg Ring 7; adult/senior/student & child €8/6/3.50; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Thu-Mon, 9am-9pm Wed) is the scientific counterpart of the Kunsthistorisches Museum. Minerals, meteorites and animal remains are displayed in jars, while zoology and anthropology are covered in detail and there's also a children's corner. The 25,000-year-old *Venus of Willendorf* statuette is on display here (her 100th anniversary of discovery was celebrated in 2008), and also in room 11 is her older sister, the 32,000 BC statuette *Venus of Galgenberg* (the oldest figurative sculpture in the world).

AKADEMIE DER BILDENDEN KÜNSTE

The **Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste** (Academy of Fine Arts; Map pp120-1; ☎ 588 16-0; www.akademiegalerie.at, in German; 01, Schillerplatz 3; adult/student/child under 10 €7/4/free, audio guide €2; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) has a small picture gallery, the highlight of which is *The Last Judgement* altarpiece by Hieronymus Bosch (1450–1516). Flemish painters are well represented in this building, which itself sports an elegant façade. As fate would have it, this was the academy that turned down would-be artist Adolf Hitler. A statue of Schiller takes centre stage in front of the academy.

SECESSION

The year 1897 was a fateful one for Austrian art. This was the year 19 progressive artists broke away from the conservative artistic establishment that met in the Künstlerhaus art gallery in Vienna and formed their own Secession movement. Their aim was to

present new trends in contemporary art and depart from backward-looking historicism. Among their number were Gustav Klimt, Josef Hoffman (1871–1956), Kolo Moser (1868–1918) and Josef M Olbrich (1867–1908), a former student of Otto Wagner (1841–1918).

In 1898, Olbrich designed the movement's **Secession Building** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 587 53 07; www.secession.at; 01, Friedrichstrasse 12; admission exhibition & frieze adult/child & student €6/3.50, exhibition only €4.50/3; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, 10am-8pm Thu); its most striking feature is the enormous golden sphere (prosaically described as a 'golden cabbage' by some Viennese) rising from a turret on the roof. Above the door are highly distinctive mask-like faces with dangling serpents instead of earlobes. The motto above the entrance postulates: 'Der Zeit ihre Kunst, der Kunst ihre Freiheit' (To each time its art, to art its freedom).

The 14th exhibition held in the building, in 1902, featured the famous *Beethoven Frieze* by Klimt. This 34m-long work was intended only as a temporary exhibit, but has been painstakingly restored and is permanently on show in the basement. The frieze shows willowy women with bounteous hair jostling for attention with a large gorilla, while slender figures float and a choir sings. The ground floor is still used for temporary exhibitions of contemporary art.

MUSEUMSQUARTIER

The **Museumsquartier** (Museum Quarter; Map pp120-1; ☎ 523 58 81-173, 0820-600 600; www.mqw.at; 07, Museumsplatz 1; ☎ information & ticket centre 10am-7pm) is a remarkable ensemble of museums, cafés, restaurants and bars inside former imperial stables designed by Fischer von Erlach. This breeding ground of Viennese cultural life is the perfect place to hang out and watch or meet people on warm evenings. With over 60,000 sq metres of exhibition space, the complex is one of the world's most ambitious cultural spaces.

Of the combined tickets on offer, the MQ Kombi Ticket (€25) includes entry into every museum (Zoom only has a reduction) and a 30% discount on performances in the TanzQuartier Wien; MQ Art Ticket (€21.50) gives admission into the Leopold Museum, MUMOK, Kunsthalle and reduced entry into Zoom, plus 30% discount on the TanzQuartier Wien; and MQ Duo Ticket

(€17) covers everything the Art ticket does, minus the Kunsthalle.

Leopold Museum

In 1994 the Austrian government acquired the enormous private collection of 19th-century and modern Austrian paintings amassed by Rudolf Leopold, paying €160 million for 5266 paintings (sold individually, the paintings would have made him €574 million). It then went about building a museum to display this important collection, and the **Leopold Museum** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 525 70-0; www.leopoldmuseum.org; 07, Museumsplatz 1; adult/child & student €9/5.50, audio guide €3; ☎ 10am-6pm, till 9pm Thu) was born.

Leopold began his art collection in 1950 with the purchase of his first Egon Schiele (1890–1918), so it comes as no surprise that the Leopold owns the largest collection of the painter's work in the world. Most are usually on the ground floor; his *Kardinal und Nonne – Liebkosung* (Cardinal and Nun – Caress) is a delightful oil on canvas depicting the two figures kneeling in furtive embrace, their eyes fixed on the onlooker. Also on the ground floor is a large collection of works by Gustav Klimt; his large *Tod und Leben* (Death and Life) is just one highlight. Simple yet highly emotional sketches by both artists are displayed in the basement.

Other artists well represented include Albin Egger-Lienz (1868–1922), Richard Gerstl (1883–1908) and, arguably Austria's third-greatest painter (after Klimt and Schiele), Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980). Egger-Lienz had a knack for capturing the essence of rural life; this is seen in his stark *Pietà*, considered by Leopold to be the artist's best work. Some of the most exciting pieces by Kokoschka were done early in his long career; his *Selbstportrait mit ein Hand* (Self-Portrait with One Hand) from 1918 is just one fine example. Works by Hoffmann, Loos, Otto Wagner, Waldmüller and Romako are also housed here.

MUMOK

The dark basalt rock building that houses the **Museum moderner Kunst** (MUMOK, Museum of Modern Art; Map pp120-1; ☎ 525 00; www.mumok.at; 07, Museumsplatz 1; adult/student €8/6.50; ☎ 10am-6pm, to 9pm Thu) is alive inside with Vienna's premier collection of 20th-century art, centred on fluxus, nouveau realism, pop art and photo-realism. The best of expressionism, cubism, minimal art and Viennese Actionism (p54)

is represented in a collection of 9000 works that are rotated and exhibited on themes. On a visit you might glimpse in the following order: a wearily slumped attendant (not part of any exhibit), photos of horribly deformed babies, a video piece of a man being led by a beautiful woman across a pedestrian crossing on a dog leash, naked bodies smeared with salad and other delights, a man parting his own buttocks, flagellation in a lecture hall, and an ultra-close up of a urinating penis. The heavy stuff comes later. Be prepared.

Kunsthalle

The **Kunsthalle** (Arts Hall; Map pp120-1; ☎ 521 890; www.kunsthallewien.at; 07, Museumsplatz 1; Hall 1 adult/student €7.50/6, Hall 2 €6/4.50, combined ticket €10.50/8.50; ☎ 10am-7pm Fri-Wed, to 10pm Thu) showcases Austrian and international contemporary art. Programmes, which run for three to six months, tend to focus mainly on photography, video, film, installation and new media.

MUSEUM FÜR ANGEWANDTE KUNST

The **Museum für angewandte Kunst** (MAK, Museum of Applied Art; Map pp120-1; ☎ 711 36-0; www.mak.at; 01, Stubenring 5; adult/child & student €7.90/5.50, free Sat, tours €2; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Sun, 10am-midnight Tue, tours in English noon Sun) is devoted to craftsmanship and art forms in everyday life. Each exhibition room showcases a different style, which includes Renaissance, baroque, orientalism, historicism, empire, Art Deco and the distinctive metalwork of the Wiener Werkstätte. Contemporary artists were invited to present the rooms in ways they felt were appropriate, the effect of which is eye-catching and unique displays. The 20th-century design and architecture room is one of the most fascinating, and Frank Gehry's cardboard chair is a gem. The museum collection encompass tapestries, lace, furniture, glassware and ornaments, and Klimt's *Stoclet Frieze* is upstairs.

The basement Study Collection has exhibits based on types of materials: glass and ceramics, metal, wood and textiles. Here you'll find anything from ancient oriental statues to unusual sofas (note the red-lips sofa).

OTHER SIGHTS OF RINGSTRASSE

Parks Relax in one of the Ring's three parks; Stadtpark (Map pp120-1; note the gold statue of Johann Strauss), Burggarten (Map pp120-1) and Volksgarten (Map pp120-1). **Postsparkasse** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 534 53-33088 www.ottowagner.at; 01, Georg-Coch-Platz; museum entry

adult/student & child €5/3.50; ☎ 8am-3pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5.30pm Thu, 10am-5pm Sat) Celebrated Post Office Savings Bank designed by Otto Wagner, with a museum giving insight into the building.

Votivkirche (Map pp120-1; 09, Rooseveltplatz; ☎ 9am-1pm & 4-6pm Tue-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun) Commissioned by Franz Josef after he survived an assassination attempt, this neo-Gothic church has an impressive façade but its interior is rather bleak and unwelcoming.

Across the Danube Canal

The districts across the Danube Canal from the Innere Stadt are predominantly residential neighbourhoods, largely bereft of individual sights of interest to the average visitor. But this is Vienna's outdoor playground.

PRATER

This large park encompasses grassy meadows, woodlands, an amusement park known as the **Wurstelprater** and one of the city's icons, the **Riesenrad** (Ferris wheel; Map pp116-17; ☎ 729 5430; www.wienerriesenrad.com; 02, Prater 90; adult/child/family €8/3.20/20; ☎ 9am-midnight May-Sep, 10am-10pm Mar, Apr, Oct, 10am-8pm Nov-Feb). Built in 1897, the wheel is 65m high and takes about 20 minutes to rotate its 430-tonne weight one complete circle, offering great views of Vienna. It achieved celluloid fame in *The Third Man* (p32) in a scene where Harry Lime is confronted by his friend Holly Martins and delivers one of the film's most poignant lines.

DONAUINSEL & ALTE DONAU

Dividing the Danube from the Neue Donau is the svelte **Donauinsel** (Map pp116-17), which stretches some 21.5km from opposite Klosterneuburg in the north to the Nationalpark Donau-Auen in the south. The island features long sections of swimming areas, concrete paths for walking and cycling, and restaurants and snack bars. The **Alte Donau** (Map pp114-15) is a landlocked arm of the Danube, a favourite of sailing and boating enthusiasts, swimmers, walkers, fishermen and, in winter (when it's cold enough), ice skaters.

Inside the Gürtel

The districts that lie inside the Gürtel are a dense concentration of apartment blocks pocketed by leafy parks, with a couple of grand baroque palaces thrown in for good measure.

SCHLOSS BELVEDERE

Belvedere is a masterpiece of total art and one of the world's finest baroque palaces. Designed by Johann Lukas von Hildebrandt (1668–1745), it was built for the brilliant military strategist, Prince Eugene of Savoy, conqueror of the Turks in 1718. The Unteres (Lower) Belvedere was built first (1714–16), with an orangery attached, and was the prince's summer residence. Connected to it by a long, landscaped garden is the Oberes (Upper) Belvedere (1721–23), the venue for the prince's banquets and other big bashes.

The palace is now home to the **Österreichische Galerie** (Austrian Gallery; combined ticket for both sections adult/child/student €12.50/5/8.50), split between the Unteres Belvedere and Orangerie, which combine to house special exhibitions, and the Oberes Belvedere, housing primarily Austrian art from the Middle Ages to the present.

Oberes Belvedere

Pride and joy of **Oberes Belvedere** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 795 57-0; www.belvedere.at; 03, Prinz-Eugen-Strasse 27; adult/student/child/€9.50/6/3; audio guide €3; ☎ 10am-6pm) are its paintings by Gustav Klimt, including his famous *The Kiss* (1908) and *Judith* (1901), which, with their rich gold tones and highly ornamental style perfectly embody Viennese Art Nouveau. Masterpieces by Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoschka also feature in this collection, while the Viennese Biedermeier school figures strongly through the works of Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller (1793–1865), Friedrich von Amerling (1803–87) and Peter Fendi (1796–1842). The gallery is a staggeringly beautiful who's who of Austrian art, with works by other artists of the calibre of Hans Makart (1840–84), Friedensreich Hundertwasser (1928–2000), Fritz Wotruba (1907–75) and many more.

The west wing of Upper Belvedere goes beyond Austria's borders to showcase some stunning late-Gothic sculpture and panels, beginning from 1400 and culminating in the 16th century. Just one highlight here is the 15th-century Znam Altar, probably originating from Znojmo in Czech Moravia.

The baroque era finds expression in the evocative and sometimes disturbing paintings of Johann Michael Rottmayer (1654–1730) and Paul Troger (1698–1762), and the bizarrely grimacing sculptured heads of Franz Xaver Messerschmidt (1736–83).

While visiting the Upper Belvedere, try to see the elaborately stuccoed and frescoed **Marmorsaal** (Marble Hall), offering superb views over the palace gardens and Vienna.

Unteres Belvedere

Construction of **Unteres Belvedere** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 795 57-0; www.belvedere.at; 03, Rennweg 6; adult/child/student €7.50/3/4.50; ☎ 10am-6pm) took from 1714 to 1716 and is remarkable for Prince Eugene's former residential apartment and ceremonial rooms, with grandiose interiors such as in the **Groteskensaal** (Hall of the Grotesque), the **Marmorgalerie** (Marble Gallery) and the **Goldenes Zimmer** (Golden Room). Temporary exhibitions are held in Lower Belvedere and the newly redesigned **Orangerie** (Map pp120-1); the latter has a walkway offering views over Prince Eugene's private garden and to Oberes Belvedere.

Gardens

The long garden between the two Belvederes was laid out in classical French style and has sphinxes and other mythical beasts along its borders. South of the Oberes Belvedere is a small **Alpine Garden** (Map pp116-17; adult/child & student €4/3; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Jul), which has 3500 plant species and a bonsai section. North of here is the much larger **Botanischer Gärten** (Map pp116-17; Botanical Gardens; admission free; ☎ 9am-1hr before dusk) belonging to Vienna University.

PALAIS LIECHTENSTEIN

After many years collecting dust in depot vaults, the private collection of Prince Hans-Adam II of Liechtenstein is now displayed in the magnificent **Palais Liechtenstein** (Liechtenstein Museum; Map p122; ☎ 319 57 67-0; www.liechtensteinmuseum.at; 09, Fürstengasse 1; permanent exhibition adult/student/child €10/8/5, temporary exhibition €4, audio guide €1; ☎ 10am-5pm). It's a magnificent private collection consisting of some 200 paintings and 50 sculptures, dating from 1500 to 1700.

Built between 1690 and 1712, the palace illustrates the audacious folly and extravagance of baroque architecture. Frescoes and ceiling paintings by the likes of Johann Michael Rottmayer (1654–1730) and Marcantonio Franceschini (1648–1729) decorate the halls, staircases and corridors of this sumptuous palace.

The palace is in four sections. On the ground floor near the western staircase (left as you enter), is the **Gentlemen's Apartment**

Library, a magnificent neoclassical hall containing about 100,000 books, frescoes by Johann Michael Rothmayr and a temple-like empire clock dating from 1795. From the library you can enter galleries I–III, which have changing exhibitions. You can also enter these directly from alongside the eastern staircase (near the cloak room). After that, climb the eastern staircase, which, like its western counterpart, is decorated with Rothmayr frescoes uncovered during restoration work in 2003. Upstairs is the **Herkulesaal** (Hercules Hall) – so named for the Hercules motifs within its ceiling frescoes by renowned Roman painter Andrea Pozzo (1642–1709).

Surrounding the hall on three sides beginning from the eastern staircase (right) and culminating at the western staircase are galleries IV–X with the **permanent collection** of the palace. And what a collection this is! Seven galleries intertwine to provide a trip through 200 years of art history, starting in 1500 with early Italian panel paintings in Gallery IV. Gallery V is dedicated to late-Gothic and Renaissance portraits; Raphael's *Portrait of a Man* (1503) is a highlight here. The centrepiece of the upper floor is Gallery VII, which is home to Peter Paul Rubens' *Decius Mus* cycle (1618). Consisting of eight almost life-size paintings, the cycle depicts the life and death of Decius Mus, a Roman leader who sacrificed himself so that his army could be victorious on the battlefield. Gallery VIII is totally devoted to Rubens and Flemish baroque painting, and even more Rubens are on display in Gallery IX – this time his portraits – alongside Van Dyck and Fran Hals. The sheer exuberance and life captured by Rubens in his *Portrait of Clara Serena Rubens* (1616) is testament to the great artist's talent. Gallery X gives you a soft landing of ivory craftwork and Dutch still life.

From 2008 the palace plans to open only on Sundays, when concerts held between 2pm and 3pm in the Hercules Hall will provide the focal point of a visit to including the galleries. Check ahead for current times.

HEERESGESCHICHTLICHES MUSEUM

The superb **Heeresgeschichtliches Museum** (Museum of Military History; Map pp116-17; ☎ 795 61-60420; www.hgm.or.at; 03, Arsenal; adult/student/child under 11/family €5.10/3.30/free/7.30; ☎ 9am-5pm Sat-Thu) is housed in the Arsenal, a large neo-Byzantine barracks and munitions depot.

Spread over two floors, the museum works its way from the Thirty Years' War (1618–48) to WWII, taking in the Hungarian Uprising and the Austro-Prussian War (ending in 1866), the Napoleonic and Turkish Wars, and WWI. Highlights on the 1st floor include the Great Seal of Mustafa Pasha, which fell to Prince Eugene of Savoy in the Battle of Zenta in 1697.

On the ground floor, the room on the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914 – which set off a chain of events culminating in the start of WWI – steals the show. The car he was shot in (complete with bullet holes), the sofa he bled to death on and his rather grisly blood-stained coat are on show. The eastern wing covers the Republic years after WWI up until the Anschluss in 1938; the excellent displays include propaganda posters and Nazi paraphernalia, plus video footage of Hitler hypnotising the masses.

WIEN MUSEUM

The **Wien Museum Karlsplatz** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 505 87 47-0; www.museum.vienna.at, in German; 04, Karlsplatz 5; adult/student & child €6/4; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun) is the main building of the city museum and illustrates the development of the capital through a blend of art, illustrations and historic objects. Exhibits include maps and plans, artefacts and stunning paintings by Klimt and Schiele, while Biedermeier painters like Waldmüller are worth the entrance fee alone.

KARLSKIRCHE

Southeast of Ressel Park, **Karlskirche** (St Charles' Church; Map pp120-1; ☎ 712 44 56; www.karlskirche.at; 04, Karlsplatz; adult/student/child under 10 €6/4/free; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 1-6pm Mon-Sat, noon-5.45pm Sun) was built between 1716 and 1739 to fulfil a vow made by Charles VI following the 1713 plague. The twin columns are modelled on Trajan's Column in Rome and show scenes from the life of St Charles Borromeo (who succoured plague victims in Italy), to whom the church is dedicated. The huge oval dome is 72m high and its interior is graced by cloud-bound celestial beings painted by Johann Michael Rottmayer; while the frescoes are being restored, it's possible to take a lift up the scaffolding to the dome for a close-up look (€2).

URBAN RAMBLING ON & OFF GUMPENDORFER STRASSE

Gumpendorfer Strasse is an odd street that is definitely worth exploring to get a feel for Vienna away from Hofburg and the big attractions. A good starting point is from the top end at the Gürtel near the Gumpendorfer U-Bahn station. If you're hungry, you could even begin with a meal 'off-Gumpendorfer' at the Russian restaurant **Wladimir** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 595 25 24; www.wladimir.at; 06, Bürgerspitalgasse 22; mains €9-19; ☎ 5-11pm Tue-Sun), where the homemade Siberian *pelmeni* (ravioli) is the best of its species in town. Two blocks to the east, also off Gumpendorfer, is **Tag/Nachtasyl** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 5969 977; 06, Stumpergasse 53-55; ☎ 8pm-4am) one place in town where you will still hear Bob Dylan's 'Desolation Row' over the PA system and revolution hangs in the air. It grew out of the Charter 77 Czech dissident movement and these days mostly continues the tradition with Czech acoustic acts on stage (or occasional Gothic party).

Back on Gumpendorfer, continue past the small church at Kurt-Pint-Platz. Otto-Baugasse, left off Gumpendorfer, is a weird street with niche stores. Good to his name, **Jimmy Gotik** (Map pp116-17; 06, Otto-Baugasse 21) specialises in Gothic clothing. Jimmy's wife stitches much of it together, and Algerian Jimmy sells it off the racks. **Steman** (p148) and **Café Jelinek** (p151) are also just off Gumpendorfer here.

Going round the bend back on Gumpendorfer, you reach a concrete **flak tower** (*Flakturm*), a relic from WWII that was part of Vienna's defences. Inside this monstrosity is the **Haus des Meeres** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 587 14 17; www.haus-des-meeres.at; 06, Fritz-Grünbaumplatz 1; adult/student/child €10.30/7.90/4.80; ☎ 9am-6pm, till 9pm Thu), a small exhibition house replete with sea creatures and reptiles. Most interesting are its **piranha-feeding** (☎ 3pm Wed & Sun) and **snake-stroking** (☎ 2pm Wed) sessions. Those inclined towards alpine pursuits can scale a 37m face of the Flakturm, which has a **Kletterwand** (Map pp120-1; www.oav-events.at/flakturm; adults/child per 2hr €12/8; ☎ 2-10pm Apr-Oct). It's serious climbing with clips, ropes and shoes.

Nearby Barnabitenngasse is a slice of the Mediterranean, with a clutch of average restaurants. At the top of the street, where the arch crosses, is Mariahilfer Kirche. South of Gumpendorfer and along 100m, begins the **Naschmarkt** (pp120-1) and all this eating mile has to offer. Late-night crawlers can drop into the **Café Drechsler** (Map pp120-1), which closes for one hour each day. In Joaneligasse, you'll find the remarkable **Einhorn** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 586 32 12; 06, Joaneligasse 7; ☎ 4pm-4am Sun-Fri, 1pm-4am Sat), which used to be a jazz place but is now a relaxed, downbeat hangout with table football downstairs. Continuing along Gumpendorfer for the final leg, you reach **Café Sperl** (Map pp120-1), and across the road **Phil** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 581 04 89; 06, Gumpendorfer Strasse 10-12; ☎ 10-1am Tue-Sun, 5pm-1am Mon), another downbeat bar, also selling books and CDs; later come **Ra'mien** (Map pp120-1) and **Felixa** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 920 47 14; Gumpendorfer Strasse 5; mains €9-15; ☎ 7pm-3am), a mixed hetero and gay bar with a daily menu and some good wines.

Topping off the urban trek is **Top Kino Bar** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 208 30 00; Rahlgasse 1; ☎ 10-2am), which serves the Czech Kozel beer, has small balconies where you can loll in a warm breeze, and is part of an art-house cinema.

KUNSTHAUSWIEN

This **art gallery** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 712 04 91; www.kunsthau.wien.com; 03, Untere Weissgerberstrasse 13; adult/student & child €9/7, incl temporary exhibitions €12/9, half-price Mon; ☎ 10am-7pm) looks like something out of a toy shop. It was designed by Friedensreich Hundertwasser, whose highly innovative buildings feature uneven floors, coloured ceramics, patchwork decoration, irregular corners, and grass and trees on the roof. The permanent collection is something of a tribute to Hundertwasser, showcasing his paintings, graphics, tapestry, his philosophy on ecology, and architecture.

While you're in the area, walk down the road to see the exterior of **Hundertwasserhaus** (Map pp116-17; nr Löwengasse & Kegelgasse), a block of residential flats also designed by the artist. Opposite is the **Kalke Village** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 9am-5pm, 9am-7pm summer), another piece of Hundertwasser handiwork housing cafés and souvenir and art shops.

Other attractions worth sniffing out: **Haydnhaus** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 596 13 07; 06, Haydnngasse 19; adult/student & child €2/1; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-6pm Wed & Thu, 10am-1pm Fri-Sun) Features a smattering of period furniture and memorabilia from Haydn, who lived here from 1796 till 1809; he composed *The Creation* and *The Seasons* under its roof. There are also rooms devoted to Brahms.

Majolikahaus (Map pp120-1; 06, Linke Wienzeile 40) Art Nouveau masterpiece by Otto Wagner, so named for the majolica tiles used to create the flowing floral motifs on the façade.

Sigmund Freud Museum (Map p122; ☎ 319 15 96; www.freud-museum.at; 09, Berggasse 19; adult/student/child €7/4.50/2.50; ☎ 9am-5pm) Former house of the famous psychologist, now housing a small museum featuring some of his personal belongings.

Stadtbahn Pavilions (Map pp120-1; ☎ 505 87 47-84 059; 04, Karlsplatz; adult/student & child €2/1; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct) *Jugendstil* pavilions designed by Otto Wagner for Vienna's first public transport system.

Outside the Gürtel

The districts that fall outside the Gürtel are quite an unusual blend. Parts are rather dull and uninviting (by Viennese standards) – in particular towards the south – while others are beautiful beyond belief and home to some of Vienna's greatest treasures.

SCHLOSS SCHÖNBRUNN

The regal rooms of **Schloss Schönbrunn** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 811 13-0; www.schoenbrunn.at; 13 Schloss Schönbrunn; Imperial tour adult/student/child €9.50/8.50/4.90, grand tour €12.90/11.40/6.90; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Jul-Aug, 8.30am-5pm Apr-Jun & Sep-Oct, 8.30am-4.30pm Nov-Mar) are in a league of their own in Vienna; the interior is a majestic conflux of frescoed ceilings, crystal chandeliers and gilded ornaments.

Commissioned by Leopold I, the palace was completed by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach in 1700 but never quite reached the grandeur he originally envisaged; it nevertheless has a startling 1441 rooms, of which 40 are open to the public. The full quota is viewed in the Grand Tour, which takes in the apartments of Franz Joseph I and Empress Elisabeth, the ceremonial and state rooms, and the audience chambers of Maria Theresia and her husband Franz Stephan. The Imperial Tour excludes the chambers of Maria Theresia and Franz Stephan and takes in 22 rooms.

Both tours start in the west wing at the bottom of the **Blauerstiege** (Blue Staircase) and climb to the private rooms of Franz Joseph I and Sisi. The ceremonial and state rooms start with the **Spiegelsaal** (Hall of Mirrors) where Mozart (then six) played his first royal concert in the presence of Maria Theresia in 1762. The pinnacle of finery is reached in the **Grosse Galerie** (Great Gallery), where gilded scrolls, ceiling frescoes, chandeliers and huge crystal mirrors are used to staggering effect.

Numerous sumptuous balls were held here, including one for delegates attending the Congress of Vienna (1814-15).

Near the Great Gallery is the **Round Chinese Room**, which features a hidden doorway and table that can be drawn up through the floor. The Imperial Tour ends with the **Ceremonial Hall**, while the Grand Tour continues onto the **Blue Chinese Room**, where Charles I abdicated in 1918, and the **Million Room**, named after the sum that Maria Theresia paid for the decorations, which comprise Persian miniatures set on rosewood panels and framed with gilded rocaille frames. While not joined to the main set of rooms, the **Bergl Rooms** are worth visiting for the paintings of Johann Wenzl Bergl (1718-89); his exotic depictions of flora and fauna quite successfully bring inside the palace's garden setting.

Gardens

The palace **gardens** (admission free; ☎ 6am-dusk Apr-Oct, 6.30am-dusk Nov-Mar), arranged in the French style, are a symphony of colour in the summer and a fusion of demure greys and browns in winter. The extensive grounds reveal a number of attractions along tree-lined avenues, including fake **Roman ruins**, the **Neptunbrunnen** (Neptune Fountain) and the Classical colonnaded **Gloriette** (adult/student/child €1.99/1.50/1; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, till 5pm Oct), offering a stunning 360-degree panorama. The original **Schöner Brunnen fountain**, from which the palace gained its name, now pours through the stone pitcher of a nymph near the Roman ruins.

The **Palmenhaus** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 877 50 87-406; adult/student & child €4/2.80; ☎ 9.30am-6pm May-Sep, 9.30am-5pm Oct-Apr) is a glorious glass and iron construction still housing palms and hot-house plants from around the world. Close by is the **Wüstenhaus** (Desert House; Map pp116-17; ☎ 877 50 87-406; adult/student & child €6/4; ☎ 9am-6pm May-Sep, 9am-5pm Oct-Apr), which makes good use of the Sonnenuhrhaus (Sun Dial House) to recreate arid desert scenes.

Behind both is the world's oldest zoo, **Tiergarten** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 877 92 94; www.zoo.wien.at; 13, Maxingstrasse 13b; adult/student/child €12/5/4; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Apr-Sep, 9am-5.30pm Mar & Oct, 9am-5pm Feb, 9am-4.30pm Nov-Jan). Founded in 1752 as a menagerie by Franz Stephan, the zoo now houses some 750 animals of all shapes and sizes; thankfully most of the original cramped cages have been updated. The **Tirolerhof**, inside

the Tiergarten, is a real highlight both for adults and kids (see p138).

Wagenburg

The **Wagenburg** (Imperial Coach Collection; Map pp116-17; ☎ 877 32 44; 13; Schloss Schönbrunn; adult/student & child/family €4.50/3/9, audio guide €2; ☞ 9am-6pm Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) displays carriages ranging from tiny children's wagons up to sumptuous vehicles of state, but nothing can compete with Emperor Franz I Stephen's (1708-65) coronation carriage. Weighing in at 4000kg, it is literally dripping in ornate gold plating and has Venetian glass panes and painted cherubs.

ZENTRALFRIEDHOF

Opened in 1874, the **Zentralfriedhof** (Central Cemetery; Map pp114-15; ☎ 760 41-0; 11, Simmeringer Hauptstrasse 230-244; admission free; ☎ information office 7.30am-3pm Mon-Sat; cemetery 7am-7pm May-Aug, 7am-6pm Mar, Apr, Sep & Oct, 8am-5pm Nov-Feb) has grown to become one of Europe's largest cemeteries – larger than the Innere Stadt and, with 2½ million graves, far exceeding the population of Vienna itself.

It contains the lion's share of tombs of Vienna's greats, including numerous famous composers: Gluck, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Schönberg and the whole Strauss clan are buried here in the cold ground. A monument to Mozart has also been erected, but he was actually buried in an unmarked mass grave in the **St Marxer Friedhof** (Map pp116-17; 03, Leberstrasse 6-8; ☞ 7am-7pm Jun-Aug, 7am-6pm May & Sep, 7am-5pm Apr & Oct, 7am-dusk Nov-Mar). The **Ehrengräber** (Tombs of Honour) in the Zentralfriedhof are just beyond Gate Two and, in addition to the clump of famous composers, those pushing up daisies include Hans Makart, sculptor Fritz Wotruba, architects Theophil Hansen and Adolf Loos, and the man of Austrian Pop, Falco (Hans Hölzel; see boxed text, p49).

KIRCHE AM STEINHOF

Situated in the grounds of the Psychiatric Hospital of the City of Vienna, **Kirche am Steinhof** (Art Nouveau church; Map pp114-15; ☎ 910 60-11 204; 14, Baumgartner Höhe 1; tours €4; ☞ 3-4pm Sat) is the remarkable achievement of Otto Wagner from 1904 to 1907. Kolo Moser chipped in with the mosaic windows, and the roof is topped by a copper-covered dome that earned the nickname **Limoniberg** (lemon mountain) from its original golden colour. It's a bold statement in

an asylum that has other Art Nouveau buildings, and it could only be pushed through by Wagner because the grounds were far from the public gaze.

ACTIVITIES

With its abundance of parks, waterways and woodlands, Vienna is a great city for fresh air and outdoor fun.

Boating

The Alte Donau is the main boating and sailing centre in Vienna, but the Neue Donau also provides opportunities for boating, windsurfing and water skiing. Places to rent boats include **Hofbauer** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 203 86 80; www.hofbauer.at, in German; 22, Wagramerstrasse 49; ☞ Apr-mid-Oct), which has electric boats for €13.50 for an hour, rudder boats (basically dinghies) for €7, and paddle boats for €11. You can also windsurf down the Danube for €11. The **sailing school** (Map pp114-15; ☎ 204 34 35; www.hofbauer.at; 22, An der Oberen Alten Donau 191; ☞ Apr-Oct) is on the eastern bank of the Alte Donau and has sailing boats for hire, and lessons in English.

Cycling

Vienna's layout and well-marked cycle lanes make cycling a pleasant and popular pastime, especially along the banks of the Danube, in the Prater and around the Ringstrasse. The Wienerwald is also popular for mountain biking; check the websites www.mbike.at and www.mtbwienerwald.at (both in German) for ideas and trails. For bike hire, see p159.

Swimming

The Donauinsel, Alte Donau and Lobau (all free bathing) are hugely popular places for taking a dip on steamy hot summer days. Topless sunbathing is quite the norm, as is nude sunbathing but only in designated areas; much of Lobau and both tips of the Donauinsel are **Frei Körper Kultur** (FKK, nude-bathing areas).

Complementing these natural swimming areas are numerous swimming pools owned and run by the city. In general, entry to these pools costs about €4.50/2.50 for adults/children. Some of the better ones are **Amalienbad** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 607 47 47; 10, Reumannplatz 23; ☞ 9am-6pm Tue & Sun, 9am-9.30pm Wed & Fri, 7am-9.30pm Thu, 7am-8pm Sat, 12.30-3.30pm Mon), a stunning **Jugendstil** bath (Monday sessions for seniors and people with disabilities only); **Strandbad Gänsehäufel** (Map pp114-15; ☎ 269 90 16; 22, Moissiggasse 21; ☞ 9am-

7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-7pm Sat & Sun 2 May-13 May & 27 Aug-16 Sep, 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-8pm Sat & Sun 14 May-26 Aug), occupying a section of island in the Alte Donau; and the lovely **Thermalbad Oberlaa** (Map pp114-15; ☎ 6800 99600; 10, Kurbadstrasse 14; adult/child €9.60/6 for 2½hr; ☞ 8.45am-10pm Mon-Sat, 7.45am-10pm Sun), a large thermal complex with both indoor and outdoor pools.

For a full list of pools call ☎ 60112 8044 between 7.30am and 3.30pm Monday to Friday or log on to www.wien.at/baeder (in German).

Walking

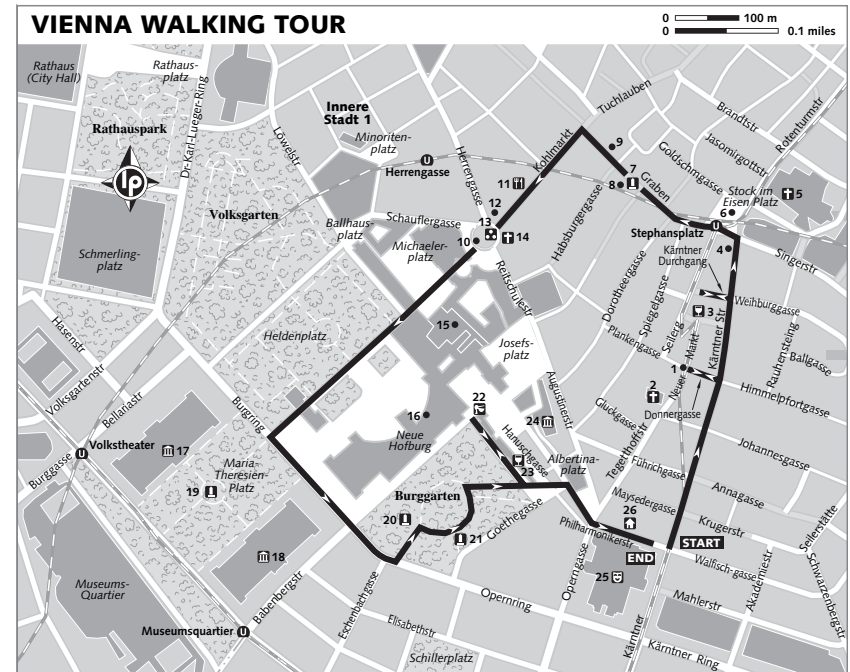
To the west of the city, the rolling hills and marked trails of the Wienerwald are perfect for walkers. A good trail heading in the woods to the north of Vienna starts in Nussdorf (take tram D from the Ring) and climbs Kahlenberg (484m), a hill offering views of the city. On your return to Nussdorf you can undo all that exercise by imbibing at a **Heuriger**. The round trip is around 11km, or you can spare yourself the leg-work by taking the Nussdorf-Kahlenberg 38A bus in one or both directions.

The Prater (p131) also has a wood with walking trails, and the densely forested Lainzer Tiergarten (Map pp114-15) animal reserve, a wild park in the west of Vienna, is perfect for roaming.

WALKING TOUR

This 1½- to two-hour walk (2.5km) takes you through some well-trodden tourist trails in Vienna. Some instantly recognisable sights (Stephansdom and the Hofburg) dominate this quarter of the Innere Stadt while Kärntner Strasse, Graben and Kohlmarkt attract shoppers by the busloads.

Start your walk heading north from the southern end of pedestrian-only Kärntner Strasse, a walkway of plush shops, trees, cafés and street entertainers. Detour left down the short **Donnergasse** to take a peek at the **Donnerbrunnen** (1) in Neuer Markt, a fountain with four naked figures representing the main tributaries of the Danube: the Enns, March, Traun and Ybbs. Across the square is the **Kaisergruft** (2; p127). Back on Kärntner Strasse, detour left again down Kärntner Durchgang. Here you'll find the **American Bar**



(3; p150), designed in 1908 by Adolf Loos, one of the prime exponents of a functional Art Nouveau style.

From Kärntner Strasse, the street opens out into Stock im Eisen Platz. Note the **nail-studded stump (4)**, said to have acquired its crude metal jacket in the 16th century from blacksmiths banging in a nail for luck when they left the city. Directly ahead is Vienna's symbol, Gothic **Stephansdom (5)**; p124), offset by the unashamedly modern **Haas Haus (6)**. Many Viennese were rather unhappy about this curving silver structure crowding their beloved cathedral, but tourists seem happy enough to snap the spindly reflections of Stephansdom's spire in its rectangular windows.

Leading northwest from Stock im Eisen Platz is the broad pedestrian thoroughfare of **Graben**, another plush shopping street. It's dominated by the knobbly outline of the **Pestsäule (7)**, completed in 1693 to commemorate the 75,000 victims of the Black Death. Adolf Loos had a hand in the Graben's appearance, creating the **Schneidersalon Knize (8)** and the nearby **toilets (9)**. Turning left into Kohlmarkt, so named because charcoal was once sold here, the arresting sight of **Michaelertor (10)**, the Hofburg's north-eastern gate on Michaelerplatz, comes into view. Towards the end of Kohlmarkt, on the right-hand side, is one of the most famous of the Konditorei-style cafés in Vienna, **Demel (11)**; p151).

Reaching Michaelerplatz, keep an eye out for the **Loos Haus (12)**, a perfect example of the clean lines of Loos' work. Franz Josef hated it and described the windows, which lack lintels, as 'windows without eyebrows'. The **excavations (13)** in the middle of the square are of Roman origin. **Michaelerkirche (14)** on the square portrays five centuries of architectural styles, ranging from 1327 (Romanesque chancel) to 1792 (baroque doorway angels).

Cross Michaelerplatz and pass through the imposing Michaelertor and past the **Schweizertor (15)** to Heldenplatz and the impressive **Neue Burg (16)**; p126), built between 1881 and 1908. Continue on past the line of **Fiakers** (horse-drawn carriages), noting the Gothic spire of the **Rathaus (p128)** rising above the trees to the right. Ahead, on the far side of the Ring, stand the rival identical twins, the **Naturhistorisches Museum (17)**; p129) and the **Kunsthistorisches Museum (18)**; p128); between them is a proud statue

of **Maria Theresia (19)**, surrounded by key figures of her reign.

Turn left onto the Ring and, once past the Neue Burg, turn left again into the peaceful **Burggarten**, formerly reserved for the pleasure of the imperial family and high-ranking officials. It now contains **statues of Mozart (20)** and **Franz Josef (21)**, the **Schmetterlinghaus (22)**; Butterfly House; ☎ 533 85 70; adult/senior/student/child €5/4.50/4/2.50; ☎ 10am-4.45pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6.15pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-3.45pm Nov-Mar) and the **Palmenhaus (23)**; p150).

Only a hop, skip and a jump from the Burggarten is the newly renovated **Albertina (24)**; p127) on Albertinaplatz. The square is home to a troubling work by sculptor and graphic artist Alfred Hrdlicka (1928–), created in 1988. This series of pale block-like sculptures commemorates Jews and other victims of war and fascism.

From here it's not far down Philharmonikerstrasse to the starting point of this walk. On your way you'll pass the rear of the grand **Staatsoper (25)**; p152) and the frontage of **Hotel Sacher (26)**; p143), a perfect spot to rest those weary legs.

VIENNA FOR CHILDREN

It was once said the Viennese love dogs more than they love children, and while this might be true for some folk, Vienna is actually quite child-friendly. Its museums, attractions and theatres, such as the Kunsthistorisches Museum and the Albertina, arrange children's programmes over the summer months.

The **Prater (p131)**, with its wide playing fields, playgrounds and funfair, is ideal for children. **Praterfee (Map pp116-17)**; ☎ 729 49 99-82; Prater 121, Prater Hauptallee; trampoline per 5 min €5, inflatable mountain €3.50, somersault trampoline €6; ☎ 11am-8pm, depending on weather) has a cool trampoline area where adults can enjoy a drink outside while the kids soar into the sky. One place that is just as fascinating for adults as kids (and adults can also relax here over a drink and sausage while the kids see the animals) is the **Tirolerhof (Map pp116-17)** inside the Tiergarten at Schloss Schönbrunn. Actually an historic farmhouse from Tyrol deconstructed and rebuilt inside the zoo, it holds ancient Noric horses, as well as goats, bulls, chickens and other farm animals. The **Donauinsel (p131)** is another place where kids can run off their energy. Swimming pools, located here and

throughout Vienna, are free to children under 15 over the summer school holidays.

Aside from summer programmes and parks, two museums are aimed directly at kids. **Zoom (Map pp120-1)**; ☎ 524 79 08; www.kindermuseum.at; 07, Museumsplatz 1; child €5, accompanying adult free; ☎ 8.30am-4pm), next door to the WienXtra-Kinderinfo (p123) in the MuseumsQuartier, is a bonanza for kids, with a craft studio and ocean, lab, science and exhibition sections (some of these multimedia) for exciting sessions of about 1½ or two hours aimed at kids between the ages of zero and 14; book ahead. Schönbrunn's **Kindermuseum (Map pp116-17)**; ☎ 811 13-239; www.schoenbrunn.at; 13, Schloss Schönbrunn; adult/child/family €6.50/4.50/17; ☎ 10am-5pm Sat & Sun, 10am-5pm during school holidays) focuses quite understandably on the 16 children of Maria Theresa and the kids dress up in costume. But it's not all hob-nobbing – they'll also find out what aspects of life made the right royal Habsburgs different from mere lowlife mortals. The obvious – fortune, fame, pets you can ride – are a start.

The tourist office publishes a good brochure in English that covers things either of interest to kids or especially for kids – it's called *For heads of families and their parents*.

QUIRKY VIENNA

Vienna has an unusually morbid side. Free-wheeling Viennese charm in a wine tavern, one expert on Viennese morbidity tells us, can easily deteriorate into 'profound death melancholia'. Worrying stuff. The abundance of crypts, the creation of the world's first crisis-intervention centre in Vienna – in 1948, incidentally, by a man with the unfortunate moniker Dr Suicide (the Romanian Dr Erwin Ringel, 1921–94) – and even the 'melancholy' waltz are held up as shining examples of Vienna's morbid side. An 'economy coffin' was even invented by Kaiser Joseph II in 1785 that allowed you to drop your relatives through a flap underneath and reuse it. Along with a bell placed inside coffins to alert relatives that your number was not quite up, this contraption and about 600 other exhibits are at the uplifting **Bestattungsmuseum (Undertaker's Museum; Map pp116-17)**; ☎ 501 95-4227; 04, Goldegasse 19; adult/student & child €4.50/2.50; ☎ by prior arrangement noon-3pm Mon-Fri).

The **Pathologisch-Anatomisches Bundesmuseum (Pathological-Anatomy Museum; Map p122)**; ☎ 406 86 72; 09, Spitalgasse 2; admission €2; ☎ 3-6pm Wed, 8-11am Thu), housed in the Narrenturm (Fool's Tower), a former insane asylum, is possibly the most bizarre attraction. It's filled with medical oddities and abnormalities preserved in jars of formaldehyde, and the odd wax model with a grisly disease.

Also known as the Geschichte der Medizin (Museum of Medical History), the **Josephinum (Map p122)**; ☎ 4277 63 422; 09, Währinger Strasse 25; adult/student €2/1; ☎ 9am-3pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm 1st Sat every month) features ceroplastic and wax specimen models of the human frame, created over 200 years ago for the Academy of Medico-Surgery to improve the skills of army surgeons. Marginally tamer – until you reach the blow-up photographs of murdered and dismembered corpses – is the **Wiener Kriminalmuseum (Map pp116-17)**; ☎ 214 46 78; Grosse Spertlgasse 24; ☎ 10am-5pm Thu-Sun), covering all manner of crime in the capital.

TOURS

Vienna has everything from bus tours to horse-drawn carriage rides, so if you're looking for a guided tour of the city you'll find something to suit your taste. Bus tours are good if you're very short on time and want to pack in as much as possible, while the walking tours are perfect if you're interested in learning more on a specific topic.

Cityrama (Map pp120-1); ☎ 534 130; www.viennasightseeing.at; 01, Börsegasse 1; adult €17-109, child €7-45) Half- and full-day bus tours of Vienna and attractions within a day's striking distance of the city, including Salzburg, Budapest and Prague. Some tours require an extra fee for admission to sights, such as training at the Spanish Riding School.

DDSG Blue Danube (Map pp120-1); ☎ 588 80; www.ddsg-blue-danube.at; 01, Schwedenbrücke; full-tour adult/child €16.80/8.40, half-tour €12/6, children under 10 free; ☎ 2-5 times daily Apr-Oct) Boat trips circumnavigating the districts of Leopoldstadt and Brigittenau via the Danube and Danube Canal.

Fiaker (20min/40min/1hr tour €40/65/75) More of a tourist novelty than anything else, a *Fiaker* is a traditional-style open carriage drawn by a pair of horses. Drivers generally speak English and point out places of interest en route. Lines of horses, carriages and bowler-hatted drivers can be found at Stephansplatz, Albertinaplatz and Heldenplatz at the Hofburg.

GAY & LESBIAN VIENNA

Vienna is reasonably tolerant towards gays and lesbians, and things get better each year. Even the Vienna Tourist Board does their bit; their *Queer Guide* booklet has listings of bars, restaurants, hotels and festivals, while their *Vienna Gay Guide* is a city map with gay locations marked up. *Xtra* and *Night Life* (www.nightlifeonline.at, in German), two free monthly publications, are additional supplements packed with news, views and listings (in German only).

The best organisation in town is the **Rosa Lila Villa** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 586 8150; www.villa.at; 06, Linke Wienzeile 102), an unmissable pink house by the Wien River. Its **Lesbian Centre** (☎ 586 81 50; lesbenberatung@villa.at; ☎ 5-8pm Mon, Wed & Fri) is on the ground floor, while its **Gay Men's Centre** (☎ 585 43 43; schwulenberatung@villa.at; ☎ 5-8pm Mon, Wed & Sat) is on the 1st floor. **Homosexuelle Initiative Wien** (HOSI; Map pp116-17; ☎ 216 66 04; www.hosiwien.at, in German; 02, Novargasse 40), another helpful organisation, is politically minded and holds regular events.

Events to look out for on the gay and lesbian calendar include the **Regenbogen Parade** (Rainbow Parade), a colourful parade that takes over the Ring and MuseumsQuartier at the end of June, the **Life Ball** (www.lifeball.org), an AIDS-charity event around the middle of May, **Wien ist andersrum** (www.andersrum.at), a month-long extravaganza of gay and lesbian art in June, and **Identities – Queer Film Festival** (www.identities.at), a film festival showcasing queer movies, also in June.

Unfortunately there isn't much in the way of accommodation aimed at gay and lesbians; Hotel-Pension Wild (p143) is one option.

The Scene

Vienna has enough bars and clubs to entertain its gay and lesbian community, while some straight clubs, like U4 (p154), feature gay nights on a weekly basis. **Rainbow** (www.rainbow.at/guide) has a scene guide for large cities.

Café Berg (Map p122; ☎ 319 57 20; 09, Berggasse 8; ☎ 10am-1am) With some of the nicest staff in Vienna, a lovely, open layout and all-round friendly vibe, it's no wonder Café Berg is often full with a gay and straight crowd. Its bookshop, Löwenherz, stocks a grand collection of gay magazines and books.

Café Willendorf (Map pp116-17; ☎ 587 17 89; 06, Linke Wienzeile 102; ☎ 6pm-2am) This is one of Vienna's seminal gay and lesbian bars in Vienna, housed in the pink Rosa Lila Villa.

Frauencafé (Map pp120-1; ☎ 406 37 54; 05, Lange Gasse 8; ☎ 7pm-midnight Tue-Thu, till 2am Sat & Sun) A long-established strictly women-only café/bar.

Frauenzentrum Bar (Map p122; ☎ 402 87 54; 09, Währinger Strasse 59; ☎ 7pm-midnight Thu-Sat) Regular clubbing nights and more political events happen here in this lesbian woman-only venue.

Santo Spirito (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 99 98; 01, Kumpfgasse 7; ☎ 6pm-2am) Attracting both a gay and straight crowd, Santo Spirito specialises in classical music at high decibels. In summer, customers spill out onto the cobblestone street to take a break from the noise.

Why Not? (Map pp120-1; ☎ 535 11 58; www.why-not.at; 01, Tiefer Graben 22; ☎ 10pm-6am Fri & Sat) Why Not? is small, very central and pops at the seams on weekends, when it fills quickly mainly with young gay guys.

Hop On-Hop Off Vienna Line (☎ 712 46 83; www.viennasightseeingtours.com; 01, Opernring; 1hr/2hr/ all-day tickets adult €12/15/20, all tickets child €7; ☎ 10am-5pm) Bus tour passing 13 major sights. You can hop on and off the buses as many times as you wish. The main bus stop is outside the Staatsoper.

Music Mile Vienna (www.musikmeile.at; 3hr tour €5, extra hr €1.50) Audio-guided walking tour from Stephansdom to Theater an der Wien past some 70 stars embedded in the footpath commemorating musical geniuses related to Vienna in one way or another. Audio

guides and booklets are available between 10am and 7pm from **Musikmeile Wien Servicestelle** (Map pp120-1; ☎ reservations 588-300; 01, Stephansplatz), **Wien-Ticket Pavillon** (Map pp120-1; 01, Herbert-von-Karajan-Platz) and **Theater an der Wien** (Map pp120-1; 01, Linke Wienzeile 6).

Old Timer Trams (☎ 7909-105; www.wiener-tramway-museum.org; adult/child €15/5) On weekends and holidays from May to October, streetcars from 1929 trundle through Vienna on one-hour tours of the city. Departures from Stadt Pavilions at Karlsplatz (Map pp120-1).

Pedal Power (Map pp116-17; ☎ 729 72 34; www.pedalpower.at; 02, Ausstellungsstrasse 3; tour with own bike adult/child €19/10, with hired bike €23/12) Half-day bicycle tours in and around Vienna from May to September, starting at 10am. Five unguided tours are offered: Innere Stadt and the Prater; Donau National Park and Lobau; Donauinsel and Klosterneuburg; Donauinsel and the Heurigen of Stammersdorf; and Classical Music Memorials and the Zentralfriedhof.

Reisebuchladen (Map pp120-1; ☎ 317 33 84; reisebuchladen@aon.at; 09, Kollingasse 6; tour €24; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-12.30pm Sat) This travel agency caters mainly for groups but will fit in individuals on alternative bus tours, including tours of Red Vienna, *Jugendstil* architecture and Hundertwasser creations.

Vienna Sightseeing Tours (☎ 712 46 830; www.viennasightseeingtours.com; tour €35) Run by the same company that organises the Hop On-Hop Off tours, Vienna Sightseeing Tours offers a wide variety of half- and full-day bus tours in English with free hotel pick-up.

Vienna Tour Guides (☎ 774 89 01; www.wienguide.at; adult/child €13/6) Group of highly knowledgeable guides who conduct 40 different guided walking tours, 11 of which are in English. Everything from Art Nouveau architecture to Jewish traditions in Vienna is covered; one of the most popular is the Third Man Tour. The monthly *Wiener Spaziergänge* leaflet from the tourist office provides details of all the walks.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Regardless of the time of year, there will be something special happening in Vienna; pick up a copy of the monthly booklet of events from the tourist office. Tickets for many events are available to personal callers at Wien-Ticket Pavillon (Map pp120-1) in the hut by the Staatsoper.

Christkindlmärkte Vienna's much-loved Christmas market season runs from mid-November to Christmas Day.

Donauinselfest Free three-day festival of rock, pop, hardcore, folk and country music on the Donauinsel in June.

Impuls Tanz (☎ 523 55 58; www.impulstanz.com) Vienna's premier avant-garde dance festival attracts an array of internationally renowned troupes and newcomers between mid-July and mid-August.

Jazzfest Wien (☎ 408 60 30; www.viennajazz.org) The major jazz festival, held in June/July.

Jazzwerkstatt (www.jazzwerkstatt.at) Innovative jazz festival organised by a musician collective each March.

Lange Nacht der Museen (langenacht.orf.at) On one late-September/October evening some 500 museums nationwide open their doors to visitors between 6pm and 1am. One ticket (adult/child €12/10; available at museums) allows entry to all of them.

Musikfilm Festival (01, Rathausplatz) Screenings of operas, operettas and concerts outside the Rathaus in July and August.

Opernball (☎ 514 44-7880; 01, Staatsoper) Of the 300 or so balls held in January and February, the Opernball (Opera Ball) is the ultimate. It's a supremely lavish affair, with the men in tails and women in shining white gowns.

OsterKlang Festival (☎ 427 17; www.osterklang.at) Orchestral and chamber music recitals in some of Vienna's best music halls, the highlight of which is the opening concert featuring the Vienna Philharmonic. Held at the beginning of April.

Silvester The Innere Stadt becomes one big party zone for Silvester (New Year's Eve), which features loads of alcohol and far too many fireworks in crowded streets.

Viennale (☎ 526 59 47; www.viennale.at) The country's biggest and best film festival, featuring fringe and independent films from around the world in October.

Volksstimmefest (www.kpoe.at, in German) Communist festival over a weekend around the end of August/beginning of September in the Prater (p131); features some 30 live acts and attracts a bizarre mix of hippies and staunch party supporters.

Wiener Festwochen (☎ 589 22-22; www.festwochen.or.at) Wide-ranging programme of arts from around the world, from May to mid-June.

SLEEPING

Sleeping options in Vienna range from basic youth hostels and student residences to hotels where chandeliers, antique furniture and original 19th-century oil paintings decorate hallowed hallways and rooms. Between these extremes are homely pensions and less ostentatious hotels, plus a small but smart range of apartments for long-term rentals.

Prices given here are for the high season, which is from June to September. Around Christmas and New Year they can rise above this. Except in winter, it's highly advisable to book ahead. Always check for weekend or web deals that might work out cheaper.

There are a handful of campsites on the outskirts of Vienna; all are listed online at www.wiencamping.at. Another cheap option is student residences, which are converted to seasonal hotels between July and September.

Accommodation Agencies

Tourist Info Wein (p124) can arrange accommodation, but charges a small commission per reservation irrespective of the number of rooms booked. Staff can help find private rooms but don't provide lists. They have a *Jugendherbergen* pamphlet detailing youth

hostels and campsites, and a booklet of hotels and pensions.

Viennese looking for apartments rely on word-of-mouth or turn to *Bazar* magazine. It's the paper if you're looking to buy, sell or rent anything, including flats or rooms. The time scale of places on offer may range from indefinite rental to occupation of a flat for a month or so while the resident is on holiday. *Falter*, *Kurier* and *Der Standard* also have accommodation ads.

Some short-term apartment rental outfits:

Appartement Pension Riemergasse (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 72 200; www.riemergasse.at; 01, Riemergasse 8; apartments per night/month from €225/2707) Apartments (five minutes' walk from Stephansdom) all come with a kitchenette, telephone, cable TV, toilet and bath or shower.

Levante Laudon (Map pp120-1; ☎ 535 45 1551; 08, Laudongasse 8; apartments per day from €90, or €72 after 22 days) Small selection of fully furnished apartments in various sizes with washing machines and dryers in the basement and cleaning.

Singerstrasse Apartments (Map pp120-1; ☎ 514 49-0; www.singerstrasse2125.at; 01, Singerstrasse 21-25; weekly/monthly apartments from €609/2190, end cleaning €25-50) Apartments come complete with telephone, satellite TV, internet facilities for laptops (bring a network cable) and kitchenette.

Choosing a Location

Prices in the Innere Stadt are often higher than elsewhere; hotels and pensions between the Ring and the Gürtel can be good value but these are less convenient to major sights. If you have a car, leave it out in the suburbs and use public transport rather than pay the high parking fees (anything from €6 to €26).

Innere Stadt BUDGET

Schweizer Pension (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 81 56; www.schweizerpension.com; 01, Heinrichsgasse 2; s €36-65, d €58-87) Cheaper rooms here are without their own bathroom. This small, family-run pension is a superb deal, with homely touches and accreditation for being environmentally friendly. Book in advance, though, as it has only 11 rooms and is popular among those on squeezed budgets.

Pension Nossek (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 70 41-0; www.pension-nossek.at; 01, Graben 17; s/d €73/115) Get in early here, too; Nossek's a strong choice not least because of its great Innere Stadt location, cosy feel and some nice rooms facing a courtyard.

MIDRANGE

Hotel-Pension Suzanne (Map pp120-1; ☎ 513 25 07; www.pension-suzanne.at; 01, Walfischgasse 4; s €78, d €98-119; ☎) One of the nicest among the central places, Suzanne has a high comfort factor and a low-key, downbeat ambience; from here it's just a short hop to the Staatsoper.

Aviano (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 83 30; 01, Marco-d'Aviano-Gasse 1; s €95, d €136-157) Aviano hangs out the window a long way when it comes to style: the precarious cream tones of period furniture and decoration here may not be to everyone's taste, but it rates highly for comfort.

Pertschy Pension (Map pp120-1; ☎ 534 49-0; www.pertschy.com; 01, Habsburgergasse 5; s €90-105, d €133-167) This gem of a pension has a peaceful inner courtyard, spacious rooms and toys for the toddlers. Here the very traditional furnishings of the rooms add nicely to the charm and old-world feel.

Hotel Amadeus (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 87 38; www.hotel-amadeus.at; 01, Wildpretmarkt 5; s €93-129, d €172; ☎) Maybe Wolfgang liked nothing better than a padded surface to bounce about on. Amadeus has carpeting on the ceiling of a lift and on the walls, and a padded lobby ceiling, making it a colourful, warm and very unusual place.

Hotel Austria (Map pp120-1; ☎ 515 23; www.hotel.austria-wien.at; 01, Am Fleischmarkt 20; s €97, d €139-149, apt €189; ☎) Solid wood furnishings set the comfortable standard in this hotel with a summer terrace to the courtyard. The owners are continuously upgrading furnishings in the spacious rooms, some of which are also very quiet.

Hotel Kaiserin Elisabeth (Map pp120-1; ☎ 515 26; www.kaiserinelisabeth.at; 01, Weihburggasse 3; s €122, d €208-230) It's unusual to find a chandelier mounted in a skylight; you'll find one here. The likes of Mozart, Wagner and Liszt graced this hotel where rooms have a turn-of-the-century touch.

Hollmann Beletage (Map pp120-1; ☎ 96 11 960; www.hollmann-beletage.at; 01, Köllnerhofgasse 6; r €140-180; ☎) Book early for this stylish and very popular choice in the Innere Stadt. Rooms have interesting design touches and are decked out in light styles and tones that lift; extras like a guest lounge well stocked with books make the difference.

ourpick Hotel am Stephansplatz (Map pp120-1; ☎ 53 405-0; www.hotelamstephansplatz.at; 01, Stephansplatz 9; s €145-165, d €210-305, tr/ste €250/450) Someone has thought very hard about design elements while creating this charming hotel. Most

rooms are lit by pairs of windows, some of these corner windows or ceiling to floor. Here your partner can lie in bed and admire the Gothic elegance of Stephansdom towering to your kneecaps. Rooms are tastefully appointed, quiet and surprisingly spacious for such a central location.

König von Ungarn (Map pp120-1; ☎ 515 84-0; www.kvu.at; 01, Schulerstrasse 10; s €145-165, d €208, apt €290-340; ☎) The King of Hungary pulls off a tough act by balancing class with informality. Its inner atrium sets a wonderful mood, and the rooms, individually decorated with antique furniture, create a homely feel. Unusual and helpful for seniors is that bathrooms have telephones to reception.

Style Hotel (Map pp120-1; ☎ 22 780-0; www.stylehotel.at; 01, Herrengasse 12; r €265-285, ste €420-550; ☎) This hotel lives up to its name admirably with mel-low tones, a chilled-out feel and extras like a free minibar re-stocked daily; the sauna and fitness facilities might tip the scales if you find the price daunting.

TOP END

Hotel Ambassador (Map pp120-1; ☎ 961 610; www.ambassador.at; 01, Kärntner Strasse 22/Neuer Markt 5; s €160-210, d €190-266) Prices vary by season and demand, but even in May and September you can find well-priced rooms in the historic Ambassador. Its gourmet restaurant Mörwald im Ambassador is a Vienna treat, making this a wonderful choice for weekend breaks.

Hotel Sacher (Map pp120-1; ☎ 51 456-0; www.sacher.com; 01, Philharmonikerstrasse 4; s €300-550, d €370-600) The elegant Sacher threw open its grand portals in 1876 and is not only home to the world-famous *Sacher Torte* but also revels in the sweet extravagance of the baroque epoch.

Ringstrasse

BUDGET & MIDRANGE

Hotel-Pension Wild (Map pp120-1; ☎ 406 51 74; www.pension-wild.com; 08, Lange Gasse 10; s €41-69, d €53-97, tr €90-114) This is a ultra-friendly pension embraces gays and straights alike. Wild, though, is the family name, not a description of the kind of nights you can expect here.

Hotel am Schuberttring (Map pp120-1; ☎ 717 02-0; www.schuberttring.at; 01, Schuberttring 11; s €106-135, d €135-218) What an eccentric fish the graceful old 'Schubi' is! A maze of corridors, Biedermeier or Art Nouveau furnished rooms (some with views over the Vienna's rambling rooftops) and guests are usually

grouped among the warren of wings roughly according to generation.

Hotel Viennart (Map pp120-1; ☎ 523 13 45; viennart@austronet.at; 07, Breite Gasse 9; s/d/apt €140/200/245; ☎) This four-star art hotel situated close to the MuseumsQuartier and Volkstheater has refreshing styles and a lobby that invites guests to meet and exchange stories. It's a period furnishing-free zone, with 56 ultra-modern rooms with an art edge.

Hotel Regina (Map pp120-1; ☎ 404 460; www.kremslehnhotels.at; 09, Rooseveltplatz 15; s €140, d €180-255; ☎) After you waded through the impressive lobby, the size of the rooms do come as a letdown, but Regina's central location and rich decorative flavours make it a decent and convenient option, directly opposite the Votivkirche.

TOP END

Hotel Maria Theresia (Map pp120-1; ☎ 521 23; www.kkhotels.com; 07, Kirchberggasse 6; s €180-205, d €240-265; ☎) Business travellers with buddies in their accounts department will harbour a soft spot for Maria Theresia. Advantages are its circular lobby bar, facilities that include a network cable for free internet in rooms (or terminals downstairs), a small fitness area and snugly styled rooms to relax in after doing deals.

Hotel Imperial (Map pp120-1; ☎ 501 10-0; www.luxurycollection.com/imperial; 01 Kärntner Ring 16; d €760-860, ste €1460-4950, breakfast extra; ☎) Originally the palace of the Prince of Württemberg, the Imperial re-invented itself as a hotel for the World Fair in 1873 while retaining the glory and majesty of a residence. It's a truly remarkable hotel: marble bathrooms, antiques and original oil paintings and silver service all help to re-create 19th-century Vienna.

Across the Danube Canal

BUDGET

Aktiv Camping Neue Donau (Map pp114-15; ☎ 202 40 10; 22, Am Kleehäufel; campsites per adult/tent €6.90/5.50; ☎ mid-May-Sep; ☎) This is the closest camping ground to the city centre and very handy to the popular swimming areas of Alte Donau and Donauinsel (p131). Rates subside outside July and August.

Jugendgästhaus Wien-Brigittenau (Map pp114-15; ☎ 332 82 94; jgh.1200wien@chello.at; 20, Friedrich-Engels-Platz 24; dm €17-20) With 410 beds, this is by far the largest of five HI hostels in Vienna. The neighbourhood is unappealing, and it's not really convenient to the Innere Stadt, but the hostel is modern, multi-storeyed and just a

couple of minutes' walk from the Danube and Donauinsel.

Inside the Gürtel BUDGET

Jugendherberge Myrthengasse (Map p122; ☎ 523 63 16; hostel@chello.at; 07, Myrthengasse 7; dm/tw €17/40) This well-run HI hostel on a quiet side street has a high convenience factor, gets busy and offers daytime check-in. Telephone reservations are strongly advised (only dorms can be reserved).

Pension Kraml (Map pp116-17; ☎ 587 85 88; www.pensionkraml.at; 06, Brauergasse 5; s/d/tr without bathroom €30/50/70, d €60-70, apt €95-125) Rooms are clean, cosy and surprisingly large in this family-run pension whose big plus is a location between Westbahnhof and the centre.

Westend City Hostel (Map pp116-17; ☎ 597 67 29; www.westendhostel.at; 06, Fügengasse 3; s €50, d €59-78, 12-/6-/8-/4-bed dm €18.50/20.50/20.50/22.10; ☎) Handy to Westbahnhof and popular among young backpackers, Westend has very good facilities and offers guests a place to sleep rather than party and drop.

Hotel Fürstenhof (Map pp116-17; ☎ 523 32 67; www.hotel-fuerstenhof.com; 07, Europaplatz/Neubaugürtel 4; s/d without bathroom from €46/65, s €69-94, d/tr/q/ste €110/120/128/132). The Fürsty is a gem. To Vienna what the Chelsea Hotel is (or once was) to New York, it's the first choice for bands and artists. The single occupancy rooms and doubles are large and some are very quiet behind double doors. If you arrive tired, it can be reached almost on your knees from Westbahnhof.

MIDRANGE

Hotel Atlanta (Map p122; ☎ 405 12 30; www.hotelatlanta.at; 09, Währinger Strasse 33; s €79-104, d €89-144) Built in 1895, Atlanta has lost much of its original Art Nouveau sparkle, but brass chandeliers, creaking floors, leadlight windows and spacious rooms do add serious charm. The street is a dull shocker, but the best doubles are high up with bay windows.

Mondial Apartment Hotel (Map p122; ☎ 310 71 80; www.mondial.at/apt; 09, Pfluggasse 1; apt per night €70-110; ☎) This apartment hotel is a very stylish number with a three-day minimum stay (two, they say, when it's really quiet). The atmosphere is ultra-cosy, and helpful staff at reception are available round the clock. The intersection is busy, though, so ask for a room facing Pfluggasse. Monthly rates are significantly lower.

Attaché (Map pp116-17; ☎ 505 18 18; www.bestvienna.hotels.at; 04, Wiedner Hauptstrasse 71; s/d €85/120; ☎) Situated within a reasonable stroll of Naschmarkt, this hotel is clean and well run, with 26 rooms furnished with period furniture, including some in Art Nouveau style.

ourpick Altstadt Vienna (Map p122; ☎ 526 33 99; www.altstadt.at; 07, Kirchengasse 41; s €109-139, d €129-189, ste €209-299; ☎) Classic rooms or designer rooms tastefully composed by Italian star architect Matteo Thun, the architectural anomaly of a 120 sq metre roof garden attached to one room, and individual design touches are the outstanding highlights here. Altstadt Vienna offers respite in a part of town where the shopping is up-beat, the bars relaxed, and you feel a sense of arrival.

Tyrol (Map pp120-1; ☎ 587 54 15; www.das-tyrol.at; 06, Mariahilfer Strasse 15; s €109-209, d €149-259) This boutique hotel has 30 cosy rooms in lovely designs. Staff are friendly and helpful, and the location close to MuseumsQuartier is killer-bee.

Hotel Am Schottenfeld (Map p122; ☎ 526 51 81; www.falkenstein.com/schottenfeld; 07, Schottenfeldgasse 74; s €133-144, d €169-185; ☎) A sociably circular bar, a garishly coloured reception, but pretty apricot tones in comfortable rooms and very helpful staff – the Schottenfeld ranks highly as an address for business travellers. Add-ons like a fitness room with sauna, steam room and solarium add to its attraction.

Theaterhotel (Map p122; ☎ 405 36 48; chwieen@cordial.at; 08, Josefstädter Strasse 22; s/d €184/196) Art Nouveau touches and friendly staff make this hotel one of the better 8th-district choices. But rooms are small and somewhat pricey unless you make good use of the kitchen niches.

TOP END

Das Triest (Map pp120-1; ☎ 589 18-0; www.dastriest.at; 04, Wiedner Hauptstrasse 12; s/d/ste €206/265/540) Business visitors will enjoy the enormous 95 sq metre suite with its own garden, while those seeking simple style and comfort will also feel snug in this refreshingly low-key hotel where everything – from the rooms through the lobby to the stairwells – fits effortlessly together in a mix of modern Italian and Viennese style.

Outside the Gürtel

BUDGET

Camping Wien West (Map pp114-15; ☎ 914 23 14; 14, Hüttelbergstrasse 80; campsites per adult/tent €6.90/5.50, 2-/4-person bungalows €27/37; ☎ Mar-Jan; ☎) This camping ground has cooking facilities

and convenient transport from the Innere Stadt; take the U4 to Hütteldorf, then bus 148 or 152.

Wombat's (Map pp116-17; ☎ 897 23 36; www.wombats.at; 15, Grangasse 6; dm/r €21/50; ☎) It's hard to find a more happening hostel than Wombat's – the atmosphere is more Gold Coast Australia than the Capital of Culture, staff are friendly and it's close to Westbahnhof.

Wombat's The Lounge (Map pp116-17; ☎ 897 23 36; 15, Mariahilfer Strasse 137; dm/r €21/50; ☎) Sister hostel to the original Wombat's, it's even closer to the station.

Hostel Ruthensteiner (Map pp116-17; ☎ 893 42 02; www.hostelruthensteiner.com; 15, Robert-Hamerling-Gasse 24; dm/s/d €15.50/30/48; ☎) Facilities at this hostel include a kitchen, laundry and a shady rear courtyard. Dorms range from two- to 10-bed rooms. The hostel is near Westbahnhof, one block south of Mariahilfer Strasse.

MIDRANGE

Altwienerhof (Map pp116-17; ☎ 892 60 00; www.altwienerhof.at; 15, Herklotzgasse 6; s/d/ste €87/129/185) Altwienerhof is a small, family-run, three-star hotel situated a stone's throw from the Gürtel. It offers style without walking all over your wallet in stilettos and is well-served by friendly and welcoming staff.

Thüringer Hof (Map p122; ☎ 401 79-0; www.thueringerhof.at; 18, Jörgerstrasse 4-8; s/d €75/99; ☎) The exterior is rather off-putting, and inside the rooms are functional, but this hotel is well run and a good shot during a busy period in Vienna. Rooms to the courtyard are surprisingly quiet. Kids aged six to 12 get a 50% discount and those under six stay free.

Favorita (Map pp116-17; ☎ 601 46; www.austria-trend.at/fav; 10, Laxenburger Strasse 8-10; s/d €120/150; ☎) You'll find rooms modern and bright behind the striking yet simple façade of Favorita. There's also a sauna and free steam bath where you can rest those weary bones. Breakfast is available (€13).

Parkhotel Schönbrunn (Map pp116-17; ☎ 87 804-0; parkhotel.schoenbrunn@austria-trend.at; 13, Hietzinger Hauptstrasse 10-20; s €70-129, d €129-170; ☎) Partially built with money from Emperor Franz Josef, who treated it as his private guesthouse, today the four-star Parkhotel Schönbrunn is a more than welcoming abode. The façade is, of course, painted Schönbrunn yellow, the lobby and grand ballroom are opulent and majestic, and many rooms surround a large garden with sun lounges, trees and grass.

EATING

Vienna has thousands of restaurants covering all budgets and styles of cuisine, but dining doesn't stop there. *Kaffeehäuser* (coffee houses) and *Heurigen* (wine taverns; p151) are almost defining elements of the city, and just as fine for a good meal. The humble *Beisl*, Vienna's equivalent of a beer house or tavern, is normally a simple restaurant serving the best of Viennese cuisine in unhealthy portions.

If you've no time to sit around and wait, a *Würstel Stand* will suffice; sausage stands are conveniently located on street corners and squares, ready with sausages, bread and beer. Otherwise you could try the ubiquitous Schnitzelhaus chain, which serves up fast food Viennese-style.

Self-caterers will have no problem stocking up on provisions; Hofer, Zielpunkt, Billa, Spar and Merkur supermarkets are commonplace throughout the city. Some have well-stocked delis that make sandwiches to order – the perfect cheap lunch on the run. The city is also dotted with markets (see p157).

Innere Stadt

RESTAURANTS

Pasta...e Basta (Map pp120-1; ☎ 796 65 42; www.pastaebasta.at; 01, Werdertorgasse 10; mains €6-7; ☎ 10am-11pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat) Over 20 different sorts of pasta are made and sold on the premises, and several sorts are served to a loyal following at wooden tables in this stylish pasta house-cum-wine bar.

Figlmüller (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 61 77; 01, Wollzeile 5; mains €7-14; ☎ 11am-10.30pm, closed Aug) Schnitzel of monumental proportions should be on your agenda here. The interior of Figlmüller has the look and feel of a village *Heuriger* and is a Vienna classic.

Rosenberger Markt Restaurant (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 34 58; 01, Maysedergasse 2; mains €10; ☎ 10.30am-11pm, bistro from 7.30am) The meat and veg mains, starters, pulses and desserts are plentiful in this food-hall style place. You pay by plate size, so pack it on without guilt. The amenities are a big plus if you're in for the day or night – it has lockers, and to avoid having to use its nappy room at a later date there are condom machines in both toilets.

Expedit (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 33 13-0; 01, Wiesingerstrasse 6; mains €8-18; ☎ noon-11pm Mon-Fri, 6-11pm Sat) Warehouse shelves, simple furnishing and an open kitchen are part of the elegant flourish of Expedit. The changing menu offers a

delightful mix of Austro-Italian classics like lamb with polenta, plus seasonal dishes.

Café Griensteidl (Map pp120-1; ☎ 535 26 92-0; 01, Michaelerplatz 2; lunch menu €8-10, mains €11-17; ☎ 8am-11.30pm) Situated in a prestigious corner between the splendour of the Hofburg and the eyebrow-less windows of the Loos Haus (p138), this coffee house crawls unashamedly with tourists but is a nice place to eat, linger and watch the world bustle on by.

Wrenkh (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 15 26; www.wrenkh.at; 01, Bauernmarkt 10; lunch menu from €8, mains €9-16; ☎ lunch & dinner) Wrenkh can be uneven, but there's no denying its creative effort. On a 'miss' day, a gazpacho-like 'power soup' will be superb but a chicken main uninspiring. The creative dishes are complemented by workshops, 'cooking salons' and dashes of experimental group cooking (p64).

Lebenbauer (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 55 56; 01, Teinfaltstrasse 3; mains €11-20; ☎ 11am-3pm & 5.30-10.30pm Mon-Fri) Sleek décor and quality upmarket vegetarian cuisine complemented by fish dishes are the highlights of Lebenbauer. The tables are a quite close together, though; here lone diners may not feel entirely at ease.

Griechenbeisl (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 19 77; 01, Fleischmarkt 11; mains €15-24; ☎ 11am-1am) As much a chunky slice of Vienna for tourists as a restaurant, Griechenbeisl has been around since 1447 and was once frequented by musical greats Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms. Choose to dine on Viennese standards in one of the vaulted rooms or in the plant-fringed front garden.

En (Map pp120-1; ☎ 532 44 90; 01, Werdertorgasse 8; lunch menu €7.50-9.50, full meal plus wine about €25; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) This rewarding slice of modern Japan in the back streets of Innere Stadt serves some of the best sushi in town. Its 16-piece flagship 'En sushi' is satisfying, and the atmosphere is relaxed even if you're eating alone.

Haas & Haas (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 26 66; 01, Stephansplatz 4; light meals €8-13, breakfast €7-14; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-6.30pm Sat) This tea house has the attraction of hefty breakfasts (served 8am to 11.30am) and a location that's the envy of town: Stephansdom to your left, a tranquil inner courtyard to your right.

QUICK EATS

Gelateria Hoher Markt (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 32 97-1; 01, Hoher Markt 4; ice cream €1.80; ☎ 9am-11.30pm) Forget Zanoni on Rotenturmstrasse and wander a few steps west to this place on Hoher Markt

for 30 varieties of homemade ice cream and a concoction of elaborate sundaes you can enjoy outdoors.

Würstelstand am Hohen Markt (Map pp120-1; 01, Hoher Markt; sausages from €3; ☎ 7am-4am) Possibly the Würstelstand in all of Vienna (which is truly saying something), this one attracts people from all walks of life who flock here for the best of the late-night Wurst.

Trzesniewski (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 32 91; 01, Dorotheergasse 1; breads from €3; ☎ 8.30am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) Even Franz Kafka frequented this Viennese deli bar. Choose your bread then select your spread, or pick from the ready-made sandwiches. They're quite tiny, though (two bites and they're gone).

SELF-CATERING

There's an Interspar (Map pp120-1) on the 1st floor on the corner of Rotenturmstrasse and Fleischmarkt, and a Billa (Map pp120-1) on Singerstrasse.

Freyung (Map pp120-1; 01, Freyung; ☎ 9am-6pm Fri & Sat 1st & 3rd weekend of month; U2 Schottentor) market exclusively sells fresh organic produce.

Ringstrasse RESTAURANTS

Café Prückel (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 61 15; 01, Stubenring 24; coffee €1.80-3.60, mains €6-11; ☎ 8.30am-10pm) In the best of Vienna's coffee houses, the past lingers like a stain on your living room carpet that brings back nice memories. Prückel is one of the best. The meals are hearty, the coffee is superb, the cakes irresistible and friendly waiters rule the world from here.

Vapiano (Map pp120-1; ☎ 581 12 12; 06, Theobaldgasse 19; pasta €6-9; ☎ 11am-midnight) Four categories of mains are offered in this cafeteria-style pasta chain whose young staff whip up your dish while you watch. Pick up a card at the door and let the chef swipe it when you order. Hold onto it and pay at the door when you leave. The pasta is made on the premises, and bonuses are its hours and a nappy-changing room.

Kantine (Map pp120-1; ☎ 523 82 39; 07, Museumsplatz 1; daily menu €6, pitta & mains €5-9; ☎ 9-2am Mon-Sat, 9am-midnight Sun) This upbeat café-cum-bar is replete with a disco ball and housed in former stables for the Emperor's horses. If the fresh daily menu – typically an Asian or Viennese dish with a vegetarian or fish choice thrown in – is sold out, settle for salad-filled pita bread.

our pick Halle (Map pp120-1; ☎ 523 70 01; 07, Museumsplatz 1; lunch menu €7, mains €6-16; ☎ 10am-2am) With tempting food, groovy waiters and a warm, gay-friendly atmosphere, Kunsthalle's restaurant is the best of a good crop in the MuseumsQuartier. The small menu rotates weekly, but look out for its Styrian chicken salad with pumpkin seed oil. Antipasti, salads, pasta and tender meats are possible here, washed down by a good wine.

Una (Map pp120-1; ☎ 523 65 66; 07, Museumsplatz 1; mains €8-14; ☎ 9am-midnight Mon-Fri, 10am-midnight Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) Striking tiled walls, arched ceilings and massive windows complement a menu sporting upmarket salads and pasta through to goulash and seasonal specialties.

Österreicher im MAK (Map pp120-1; ☎ 714 01 21; 01, Stubenring 3-5; lunch menu €6.40, mains €10-19; ☎ 10am-11.30pm) The classic Viennese cuisine with a difference is a treat here. Chef Helmut Österreicher, one of Austria's stars, puts together delicious concoctions such as veal with prawns served on risotto at affordable prices inside the Museum für angewandte Kunst (p131). The garden in summer adds to the delicious pleasure.

Café Restaurant Landtmann (Map p120-1; ☎ 241 00; 01, Dr Karl-Lueger-Ring 4; lunch menu €10, mains €8-20; ☎ 7.30am-midnight) This elegant old dame has sidelong views of the Burgtheater (p153) from its lovely covered outdoor area. Staff bustle about taking orders for classic Austrian cuisine outside or in the lavish wood-panelled interior.

Vestibül (Map pp120-1; ☎ 532 49 99; 01, Dr Karl-Lueger-Ring 2; evening menu €39-45, mains €19-24; ☎ 11am-midnight Mon-Fri, 6pm-midnight Sat) The menu may be small at Vestibül but flavours run deep in this restaurant, which is very popular for dishes focused mainly on classic meat cuts. The interior is delightful, with marble columns, chandeliers and a mirrored bar; it's situated in the southern wing of the Burgtheater.

Across the Danube Canal RESTAURANTS

Schöne Perle (Map pp116-17; ☎ 243 35 93; 02, Grosse Pfarrgasse 2; lunch menu €7, mains €6.50-12; ☎ noon-midnight Mon-Fri, 10am-midnight Sat & Sun) Schöne Perle uses organic eggs and cheeses in its delicious breakfasts and mains; the cuisine is Austro-international and you can enjoy it while the kids play with those toys up the front.

Schweizerhaus (Map pp116-17; ☎ 728 01 52 13; 02, Strasse des Ersten Mai 116; mains €10-15; ☎ 11am-11pm

mid-Mar-Oct) It's conceivable that your meal here will do you for three days: the house specialty, roasted *hintere Schweinsstetzel* (pork hocks), is sold by the kilogram and you can wash it down with draught Budweiser (the Czech stuff) direct from the barrel while enjoying a rollicking Biergarten atmosphere.

Vincent (Map pp116-17; ☎ 214 15 16; 02, Grosse Pfarrgasse 7; a la carte €12-18, 3-10 course menus €29-98; ☎ 5.30-11.30pm Mon-Sat) There aren't a lot of Leopoldstadt options, but Vincent is a good one: Austrian flavours meet the rest of the culinary world here: *Tafelspitz* or freshwater crayfish in tempura batter; rich décor up the front is balanced by an atrium out the back.

SELF-CATERING

Karmelitermarkt (Map pp116-17; 02, Im Werd; ☎ 6am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 6am-2pm Sat) Karmelitermarkt has fruit and vegetable stalls and butchers selling kosher and halal meats. On Saturday the square features a *Bauernmarkt* (farmers market).

Inside the Gürtel RESTAURANTS

Aromat (Map pp116-17; ☎ 913 24 53; 04, Margareten Strasse 52; menus €5-7, mains about €5; ☎ 5-11pm Tue-Sun) Vegetarian and meat dishes are complemented by sweet and savoury crepes and galettes in this relaxed restaurant featuring a rotating menu. Much of it is concocted from whatever the cooks find fresh at the Naschmarkt. It's about the size of a living room, so get in early or reserve.

St Josef (Map p122; ☎ 526 68 18; 07, Mondscheingasse 10; small/large menu €5.80/6.70; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-4pm Sat) This bustling vegetarian eatery is one of Vienna's favourites, and not just among the Öko (ecological) crowd. Everyone beats a trail here for a changing menu with 100% organic and vegetarian offerings. The kitchen is open all day. Take a seat upstairs or downstairs or get something to go.

Zu den Zwei Liesln (Map p122; ☎ 523 32 82; 07, Burggasse 63; mains €4.40-8; ☎ 11am-11pm) This thoroughly authentic *Beisl* is among the best in the business and its treed courtyard is a popular spot on warm summer days and evenings. If you're up for vast portions of Wiener schnitzel and drinking a refreshing beer or wine with a young-ish crowd, this is a fine place to do it.

Hollerei (Map p122; ☎ 406 25 69; 08, Pfeilgasse 2; mains €7-11; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri) The sleek wooden interior of Hollerei is the scene of some of the tastiest vegetarian dishes in town. Even the

simple lentil soup is wonderfully spiced and fills a midday hole perfectly. A few tables are lined up outside when weather permits.

Zum Alten Fassl (Map pp116-17; ☎ 544 42 98; 05, Ziegelofengasse 37; lunch menu €5.70-7, mains €7-14; ☎ 5pm-1am Mon-Sat, noon-3pm & 5pm-1am Sun) Behind the unassuming façade on a residential street is one of Vienna's most esteemed *Beisl*. Locals cross town backwards on their knees for the desserts, and its rear garden is an absolute joy: overgrown with vines, you can sample a hidden garden in residential Vienna.

Steman (Map pp116-17; ☎ 597 85 09; 06, Otto-Bauer-Gasse 7; mains €7-13; ☎ 11am-midnight Mon-Fri) Run by the same people as Café Jelinek (p151), Steman serves traditional food for young and old in a nicely restored and unpretentious interior, with a few tables outside in summer.

Ra'mien (Map pp120-1; ☎ 585 47 98; 06, Gumpendorferstrasse 9; mains €6-15; ☎ 11am-midnight Tue-Sun) Picture a grey-white room, with an open, simple look, full of bright, young, hip things bent over bowls of piping hot noodles, and you have Ra'mien. The menu not only consists of noodles, but covers the spectrum of Asian delights, from Thai to Japanese. Arrive early or reserve a table.

Lux (Map pp120-1; ☎ 526 94 91; 07, Spittelberggasse 3; lunch menu €8.40, mains €8-15; ☎ 11-2am) This rambling restaurant and café-bar uses the French bistro as its role model, right down to the paper tablecloths; the atmosphere is convivial and the menu includes lamb and rabbit as well as vegetarian options.

Chang (Map pp116-17; ☎ 961 92 12; 04, Waaggasse 1; mains €6-16; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Noodles – absolutely oodles of them – and a couple of duck dishes are the strength of this eating house, prepared with expertise and flair in a relaxed atmosphere.

Wild (Map pp120-1; ☎ 920 94 77; 03, Radetzkyplatz 1; mains €9-20; ☎ 10am-1am) The building used to be a wine house peddling wares of a dubious quality, but today you can sit indoors or outdoors on Radetzkyplatz while enjoying genuine classics like veal roulade or schnitzel.

Motto (Map pp116-17; ☎ 587 06 72; 05, Schönbrunner Strasse 30; mains €8-21; ☎ 6pm-2am Sun-Thu, till 4am Fri & Sat) The culinary delights of Motto are legendary, right down to the steak with chocolate chilli sauce on mashed potato. If the fusion Asian, Austrian and Italian food doesn't get your pulse racing, linger and enjoy the vibe of the bar or get down at its regular music events. Reserve a table;

entrance is through the forbidding chrome door on Rüdigerasse.

Stomach (Map pp116-17; ☎ 310 20 99; 09, Seegasse 26; mains €10-17; ☎ 4pm-midnight Wed-Sat, 10am-10pm Sun) Stomach's been serving seriously good food for years, and getting better with age. The menu is a healthy mix of meat and vegetarian dishes and features plenty of game during the season. The interior is straight out of rural Austria, with an overgrown garden and cobblestones. Reservations are highly recommended.

Tancredi (Map pp116-17; ☎ 941 00 48; 04, Grosse Neugasse 5; lunch menu €7, mains €12-19; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat) This ex-*Beisl* has stripped-back wooden floors, warm, pastel-yellow walls, fittings from yester-year and a lovely tree-shaded garden; its strengths are regional and fish specialties, organic products and its Austrian wines.

Gaumenspiel (Map p122; ☎ 526 11 08; 07, Zieglergasse 54; mains €15-20, midday menus around €8, full menus €35-42; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat) Small and attracting a faithful following, Gaumenspiel has a bistro feel and serves up delicious Mediterranean-Austrian crossover cuisine – it's all chalked on a blackboard.

Amacord (Map pp120-1; ☎ 587 47 09; 05, Rechte Wienzeile 15; breakfast €5-8, mains €8-12; ☎ 10am-2am, breakfast till 6pm) Shoppers on a Saturday morning fill Amacord to bursting point, all fighting for a table and a chance to breakfast. Outside Saturday morning, the pace is more sedate, but the food – a mix of Viennese classics and Italian pastas – is still of the highest quality and the atmosphere is convivial and quirky, if a little smoky sometimes.

Gasthaus Wickerl (Map p122; ☎ 317 74 89; 09, Porzellangasse 24a; menu €5.80, mains €8-16; ☎ 9am-midnight Mon-Fri, 10am-midnight Sat) Wickerl's laurels are excellent Viennese home cooking served in a low-key ambience of bare wooden floors, simple furniture and summer street-side seating.

Scala (Map pp116-17; ☎ 310 20 79; 09, Servitengasse 4; mains €10-18.50; ☎ 11am-midnight Mon-Sat, 5pm-midnight Sun) Scala is one of those cosy Italian family places that makes for a great refuge on a rainy day for a plate of pasta and glass of wine, though it can get bustling at night for its antipasti, pizza and fish specialties.

Summer Stage (Map pp116-17; ☎ 315 52 02; 09, Rossauer Lände; mains €6-20; ☎ 5pm-1am Mon-Sat, 3pm-1am Sun May-Sep) A diverse range of restaurants set up shop over the summer months at Summer Stage, a covered area overlooking

the Danube Canal near the Rossauer Lände U4 stop.

Amerlingbeisl (Map pp120-1; ☎ 526 16 60; 07, Stifftgasse 8; mains €6-9; ☎ 9am-2am) Amerlingbeisl in cobblestoned Spittelberg does a small selection of dishes like roasted pumpkin and salad for a young crowd who nosh from the changing menu. On balmy nights the roof slides back for those who are able to cram into the rear courtyard.

Ubl (Map pp120-1; ☎ 587 64 37; 04, Pressgasse 26; mains €9-14; ☎ lunch & dinner) Schnitzels as big as your boot and local classics such as *Tafelspitz* are the fare at this Viennese *Beisl* with bite.

Palais Schwarzenberg (Map pp120-1; ☎ 798 45 15-600; 03, Schwarzenbergplatz 9; ☎ closed for restoration until at least 2008) The grand baroque dining room and terrace with sweeping views of an 18-acre garden were being given a face-lift when we last looked in. Watch out for a re-opening, though, as the setting is wonderful.

Café Hummel (Map p122; ☎ 405 53 14; 08, Josefstädter Strasse 66; breakfast €5-10, mains €10-17; ☎ 7am-midnight Mon-Sat, 8am-midnight Sun) Unpretentious Hummel is a true locals' *Kaffeehaus*, with a decent schnitzel and chips, aloof waiters, outdoor seating, a huge range of Viennese dishes, top coffee and homemade cakes.

Café Sperl (Map pp120-1; ☎ 586 41 58; 06, Gumpendorfer Strasse 11; mains €6.50-9; ☎ 7am-11pm Mon-Sat, 11am-8pm Sun, closed Sun Jul & Aug) *Jugendstil* fittings, a cosy atmosphere, an honest goulash reminiscent of your grandmother's, topped off by a billiard table and the *Sperl Torte* – this is definitely one of Vienna's best coffee houses.

Naschmarkt (Map pp120-1; 06, Linke & Rechte Wienzeile; ☎ 6am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 6am-5pm Sat) Vienna's biggest and boldest market is a food-lover's dream come true. Not only are there food stalls selling meats, fruits, vegetables, cheeses and spices, but there's also a wide variety of restaurants. Here's a couple:

Naschmarkt Deli (Map pp120-1; ☎ 585 08 23; 04, Naschmarkt 421; bagels €5, sandwiches €6-8, mains €7-9; ☎ 8am-11pm Mon-Sat) Wraps, baguettes, sandwiches and breakfasts and the perfect place to people-watch; don't turn up at 10am Saturday expecting to find a seat.

Indian Pavillon (Map pp120-1; ☎ 587 85 61; 04, Naschmarkt 74-75; mains €7-10; ☎ 11am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat) Serves dishes laden with spices from the subcontinent, including kebabs, samosas and rogan josh.

QUICK EATS

Bagel Station (Map pp120-1; ☎ 208 08 94; 06, Capistrangasse 10; bagels €3.50-4; ☎ 7am-9pm Mon-Fri, 9am-9pm

Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) This European chain of bagel shops has garish orange, bright interiors. Another station can be found at Währinger Strasse 2-4.

SELF-CATERING

Biomarkt Maran (Map p122; ☎ 526 58 86-18; Kaiserstrasse 57-59) A whole-food supermarket with inexpensive fruit, vegetables and almost everything else needed to whip up a nutritious meal.

Outside the Gürtel RESTAURANTS

Schloss Concordia (Map pp114-15; ☎ 769 88 88; 11, Simmeringer Hauptstrasse 283; mains €10; ☎ 10am-1am) Concordia's overgrown garden, bare wooden floors, gargantuan mirrors and stained-glass ceiling create a strange but highly appealing interior. The large stone Jesus statue adds to this. With 12 different types of schnitzel, its menu reads like a list from the abattoir; the house specialty – the Concordia schnitzel – is prepared with lentils; truly vegetarian options are also available.

Kent (Map p122; ☎ 405 91 73; 16, Brunnengasse 67; mains €5-9; ☎ 6am-2am) With a huge summer garden, excellent lamb kebabs, and good pizzas and Turkish-style breakfasts, Kent is one of our favourite Turkish restaurants in Vienna; its meats are *halal*.

SELF-CATERING

Brunnenmarkt (Map p122; 16, Brunnengasse; ☎ 6am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 6am-2pm Sat) Brunnenmarkt is Vienna's largest street-market and totally reflects its ethnic neighbourhood; most stall-holders are of Turkish/Balkan decent. On Saturday nearby Yppenplatz features the best *Bauernmarkt* (farmers market) in the city.

DRINKING Bars

Vienna is riddled with late-night drinking dens, but you will find concentrations of pulsating bars north and south of the Naschmarkt, around Spittelberg (many of these double as restaurants) and along the Gürtel (mainly around the U6 stops of Josefstädter Strasse and Nussdorfer Strasse). The Bermuda Dreieck (Bermuda Triangle), near the Danube Canal in the Innere Stadt, also has many bars, but they are more touristy. In summer, beach bars line the banks of the canal (see boxed text, p154).

Also during the summer months, partygoers congregate at Copa Kagrana and Sunken City, an area around the U1 Donauinsel U-Bahn station. It's quite a tacky affair, but it can be a lot of fun. Summer Stage (p148) and the **Alte AKH** (Map p122; ☎ 87 05 04; cnr Alser Strasse & Spitalgasse) also wage war against the threat of melting indoors.

Café Drechsler (Map pp120-1; ☎ 581 20 44; 06, Linke Wienzeile 22; ☎ 3am-2am) This wonderful Vienna institution is a traditional coffee house that was recently refurbished by British architect Sir Terence Conran in an upbeat minimalist style; the food here is very good (€6 to €13), and it's a great place to begin, end or while away the night. At 2am you have to vacate while cleaners go through.

Palmenhaus (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 10 33; Burggarten; ☎ 10am-2am, closed Mon & Tue Jan & Feb) Relax in a splendidly restored palm house, replete with high, arched ceilings, glass walls and tempered steel. A well-to-do crowd eats, grooves and gets loud here till late.

Kleines Café (Map pp120-1; 01, Franziskanerplatz 3; ☎ 10am-2am) What this small café lacks in size it makes up for with an off-beat atmosphere, tasty morsels from the kitchen and wonderful summer outdoor seating on Franziskanerplatz.

rhiz (Map p122; ☎ 409 25 05; www.rhiz.org; 08, Lerchenfelder Gürtel/Stadtbahnbogen 37-38; ☎ 6pm-4am Mon-Sat, 6pm-2am Sun) With exposed brick walls that breathe the vibe and morph with the crowd, rhiz is one place that you can easily grow to love. It's the hippest of the Gürtel's bunch of bars situated inside the vaulting of the overground. Throw in friendly staff, a large outdoor seating area, large doses of electronic music and guest DJs and you've got the makings of a long night with a changing tempo (it shouldn't stop you exploring the other bars in the area, though!).

An-Do Café (Map p122; ☎ 408 15 89 08, 16, Yppenmarkt Stand 11-15; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat, till midnight Sun) Situated on colourful Yppenplatz in a former market stall, this small bar and café has a set of scales on the floor that you walk over to reach the back section; it's a convivial place that fits in well with a visit to the nearby Kent (p149) for an evening of Turkish food and a drink, though it also does its own snacks.

Das Möbel (Map pp120-1; ☎ 524 94 97; 08, Burggasse 10; ☎ 10-1am) Some sit with turbo-laptops free-surfing on wi-fi; others browse a catalogue for locally designed furniture you can sit on while

drinking or breakfasting. Das Möbel is an odd joint much loved by a relaxed crowd that spends the day and night chatting over drinks – sometimes even about furniture.

ourpick Manolos (Map pp120-1; ☎ 526 20 82; 01, Volksgartenstrasse 1; ☎ 6pm-2am Mon-Fri, 6pm-2am Sat) Deep in the shadows of the Natural History Museum, Manolos is a sleek Mexican restaurant and bar (the fusion food is OK, too, incidentally) with an art edge that can kick on in unusual ways. It's tequila selection will startle, and behind the bar a DJ wearing headphones tweaks a CD deck into the wee hours. Everyone rises to the occasion, dances on available surfaces, and one by one they usually fall off them.

Futuregarden Bar & Art Club (Map pp120-1; ☎ 585 26 13; 06, Schadekgasse 6; ☎ 7pm-2am Mon-Sat, 9pm-2am Sun) A 30s to 40s crowd here soaks up the buzzing atmosphere while DJs spin vinyl. This basic bar's one piece of luxury – apart from the occasional art exhibition by local artists – is its rectangular disco 'ball' that floats from the ceiling.

Schikaneder (Map pp120-1; ☎ 585 58 88; 04, Margareten Strasse 22-24; ☎ 6pm-4am) A cinema, club and bar merge in this art-house venue attracting a crowd with energy to burn. Movies are shown most nights.

Tanzcafé Jenseits (Map pp120-1; ☎ 587 12 33; 06, Nelkengasse 3; ☎ 9pm-4am Mon-Sat) Rumour has it that Jenseits was formally a brothel, which is highly plausible considering the kitschy red velvet interior. DJs perform most nights and the place attracts a mainly alternative and arty crowd that quickly fills the tiny dance floor.

Blue Box (Map p122; ☎ 523 26 82; 07, Richtergasse 8; ☎ 5pm-2am Mon, 10-2am Tue-Thu, till 4am Fri-Sun) This café and bar tucked away on back-street Richtergasse is enjoying a new lease of life. It has comfortable table seating and the atmosphere morphs at night when DJs take centre stage or events are held.

Volksgarten Pavillon (Map pp120-1; ☎ 532 09 07; 01, Burgring 1; €4-15; ☎ 11am-2am May-mid-Sep) The larger garden of this 1950s-style pavilion is especially popular on warm evenings for stupendous views of Hofburg; events are held nightly, but the most popular is 'Techno Café' held Tuesdays from 7pm.

American Bar (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 32 83; 01, Kärntner Durchgang 10; ☎ noon-5am Tue-Sat, noon-4am Sun-Mon) Designed by Adolf Loos is 1908, the American Bar also goes by the name Loos-Bar. You can't swing a cat in this tiny salon; if the mirrors

don't make you think otherwise, the excellent cocktails might – they're among the best in town.

Aera (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 53 14; www.aera.at; 01, Gonzagagasse 11; mains €7.50-10; ☎ 10am-1am Sun-Thu, 10am-2am Fri & Sat) Aera is gay-friendly and it attracts a mixed art crowd who while away hours eating or drinking. You can descend into the cellar some nights for music and performance – from flamenco guitar to kid's theatre or even Austro-Latino choir sessions.

Coffee Houses & Cafés

The Vienna coffee houses are wonderful places for sipping a tea or coffee, imbibing a beer or wine, and catching up on gossip or news of the world. Most serve light meals, while most cafés have a good cake range.

Café Jelinek (Map pp116-17; ☎ 597 41 13; 06, Otto-Bauegasse 5; ☎ 9am-9pm) Walk in from the street here and everyone looks up as if keeping a secret of something shocking that happened 20 years ago. Newspapers fill a ledge near the doorway, the wood oven is fired up in winter and the cigarette smoke clings to you long after you've gone. There's food too, but drift across the street for Viennese nosh at Steman (p148), run by the same people.

Café Bräunerhof (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 38 93; 01, Stallburggasse 2; snacks €3-6; ☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Fri, 8am-7pm Sat, 10am-7pm Sun) Not much has changed in this fine Viennese *Kaffeehaus* since the late great Thomas Bernhard once hung out here. There's classical music on weekends and holidays from 3pm to 6pm, and UK newspapers alongside Vienna's hallowed press.

Café Hawelka (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 82 30; 01, Dorotheergasse 6; snacks €3-6; ☎ 8am-2am Mon & Wed-Sat, 10pm-2am Sun, closed late Jul-Aug) This is the perfect spot to people-watch and chat to complete strangers. It's a traditional haunt for artists and writers, and attracts the soaring figures of Viennese society; expect to be constantly shunted along to accommodate new arrivals at your table, though.

Café Central (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 37 64-26; 01, Herrengasse 14; cakes €4; ☎ 7.30am-midnight) With its marble pillars, arched ceilings, cast-iron chandeliers, bustling waiters and live piano music from 4pm to 11pm, Central is a fascinating Viennese coffee house and restaurant. Trotsky came here to play chess and the writer-cum-regular Peter Altenberg (1859-1919) is still poised stoically at the entrance.

Café Sacher (Map pp120-1; ☎ 541 56-661; 01, Philharmonikerstrasse 4; Sacher Torte €4.80, food €11-25; ☎ 8am-midnight) Sacher is Vienna's coffee house where you can have your history as cake and eat it too; it is home to the infamous *Sacher Torte*. Meals are served here, borne by a battalion of waiters gliding among opulent furnishings.

Demel (Map pp120-1; ☎ 535 17 17-0; 01, Kohlmarkt 14; ☎ 10am-7pm) Demel is Sacher's *Torte* rival – the *Crème-Schnitte* here is to die for. You pay for quality, location and elegance.

Café Gloriette (Map pp116-17; ☎ 879 13 11; 13, Gloriette; snacks €6-8; ☎ 9am-1hr before dusk) This pleasant café occupies a neoclassical gem high on a hill behind Schloss Schönbrunn. Its sweeping views of the Schloss and magnificent gardens and the districts to the north make it arguably one of the best places in Vienna for a vista.

Heurigen

Vienna's *Heuriger* (wine tavern) tradition dates back to the Middle Ages. Identified by a *Busch'n* (a green wreath or branch) hanging over the door, many have outside tables in large gardens or courtyards, while inside the atmosphere is rustic. Some serve light meals, which in Vienna can be a hot or cold buffet.

Concentrations of *Heurigen* can be found in the wine-growing suburbs to the north, southwest, west and northwest of the city. Grinzing, in the northwest, is the best-known *Heurigen* area, but it is also the most touristy. It's generally avoided by the Viennese, but if you like loud music and busloads of rowdy tourists, then it's the place for you.

Esterházykeller (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 34 82; 01, Haahrhof 1; ☎ 11am-11pm Mon-Fri, 4-11pm Sat & Sun) Esterházykeller is one of the few city *Heurigen* gracing the Innere Stadt. Low ceilings and rural decorations blend to create a magnificent interior. Its wine comes from the Schloss Esterházy estate in Eisenstadt.

Zwölf Apostelkeller (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 67 77; 01, Sonnenfelsgasse 3; ☎ 4.30pm-midnight) Even though Zwölf Apostelkeller plays it up big time to the tourists, it still retains plenty of rustic charm. This is mostly due to the premises themselves – a vast, dimly lit, multilevel cellar.

Hirt (Map pp114-15; ☎ 318 96 41; 19, Eisernenhandgasse 165; ☎ 3pm-late Wed-Fri, noon-late Sat & Sun Apr-Oct; noon-late Fri, Sat & Sun Nov-Mar) Hirt is a fantastic little *Heuriger* well hidden among the vineyards of Kahlenberg. Expect superb views,

great food, friendly service and plenty of scrumptious wine.

Zawodsky (Map pp114-15; ☎ 320 79 78; 19, Reinschgasse 3; ☎ 5pm-midnight Mon, Wed & Thu, 2pm-midnight Fri-Sun Mar-Nov) The idyllic orchard and vineyard setting and the small selection of cold and hot meats make this Heuriger a wonderful retreat, far from the madding crowds.

Mayer am Pfarrplatz (Map pp114-15; ☎ 370 12 87; 19, Pfarrplatz 2; ☎ 4pm-midnight Mon-Sat, 11am-midnight Sun) Mayer is one of the few gems in Grinzing and also has a place in the history annals – in 1817 Beethoven called it home. Its large garden is particularly pleasant and there's live music from 7pm to midnight daily.

Göbel (Map pp114-15; ☎ 294 84 20; 21, Stammersdorfer Kellergasse 151; ☎ seasonal) About 80% of the output of this stylish Heuriger is red wine, served to complement warm and cold buffet dishes and traditional gourmet cuisine; the building was designed by owner-architect Peter Göbel.

Sirbu (Map pp114-15; ☎ 320 59 28; 19, Kahlenberger Strasse 210; ☎ 3pm-midnight Mon-Sat Apr-mid-Oct) Occupying a quiet spot up high among the vineyards on Kahlenberg, Sirbu is a far cry from the hustle and bustle of Vienna below. Its wines are award-winning, and the garden is perfect for whiling away a sunny afternoon.

Zahel (Map pp114-15; ☎ 889 13 18; 23, Maurer Hauptplatz 9; ☎ 3pm-midnight Tue-Sun) Zahel, housed in 250-year-old premises, is one of the oldest Heurigen in Vienna and the best on offer in the Mauer area (in the southwest of Vienna).

ENTERTAINMENT

Vienna is, and probably will be till the end of time, the European capital of opera and classical music. The programme of music events is never-ending, and as a visitor in the centre you'll continually be accosted by people in Mozart-era costume trying to sell you tickets for concerts or ballets. Even the city's buskers are often classically trained musicians.

The city also sports a number of great clubs, jazz bars and live-music venues. The tourist office produces a handy monthly listing of concerts and other events.

Opera & Classical Music

The list of venues below is certainly not complete, and many churches and cafés are fine places to catch a classical concert.

Tickets for the Akademietheater, Burgtheater, Schauspielhaus, Staatsoper and

Volksoper can be purchased from the state ticket office, **Bundestheaterkassen** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 514 44 7881; www.bundestheater.at; 01, Operngasse 2; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat & Sun). The office charges no commission and tickets for the Staatsoper and Volksoper are available here one month prior to the performance. Credit card sales can be made by telephone (☎ 513 15 13; ☎ 10am-9pm), where English-speaking operators are available, or over the internet. The box office, **Info unter den Arkaden** (Herbert von Karajan-Platz; ☎ 9am-1hr before performance begins Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat), handles tickets for the Staatsoper and Volksoper.

The **Wien-Ticket Pavillon** (Map pp120-1; 01, Herbert-von-Karajan-Platz; ☎ 10am-7pm) outside the Staatsoper sells tickets for Theater an der Wien, the Raimundtheater and various music acts. **Jirsa Theater Karten Büro** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 400 600; http://viennaticket.at; 08, Lerchenfelder Strasse 12; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon, Thu & Fri, till 1pm Tue & Wed, 10am-1pm Jul & Aug) covers most venues in town.

Staatsoper (Map pp120-1; ☎ 514 44 7880; www.wiener-staatsoper.at; 01, Opernring 2; tours adult/child €5/2; ☎ box office 9am-until 2hr before performance Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat, closed Jul & Aug) This is the premier opera and classical music venue in Vienna. Productions are lavish affairs and the Viennese take them very seriously and dress up accordingly. Standing-room tickets (€2 to €3.50) can only be purchased 80 minutes before the beginning of performances and any unsold tickets are available for €30 one day before a performance (call ☎ 514 44 2950 for more information).

Musikverein (Map pp120-1; ☎ 505 81 90; www.musikverein.at; 01, Bösendorferstrasse 12; ☎ box office 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat, closed Jul & Aug) The Musikverein, home to the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, is said to have the best acoustics of any concert hall in Austria. The interior is suitably lavish and can be visited on the occasional guided tour. Standing-room tickets in the main hall cost €4 to €6; there are no student tickets.

Konzerthaus (Map pp120-1; ☎ 242 002; www.konzerthaus.at; 03, Lothringerstrasse 20; ☎ box office 9am-7.45pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat, closed Jul & Aug) This is a major venue in classical music circles, but throughout the year ethnic music, rock, pop or jazz can also be heard in its hallowed halls. Regular tickets start at around €15; students can purchase tickets for €12, 30 minutes before the show.

Theater an der Wien (Map pp120-1; ☎ 588 85; www.musicalvienna.at; 06, Linke Wienzeile 6; ☎ box office 10am-7pm)

Once the host of monumental premiers such as Beethoven's *Fidelio*, Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and Strauss Jr's *Die Feldermaus*, Theater an der Wien now showcases opera, dance and concerts. Tickets start from €7 for standing room, sold one hour before performances.

Volksoper (Map p122; ☎ 514 44 3670; www.volkoper.at; 09, Währinger Strasse 78; ☎ box office 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) This is Vienna's second opera house and features operettas, dance and musicals. Standing tickets go for as little as €1.50, and there are discounts 30 minutes before performances.

Dating back to 1498, the Wiener Sängerknaben (Vienna Boys' Choir) is an institution of the city. The choir sings every Sunday (except during July and August) at 9.15am in the Burghkapelle (Royal Chapel; p125) in the Hofburg. Tickets (€5 to €29) should be booked around eight weeks in advance (☎ 533 99 27), otherwise try your luck for a last-minute ticket at the **Burghkapelle box office** (☎ 11am-1pm & 3-5pm Fri) for the following Sunday or immediately before mass between 8.15am and 8.45am. Standing room is free and you need to queue by 8.30am to find a place inside the open doors, but you can get a flavour of what's going on from the TV in the foyer. The choir also sings a mixed programme of music in the Musikverein at 4pm on Friday in May, June, September and October. Tickets range from €36 to €63, and can be purchased from **Reisebüro Mondial** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 588 04 141; www.mondial.at; 04, Faulmannsgasse 4) and hotels in Vienna.

Theatre & Dance

Theatrical performances in English can be seen at the **English Theatre** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 402 12 60-0; www.englishtheatre.at; 08, Josefsplatz 12; tickets €19.50-38; ☎ box office 10am-5pm Mon-Fri) or the smaller **International Theatre** (Map p122; ☎ 319 62 72; www.internationaltheatre.at; 09, Porzellangasse 8; tickets €20-24; ☎ box office 11am-3pm Mon-Fri, 6-7.30pm on performance days).

Of the German theatres around town, the best to visit is the **Burgtheater** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 514 44 4140; www.burgtheater.at; 01 Dr Karl-Leuger-Ring; tickets €1.50-48; ☎ box office 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat & Sun). Other theatres include **Schauspielhaus** (Map p122; ☎ 317 01 01-18; www.schauspielhaus.at; 09, Porzellangasse 19; tickets €16; ☎ box office 4-6pm Mon-Fri, 2hr before performances) and **Volkstheater** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 52111-400; www.volkstheater.at; in German; 07, Neustiftgasse 1; tickets €3-40; ☎ box office 10am-performance start Mon-Sat).

In 2001 Vienna opened its first dance institution, the **TanzQuartier Wien** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 581 35 91; www.tqw.at; 07, Museumsplatz 1; tickets €9.50-155; ☎ box office 10am-7pm Mon-Sat). Located in the newly completed MuseumsQuartier, it hosts an array of local and international performances with a strong experimental nature.

Nightclubs

Goodmann (Map pp120-1; ☎ 967 44 15; www.goodmann.at; in German; 04, Rechte Wienzeile 23; €5-10; ☎ 4am-10am Mon-Sat) Who cares that Goodmann keeps the strangest opening hours of any establishment in Vienna? This is where clubbers go when the clubs close; most come for a snack (food is served till 8am) before heading downstairs to dance till closing.

Camera Club (Map p122; ☎ 523 30 63; www.camera-club.at; in German; 07, Neubaugasse 2; €5-10; ☎ 2pm-6am Thu-Sat) Decked out with orange-walled seating inherited from the 1970s, the Camera Club gets Vienna's top DJs and has even morphed into the wintering ground for one of the country's most innovative – DJ Tibcurl and the Icke Micke Club. A live band usually plays the first Wednesday of each month from about 10pm.

Flex (Map pp116-17; ☎ 533 75 25; www.flex.at; 01, Donaukanal, Augartenbrücke; €4-10; ☎ 6pm-4am) Change is afoot at Vienna's most celebrated low-life club, with a new pavilion being built out the front. Flex still looks like a complete dive, but it has one of the best sound systems in Europe, puts on great shows and features the top DJs from Vienna and abroad. The Dub Club on Monday and London Calling (alternative and indie) on Wednesday are among the most popular. Live bands also take the stage, and there's free internet access.

Roxy (Map pp120-1; ☎ 961 88 00; www.sunshine.at; 04, Operngasse 24; €5-10; ☎ 10pm-late Thu-Sat) Roxy's tiny dance floor reaches bursting point when DJs from the electronic scene guest here, though everything from Brazilian to jazzy grooves can be heard.

Volksgarten (Map pp120-1; ☎ 532 42 41; 01, Burgring 1; free-€15; ☎ 8pm-2am Mon-Wed, 9.30pm-late Thu-Sat) This club attracts a well-dressed crowd, keen to strut their stuff and scan for talent from the long bar. The quality sound system pumps out an array of music styles, which changes from night to night.

Ost Klub (Map pp120-1; ☎ 505 62 28; 04, Schwarzenbergplatz 10; price varies; ☎ 7pm-4am Thu-Sat) Ost Klub hooks right into the wave of European

MORE BRACKISH THAN BLUE (BUT WHO CARES?)

Much ado is made about the romantic Danube, but what about its canal? At first glance the Danube Canal seems no great shakes. It slurps through town brown and disturbingly opaque. There's more to its 'flowing upside down' appearance, though. From this small stretch of water you can jump on a boat on a Friday or Saturday summer evening, zip downstream to Bratislava for dinner, and back upstream to Vienna in time for a nightcap or some clubbing (p400; book early though!).

Sometime after 2008 the converted cargo vessel, **MS Supamira** (www.supamira.com), should swing into life as a floating culture platform modelled on similar ships in Paris and Belgrade. Visual arts, film, theatre and performance will be the focus. The idea is that the ship will spend part of the year moored in Vienna and at other times cruise the Danube to culturally hook up cities along the river. Original plans were to moor it in front of Strandbar Herrmann, but that hit a hitch and the location is still undecided.

Speaking of that nightlife devil: **Strandbar Herrmann** (Map pp120-1; www.strandbarherrmann.at, in German; 01, Donaukanal/Wienfluss; ☎ 10-2am May-Sep), regarded as one of the world's hottest venues, looks set to pack up its deck chairs in 2015 (time enough for a few more cocktails, anyway) to make room for some canal construction work. No-one knows where Herrmann will be or what form he'll take after that. There's always space upriver, where a few other beach bars are situated on the canal, a stone's throw from the Bermuda Triangle nightlife zone.

Meanwhile, the club **Flex** (p153) is getting a dazzling glass pavilion and roof terrace that is tipped to attract a less feral clientele. It'll be interesting to see what happens to the grunge when it's exposed to all those rays of light and good manners. The word around town is also that a second Badeschiff (Bathing Ship) with a pool will moor here (run by Flex), so look out for that. The original is the **Badeschiff Wien** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 51307-44; www.badeschiff.at; 01, btwn Schwedenbrücke & Aspernbrücke; €5 for pool; ☎ 11am-midnight), which contains the club **Laderaum** (☎ 10pm-4am Mon-Sat; free or about €5-6) within its bowels, with regular DJs and electronic sounds.

Another new attraction is **Surfwelle** (www.surfwelle.at, in German), a large polystyrene wave with a water film that you can surf on boards. But if hanging 10 in the canal is not your thing, upstream the historic **Otto-Wagner-Schützenhaus** (Map pp116-17; Obere Donaustrasse 59) is getting an overhaul and will be an Art Nouveau café from 2009.

The 'mother of all projects', the **Trialto Bridge** (Map pp116-17; btwn Marienbrücke & Schwedenbrücke) is a new bridge development with shops, restaurants and bars. At the time of publication, though, approval was being held up due to some political issues that need talking through. The year 2011 could be the time for unveiling the new bridge.

clubs with an Eastern European and Balkan flavour; you can see a Georgian choir going through its paces one night and hear klezmer, turbo folk, world music or lounge and electronic the next in a mixture of turntable and live sounds in its 'Klub' and 'Kantine' rooms.

U4 (Map pp116-17; ☎ 817 11 92; www.u-4.at; 12, Schönbrunner Strasse 222; €6-25; ☎ 10pm-late) Once the cutting edge of techno in Vienna, these days U4 pulls a young, studenty crowd – the edge has blunted somewhat but it's still very popular.

Live Music

Porgy & Bess (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 88 11; www.porgy.at; 01, Riemergasse 11; about €15 ☎ 8pm-4am Mon-Sat, 7pm-4am Sun) This is the place to catch home-grown

and international jazz acts. Its jam sessions have recently been revived on Friday night after the scheduled performance.

WUK (Map p122; ☎ 40 121-0; www.wuk.at; 09, Währinger Strasse 59; free-€10) WUK is a space as much as a venue. You can catch Mieke Medusa & Tenderboy hip-hopping one night and classical concerts, film evenings, theatre or even children's shows another.

Szene Wien (Map pp116-17; ☎ 749 33 41; www.szene.wien.at; 11, Hauffgasse 26; €8-20; ☎ from 7.30pm) Good things happen in small places – this small venue hauls out a mixed bag that includes rock, reggae, funk, jazz and world music.

Arena (Map pp116-17; ☎ 798 85 95; www.arena.co.at, in German; 03, Baumgasse 80; price varies; ☎ 2pm-late summer, 4pm-late winter) Arena normally hosts hard rock, metal and rock, which is well suited to

its industrial location. The former slaughterhouse also shows films outdoors in summer and it holds once-a-month all-night parties; 'Iceberg', a German/British 1970s new wave bash, is popular.

Jazzland (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 25 75; www.jazzland.at; 01, Franz-Josefs-Kai 29; price varies; ☎ 7pm-2am Mon-Sat) Jazzland has been an institution of Vienna's jazz scene for the past 30 years. The music covers the whole jazz spectrum and the brick venue features a grand mixture of local and international acts.

Unplugged (Map pp120-1; ☎ 5; www.vienna-unplugged.at, in German; 09, Liechtensteinstrasse 61; €2-8; ☎ from 8pm) This live venue has sporadic acts and provides a platform for local bands to perform live. Musos of all styles unpack their instruments here: punk, pop and rock – it's raw, small and back to the roots of the live gig.

Cinemas

Vienna has a fine mix of cinemas, featuring Hollywood blockbusters to art-house films, in both German and English. *Falter*, *City* and *Der Standard* (daily newspaper) all contain film listings. Monday is *Kinomontag*, when many seats are discounted. Expect to pay about €8 for tickets.

Artis International (Map pp120-1; ☎ 535 65 70; www.cineplex.at; 01, Schulergerasse 5) Mainstream films in English.

Breitenseer Lichtspiele (Map pp116-17; ☎ 982 21 73; 14, Breitenseer Strasse 21) Opened in 1905; still contains the original fittings and plays old B&W classics and independents.

Burg Kino (Map pp120-1; ☎ 587 84 06; www.burkino.at; 01, Opernring 19) English films; has regular screenings of *The Third Man*.

English Cinema Haydn (Map pp120-1; ☎ 587 22 62; www.haydnkino.at; 06, Mariahilfer Strasse 57) Features mainstream Hollywood-style films in their original language.

Film Casino (Map pp116-17; ☎ 581 39 00-10; www.filmcasino.at; 05, Margareten Strasse 78) Art-house cinema with a mix of Asian and European independent films.

Österreichische Filmmuseum (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 70 54; www.filmmuseum.at; 01, Augustinerstrasse 1; ☎ Sep-Jun) Monthly retrospectives on directors or genres.

Top Kino (Map pp120-1; ☎ 208 30 00; www.topkino.at; 06, Rahlgasse 1) Cinema showing European independent films. Also hosts the Vienna Short Film Festival each May and has a great bar.

Votivkino (Map p122; ☎ 317 35 71; www.votiv.kino.at; 09, Währinger Strasse 12) Hollywood and art-house films in their original language.

Sport

Football is easily the largest spectator sport in Vienna. Catch Rapid and Austria Memphis, Vienna's local teams, at the **Austria Memphis Franz-Horr-Stadion** (Map pp114-15; ☎ 688 01 50; 10, Fischhofgasse 12) and the **Rapid Vienna Gerhard-Hanappi-Stadion** (Map pp114-15; ☎ 914 55 10; 14, Keislersgasse 6). International games are normally played at the **Ernst Happel Stadion** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 728 08 54; 02, Meiereistrasse 7).

Stadthalle (Map p122; ☎ 98 100-0; 15, Vogelweidplatz) hosts a diverse array of events, including tennis, indoor football, horse shows and ice hockey.

SHOPPING

Vienna is one place where the glitz and glamour of shops selling high-end brands stand in stark contrast to some weird and idiosyncratic local stores. Specialities include porcelain, ceramics, handmade dolls, wrought-iron work and leather goods, and there are many shops selling *Briefmarken* (stamps), *Münze* (coins) and *Altwaren* (secondhand odds and ends).

The bustling Mariahilfer Strasse and Kärntner Strasse are lined with global High St names and chain stores. Off Mariahilfer Strasse in Mariahilf itself and in Neubau are where some of the more interesting shops are located. Otto-Bauer-Gasse is a freak's paradise, while Neubaugasse is good for second-hand hunters and collectors, and Josefstädter Strasse is an old-fashioned shopping street filled with quaint shops selling anything from flowers to tea. Not to be forgotten, too, is the Flohmarkt (p157).

Antiques

Dorotheum (Map pp120-1; ☎ 515 60-0; www.dorotheum.com; 01, Dorotheergasse 17) Founded in 1707 by Joseph I, the Dorotheum ranks among the largest auction houses in Europe. The range of objects is quite extraordinary, but stick to the categories of art, antiques and collectables. Some of it is reasonably priced, especially household ornaments.

Glasfabrik (Map pp116-17; ☎ 494 34 90; 16, Lorenz-Mandl-Gasse 25; ☎ 2-7pm Tue-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat) Glasfabrik specialises in antiques dating from 1670 to 1970, so the range on offer is eclectic to say the least.

Art

M-ARS (Map p122; ☎ 890 58 03; 07, Westbahnstrasse 9) The driving idea is that art can be bought

THE VOLATILE VOLANT – VIENNA DESIGN

Anyone into the international designer scene will be familiar with Vienna design brands like Wendy & Jim and Petar Petrov & Co. In keeping with the times, Vienna's design scene is prickling with talent; here's a few tips. In 2007 **Martina Rogy & Marcel Ostertag** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 532 3054; www.martinarogy.com; 1, Landskrongasse 1-3) released a summer collection with some *volant* designs that would make a sex goddess out of Wilma Flintstone. On a more casual note, **PiaMia** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 890 44 72; www.piamia.at; 05, Schönbrunnerstrasse 65) cuts the stuff for men as well as women in dress-down styles that look smart. **Ninali** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 699 1044 46 41; www.ninali.at; 07, Neustiftgasse 21; ☎ noon-7pm Thu, Fri & Sat) is the label of Nina Kepplinger and Ali Rabbani, whose 2007 women's summer streetwear (it also has men's collections) crossed over into the occasional gather or volant.

without the artist having to sell his or her soul, here in Vienna's 'supermarket' for contemporary art. Some key figures in Austria's art world are behind this project, which got off the ground in 2007.

Ceramics, Glass & Crystal

Woka (Map pp120-1; ☎ 513 29 12; www.woka.at; 01, Singerstrasse 16) Accurate re-creations of Wiener Werkstätte lamps are the hallmark of Woka, using designs from the likes of Adolf Loos, Koloman Moser and Josef Hoffmann.

J&L Lobmeyr (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 05 08; www.lobmeyr.com; 01, Kärntner Strasse 26) Around since the late-19th century and supplying the imperial court with glassware, Lobmeyr now focuses on Werkstätten pieces.

Österreichische Werkstätten (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 24 18; www.oew.at; 01, Kärntner Strasse 6) The best Austrian crafts and design is found upstairs here, including Kisslinger, a family glassware company since 1946, with Klimt- and Hundertwasser-styled designs.

Porzellan Manufacturer Augarten Schloss Augarten (Map pp116-17; ☎ 211 24-200; www.augarten.at; 02, Obere Augartenstrasse 1, Schloss Augarten; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Mon-Fri); Stock-im-Eisen-Platz (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 14 94; 01, Stock-im-Eisen-Platz 3) Exquisite, albeit very traditional, porcelain ornaments and gifts are sold at the well-established factory and its city outlet.

Clothes, Leather & Jewellery

Kaufhaus Schiepek (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 15 75; 01, Teinfaltstrasse 3) If you're looking for inexpensive, colourful jewellery or beads to create your own, look no further than Kaufhaus Schiepek.

Combinat (Map pp120-1; ☎ 699 1200 8920; 01, Museumsplatz 1; ☎ noon-7pm Tue-Sat) Four designers have pooled resources in this fashion shop and have one guest each month to present

five labels for handbags, textiles and other art or accessories.

Loden-Plankl (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 80 32; 01, Michaelerplatz 6) Loden-Plankl is a specialist in *Trachten*, traditional folk wear like *Lederhosen* (leather trousers) and *Dirndl* (traditional women's dress). It's been in operation for over 170 years, but the prices for quality stuff are less folkloric.

Lederwaren-Manufaktur Thomas Hicker (Map pp116-17; ☎ 982 82 06; 14, Schanzstrasse 55) The favoured address of Austria's prominence for briefcases and handcrafted leather accessories for business and the office.

Etcetera (Map p122; ☎ 524 56 37; 07, Neubaugasse 77; ☎ 10am-noon & 3-6pm Mon-Fri, closed afternoon Wed) One of the best secondhand shops in Vienna for women's clothing – lots of retro stuff on the racks here, some of it prestigious labels. Stroll along Neubaugasse for more of this ilk.

See also boxed texts, above and p134.

Confectionary

Altmann & Kühne (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 09 27; 01, Graben 30) Altmann & Kühne have been producing their handmade bonbons for over 100 years using a well-kept secret recipe. The packaging is designed by Wiener Werkstätten.

Demel (Map pp120-1; ☎ 535 17 17; www.demel.at; 01, Kohlmarkt 14) Demel produces stunning cakes, which are lovingly prepared – and lovingly devoured. Cakes can also be ordered over the internet.

Manner (Map pp120-1; ☎ 513 70 18; 01, www.manner.com; 01, Stephansplatz 7; ☎ 10am-9pm Mon-Sat) The concept store of Vienna's favourite for sweet teeth since 1898. The peachy pink is hard to ignore, but so too are the confectionery delights available in a variety of packaging and combinations.

Department Stores

Gerzog (Map pp120-1; ☎ 521 80; 07, Mariahilfer Strasse 38-40) Five floors of shops at Gerzog cover most shopping genres, although the selection is very mainstream.

Steffl (Map pp120-1; ☎ 514 31-0; 01, Kärntner Strasse 19) Steffl is the most upmarket of Vienna's department stores, filled with designer labels and cosmetics.

Markets

Flohmarkt (flea market; Map pp116-17; 05, Kettenbrückengasse; ☎ dawn-4pm Sat) This atmospheric flea market, in the mould of an Eastern European market, shouldn't be missed, with goods piled up in apparent chaos on the walkway. You can find anything you want (and everything you don't want): books, clothes, records, ancient electrical goods, old postcards, ornaments, carpets...you name it. Bargain for prices here.

From around the middle of November, *Christkindlmärkte* (Christmas Markets) start to pop up all over Vienna. Ranging from kitsch to quaint in style and atmosphere, the markets all have a few things in common: plenty of people, loads of Christmas gifts to purchase, mugs of *Glühwein* (mulled wine) and hotplates loaded with *Kartoffelpuffer* (hot potato patties) and *Maroni* (roasted chestnuts). Most close a day or two before Christmas day. Some of the best include:

Freyung market (Map pp120-1) Austrian arts and crafts and an old-worldly feel.

Heiligenkreuzerhof market (Map pp120-1) Oft-forgotten market which is arguably the most authentic and quaint of all the *Christkindlmärkte*.

Karlsplatz market (Map pp120-1) Mainly sells arty gifts and is situated close to the Karlskirche.

Rathausplatz market (Map pp120-1) Easily the biggest and most touristy Christmas market in Vienna, held on the square in front of the Rathaus, but most of the Christmas gifts on sale are kitschy beyond belief unfortunately.

Schönbrunn market (Map pp116-17) Circle of upmarket stalls, loads of events for the kids and daily classical concerts at 6pm (more on weekends).

Spittelberg market (Map pp120-1) Traditional market occupying the charming cobblestone streets of the Spittelberg quarter. Stalls sell quality arts and crafts, but not at the cheapest prices.

Music

Black Market (Map pp120-1; ☎ 533 24 58; www.soul seduction.com; 01, Gonzagagasse 9; ☎ noon-7pm Mon-Fri, 11am-6pm Sat) This is Vienna's house, techno

and electronic specialist. The vinyl selection is enormous and the staff are highly knowledgeable.

MP3 (Map pp120-1; ☎ 526 47 15; www.musiktank.steile.at; in German; 01, Museumsplatz 1; ☎ 1-7pm Tue-Sun) There's only one other place in the world where you'll find another of these – inside the Haus der Musik (p127). Zillions of Austrian pop, rock and electronic beats in one place for downloading. You can listen on the computer and have your selection burnt onto a CD for €0.99 per song plus €2 for the CD.

Rave Up (Map pp116-17; ☎ 596 96 50; 06, Hofmühlgasse 1) Friendly staff, loads of vinyl and a massive collection covering every genre of music in the world makes a trip to Rave Up a real pleasure.

Teuchtl (Map pp120-1; ☎ 586 21 33; 06, Windmühlgasse 10; ☎ 1-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) This second-hand shop buys, sells and exchanges records and CDs, including rare and discontinued titles.

Photography

Lomoshop (Map pp120-1; ☎ 523 70 16; 07, Museumsplatz 1; ☎ 11am-7pm) What began in the '80s as a bit of fun for a handful of Lomo fanatics in Vienna has now turned into a worldwide cult, and the Lomoshop is considered the very heart of the global Lomo movement. Here you'll find Lomo cameras, gadgets and accessories for sale, including original Russian-made multiple lens and fisheye Lomos.

Wine

Wien & Co (Map pp120-1; ☎ 535 09 16-12; www.weinco.at; 01, Jasomirgottstrasse 3-5) Wein & Co is arguably the best place to buy wine in Vienna; prices are extremely competitive, the selection hard to beat and the concentration of New World wines is impressive.

Bernthaler + Bernthaler (Map pp120-1; ☎ 216 37 57; 02, Komödiengasse 3; ☎ 3-7pm Tue, Thu & Fri) This small Burgenland winemaker from Gols sells (mostly) his own wines at cellar door prices. Those with a deep appreciation of chocolate will gravitate towards his wine-spiked variety.

Unger und Klein (Map pp120-1; ☎ 532 13 23; www.ungerundklein.at; 01, Golsdorfgasse 2; ☎ 3pm-midnight Mon-Fri, 5pm-midnight Sat) Austrian wines make a great show at this wine bar/shop, with the best the country has to offer – whether expensive boutique varieties or bargain-bin bottles.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Vienna is the main centre for international flights. Flying domestic routes offers few benefits over trains. Although there are frequent flights to Graz, Klagenfurt, Salzburg and Linz with Austrian Airlines from Vienna (from about €78 each way), Innsbruck in Tyrol is the one place where flying is considerably faster than train (from about €93, one hour, five times daily). Book early for the cheapest fares. See p395 for more information.

Boat

Steamers head west (mostly from Krems) and fast hydrofoils head east – see p400 and p164.

Bus

Vienna currently has no central bus station and national Bundesbuses arrive and depart from several different locations, depending on the destination – many routes south (eg Eisenstadt) go from Südtiroler Platz. The Eurolines Bratislava service makes a stop here. For information, call ☎ 711 01 (open 7am to 8pm).

Car & Motorcycle

All the major car rental companies are represented in Vienna.

Avis (Map pp114-15; ☎ 587 6241; www.avis.at; 10, Laaer-Berg-Strasse 43; ☎ 7am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat, 8am-1pm Sun)

Denzeldrive (Map pp116-17; ☎ 0501 054190; www.denzeldrive.at; 15, Europlatz (Westbahnhof); ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat)

Europcar (Map pp120-1; ☎ 714 67 17; www.europcar.at; 01, Schuberting 9; ☎ 7.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat, 8am-noon Sun)

Hertz (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 86 77; www.hertz.at; 01, Kärntner Ring 17; ☎ 7.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun)

LaudaMotion (Map pp116-17; ☎ 0900 240 120; www.laudamotion.com; 15, Europlatz; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat, 4-6pm Sun) Cheap deals and (almost) free city sponsor cars.

Train

Vienna has excellent rail connections with Europe and the rest of Austria. Not all destinations are served by one station, and schedules are subject to change. The following stations (except Meidling) have lockers, currency exchange, *Bankomats* and places to eat and buy provisions for your journey.

WESTBAHNHOF

Trains to the west and north depart from Westbahnhof. Hourly services head to Salzburg (€43, 3½ hours) and four travel to Munich (€72, five hours). Seven daily direct trains run to Zürich (€88, six hours), frequent direct trains go to Frankfurt (€112, 7½ hours), one night train goes to Berlin (€155, 12 hours) and six go to Budapest (Keleti; €34, 2¾ hours). Westbahnhof is on U-Bahn lines U3 and U6, and many trams stop outside.

SÜDBAHNHOF

From Südbahnhof trains travel to Italy, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland. One direct train leaves each evening for Rome (€100, 13½ hours; via Klagenfurt, Venice and Florence); more services require a change at Venice. Hourly trains go to Bratislava (€13, one hour); there's six a day to Prague (€47, 4½ hours) and one each morning to Berlin (€98, nine hours).

Trams D (to the Ring and Franz-Josefs-Bahnhof) and O (to Wien Mitte and Praterstern) stop outside. Transfer to Westbahnhof in about 20 minutes by taking tram 18, or the S-Bahn to Meidling and then the U6.

FRANZ-JOSEFS-BAHNHOF

This station handles regional and local trains, including to Tulln (p174), Krems an der Donau (p170), and the Wachau region. From outside, tram D goes to the Ring, and tram 5 goes to Westbahnhof (via Kaiserstrasse) in one direction and Praterstern (Wien Nord) in the other.

OTHER STATIONS

The smaller stations Wien Mitte (Map pp120-1), Wien Nord (Map pp116-17) and Meidling (Map pp116-17) all have U-Bahn stops and the former two have connections to the airport.

GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

Getting to/from the airport is possible using the following transport options:

Bus Link (☎ 05 17 17, 7007 32300; www.oebb.at; adult one way/return €6/11, child 6-15 €3/5.50, child under 6 free; ☎ from Westbahnhof every 30 min 5am-11pm, ☎ from Schwedenplatz 5am-11.30pm, every 20 min (U1 and U4)). The Westbahnhof service takes 35 minutes and calls at Wien Südbahnhof station; the Schwedenplatz service is direct and takes 20 minutes.

OUT FOR THE RIDE

With its network of over 30 tram lines, Vienna is ideal for exploration by tram. Just to spice up one possible ride, here's a 'mystery tour'. Set aside a half day to do it with stops.

Board the tram N at Schwedenplatz going east. After a few stops you cross the lovely bridge of a famous general (p30) who helped keep the Habsburg monarchy in power with a stunning win. Get off here if you like and try something Wild (p148). Look or ask someone for a house where no line runs straight (the boxed text, p53, will help). Board again in the same direction, get out once you've reached the terminus and walk towards the major attraction here. It'll take you about 20 minutes. Along the way, there's a trampoline centre (in good weather). If it's open, tell the person at the booth you've got a brother who weighs 100kg and ask whether that's OK on the trampolines. ('Mein Bruder wiegt Einhundert Kilo, geht das überhaupt?'). There are places to snack, eat or drink all along the way if your brother needs upsizing, or you can rent a bike to downsize him.

Press on until you reach the train station. Jump on tram 5 towards Westbahnhof and immediately look out for the lovely little bar named after a famous 1970s kitsch film (we don't really recommend this one). After a while, you cross the bridge Friedensbrücke. On the right is another masterpiece from our 'Straight is not great' fellow. It was completed in 1971, and our architect wrote a famous manifesto called...? (Time you read that 'Architecture' section, isn't it?) You've crossed the canal now and are weaving towards Westbahnhof through the districts of Alsergrund and Josefstadt (Vienna's smallest district in terms of area). You might get off at Blindengasse to explore the neighbourhood, if it's evening try one of the bars beneath the Josefstädter U-Bahn station, or continue on to Westbahnhof.

C&K Airport Service (☎ 444 44; one way €27) C&K car service is a better and cheaper option than a taxi as its rates are fixed. On arrival at the airport, head to its stand to the left of the exit hall; when leaving Vienna, call ahead to make a reservation.

City Airport Train (☎ 252 50; www.cityairporttrain.com; return adult/child 6-14 €15/free if accompanied by adult; ☎ 5.38am-11.08pm, every 30 min) Departs from Wien-Mitte and takes 16 minutes; luggage check-in facilities and boarding card issuing service.

Schnellbahn 7 (☎ 05 17 17; www.oebb.at; one way €3, with city transport passes €1.50; ☎ 1.09am, 2.09am, 3.09am, 4.32am & 4.56am-11.22pm, every 30 min from Wien-Mitte) Cheapest way to get to the airport; also departs Wien-Nord.

Eurolines buses (see p398) run between Bratislava airport in Slovakia and Schwechat five times daily (departing Schechat between 8.15am and 8.45pm, departing Bratislava airport between 7.30am and 10.30pm). The trip takes 1½ hours and costs €10 return.

Bicycle

With a cycle track network of over 700km, Vienna is great for a bike ride on a warm day. Bikes can be rented from **Pedal Power** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 729 7234; 02, Ausstellungsstrasse 3; 1hr/half-/full-day rental €5/17/27; ☎ 8am-6pm Mar-Apr & Oct, 8am-7pm May-Sep; bring a passport or credit card) or from **Vienna City**

Bike (☎ 0810-50 05 00; www.citybikewien.at; 1st hr free, 2nd/3rd/4th hr €1/2/4), which has blue and yellow bike racks across the city. International MasterCard or Visa credit cards can be used, but unfortunately only an Austrian bank Maestro card; buying a city bike card is easiest. This is available from some hotels and pensions, or from **Royal Tours** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 710 4606; www.royaltours.at; 01, Herrengasse 1-3; ☎ 8-11.30am & 1-6pm) for €2 per day. But make sure you don't lose the bike, or €600 will be deducted from your card.

Bicycles can be carried on carriages marked with a bike symbol on the S-Bahn and U-Bahn (9am to 3pm and after 6.30pm Monday to Friday, after 9am Saturday, and all day Sunday) for half the adult fare. It's not possible to take bikes on trams and buses.

Car & Motorcycle

Due to a system of one-way streets and expensive parking, you're better off using the excellent public transport system. If you do plan to drive in the city, take special care of the trams; they always have priority and vehicles must wait behind trams when they stop to pick up or set down passengers.

Districts one to nine and 20 are pay zones and display *Kurzparkzone* (short-stay parking zones) where a *Parkschein* (parking voucher) is required. These come in colour-coded

30-/60-/90-minute lots (€0.60/1.20/1.80) and can be purchased from most *Tabaks* (tobacconist shops), banks, train stations and Wiener Linien ticket offices. A free 10-minute voucher is also available. To validate a voucher, just cross out the appropriate time, date and year and display it on your dashboard.

Public Transport

Vienna has one of Europe's best integrated public transport networks. Flat-fare tickets are valid for trains, trams, buses, the underground (U-Bahn) and the S-Bahn regional trains. Services are frequent, and you will rarely have to wait more than five or 10 minutes.

Public transport kicks off around 5am or 6am. Buses and trams finish between 11pm and midnight, and S-Bahn and U-Bahn services between 12.30am and 1am. Twenty-one Nightline bus routes crisscross the city from 12.30am to 5am. Schwedenplatz, Schottentor and the Oper are starting points for many services; look for buses and bus stops marked with an 'N'. All tickets are valid for Nightline services.

Transport maps are posted in all U-Bahn stations and at many bus and tram stops. Free maps and information pamphlets are available from **Wiener Linien** (☎ 7909 100; www.wienerlinien.at; ☎ information line 6am-10pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-4.30pm Sat & Sun), located in nine U-Bahn stations. The Karlsplatz, Stephansplatz and Westbahnhof information offices are open from 6.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday and 8.30am to 4pm Saturday and Sunday. Those at Erdberg, Floridsdorf, Landstrasse, Philadelphiabrücke, Praterstern and Schottentor are closed on weekends.

TICKETS & PASSES

Tickets and passes can be purchased at U-Bahn stations – from automatic machines (with English instructions and change) and occasionally-staffed ticket offices – and in *Tabaks*. Once bought, tickets need to be validated before starting your journey (except for weekly and monthly tickets); look for small blue boxes at the entrance to U-Bahn stations and on buses and trams. Just pop the end of the ticket in the slot and wait for the 'ding'. It's an honour system and ticket inspection is infrequent, but if you're caught without a ticket you'll be fined €60, no exceptions.

Tickets and passes are as follows:

8-Tage-Karte (Eight-day Ticket; €27.20) Valid for eight days, but not necessarily eight consecutive days; punch the card as and when you need it.

24-Stunden Wien-Karte (24hr Ticket; €5.70) Unlimited travel for 24 hours from time of validation.

Die Wien-Karte (The Vienna Card) See p124.

Fahrschein (Single Ticket; €1.70) Good for one journey, with line changes; costs €2.20 if purchased on trams and buses (correct change required).

Monatskarte (Monthly Ticket; €49.50) Valid from the 1st of the month to the last day of the month and transferable.

Streifenkarte (Strip Ticket; €6.80) Four single tickets on one strip.

Wiener Einkaufskarte (Vienna Shopping Card; €4.60) For use between 8am and 8pm Monday to Saturday; only good for one day after validation.

Wochenkarte (Weekly Ticket; €14) Valid Monday to 9am Monday.

Children aged six to 15 travel for half-price, or free on Sunday, public holidays and during Vienna school holidays (photo ID necessary); younger children always travel free. Senior citizens (women over 60, men over 65) can buy a €2 ticket that is valid for two trips; inquire at transport information offices.

Taxi & Pedal Taxi

Taxis are reliable and relatively cheap by West European standards. City journeys are metered; expect a flagfall of €2.50 from 6am to 11pm Monday to Saturday and €2.60 any other time, plus a small per kilometre fee. A small tip is expected; add on about 10% to the fare. Taxis are easily found at train stations and stands all over the city, or just flag them down in the street. To order one call ☎ 31 300, ☎ 60 160, ☎ 40 100 or ☎ 81 400. Don't count on taxis taking credit cards.

Pedal taxis (called Faxi) will set you back €2.50 per kilometre if you flag one down. Expect to pay €40 for a short spin of 20 minutes in a *Fiaker* (see p139).

AROUND VIENNA

KLOSTERNEUBURG

Realistically, much of Lower Austria can be visited as a day trip from Vienna. Klosterneuburg, a small town only 12km north of the Innere Stadt, is an easy half-day trip.

Without doubt the biggest attraction is Klosterneuburg's **Stift Klosterneuburg** (☎ 02243-

411 212; www.stift-klosterneuburg.at; Stiftplatz 1, Klosterneuburg; tours adult/student/child/family €7/6/5/4/14; ☎ tours 10am-5pm hourly). Founded in 1114, the abbey's baroque facelift didn't begin until 1730, and wasn't completed until 1842. The plans actually called for something much more grand, but fortunately these were not realised, leaving large sections intact in their original medieval style. The abbey's **museum** (☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun May–mid-Nov) contains an eclectic mix of religious art from the Middle Ages to the present. It closes in winter to individual visitors, but tours of are conducted almost hourly all year (tours in English require advanced notice). The highlight of the 'Der Sacrale Weg' tour is the **Verdun Altar** in St Leopold's Chapel, an annexe of the church. Made in 1181 by Nicholas of Verdun, it is

an unsurpassed example of medieval enamel work and is gloriously adorned with 51 enamelled panels showing biblical scenes.

Not far from the abbey, but light years away in its displays, is **Sammlung Essl** (☎ 02243-370 50; www.sammlung-essl.at; Kunst Der Gegenwart, An der Donau-Au 1, Klosterneuburg; adult/student & child €7/5/3.50, free Wed 7-9pm; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, 10am-9pm Wed). This gallery houses the extensive contemporary art collection of the Essl family, and includes the likes of Gerhard Richter, Hermann Nitsch, Georg Baselitz and Elke Krystufek.

Getting There & Away

Klosterneuburg's on the S-Bahn route from Vienna (Franz-Josef-Bahnhof) to Tulln. The station closest to the abbey is Klosterneuburg-Kierling (€4.40; 15 minutes; every 30 minutes).

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Lower Austria



Surrounding Vienna on all sides, the fertile valleys and plains of Lower Austria are the 'cradle' of Austrian culture, and it has one of the country's richest cultural landscapes. The Viennese often come out here to paddle its rivers, sup its wines and scale its mountains, but the cultural aspect of Lower Austria is what stands out most.

The north is an often neglected region of rich pastures, forested glens and pretty vineyards set upon gentle, rolling hills. Poppy fields deliver one of the country's most interesting culinary aspects (foods brimming with poppy seed), while the town of Drosendorf near the Czech border is an isolated fortress town with Austria's only intact town wall. The south is sprinkled with mountains rising up to about 2000m on the doorstep of Vienna; here you also find the moderately interesting towns of Baden bei Wien and Wiener Neustadt, and one of the nicest ways to travel between Lower Austria and Styria – the Semmering Pass and spectacular *Semmeringbahn* (Semmering Railway). Carnuntum, a small region between Vienna and the Slovakian border, has some fascinating remnants of the Roman period in Austria, dating from about 15 BC.

Most famous of all regions in Lower Austria, however, is the Danube River (Donau) and its valley, a place of magnificent natural beauty and cultural achievement. The Wachau, which stretches from Melk to Krems an der Donau, is the prettiest section and is truly a European highlight for its wines, castles, abbeys and medieval villages. Elsewhere, towns such as St Pölten, Lower Austria's largest town and the provincial capital, and Tulln offer a feel for provincial urban texture, and both have a couple of good museums and art spaces.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hiking through the vineyards and forest around **Spitz** (p172) and exploring the historical **Danube Valley** (p164)
- Meandering through **Stift Melk** (p172), a magnificent baroque monastery on the banks of the Danube
- Indulging in the rustic pleasures of wine and *Wurst* (sausage) in one of the *Heurigen* (wine taverns) in **Krems an der Donau** (p169) or **Dürnstein** (p171)
- Riding the **Semmering railway** (p187), a remarkable engineering feat and Unesco World Heritage site
- Getting caught in the 'mother of all rainstorms' while hiking **Schneeberg** (p187), Lower Austria's highest peak



■ POPULATION: 1.5 MILLION ■ AREA: 19,178 SQ KM ■ HIGHEST ELEVATION: SCHNEEBERG 2076M

LOWER AUSTRIA



HISTORY

Settlement of Lower Austria can be traced back to prehistoric times; some of the earliest archaeological finds in Europe, such as the 25,000-year-old *Venus of Willendorf*, come from the region. The Romans had a strong presence here, particularly in the area south of the Danube, and built fortifications at Ybbs, Melk, Mautern and Carnuntum (p178).

Lower Austria's borders were drawn in the 13th century under Babenberg rule, but in 1278 the region fell to the Habsburgs. Lower Austria's flat plains to the north were a favourite of marauding foreigners; it was often overrun with Bohemian Hussites in the early 15th century, the Turks in the 16th

century and the Swedes during the Thirty Years' War.

Following WWII, the region was occupied – and plundered – by the Russians. With independence achieved in 1955, the situation improved, and in 1986 Lower Austria gained its own provincial capital, St Pölten (Vienna had played the role until then).

CLIMATE

Lower Austria has a mix of climates; to the north and east you'll find a Pannonian climate and to the south more alpine weather, with rapid changes in temperature common. The Danube Valley is marked by a continental climate.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Much of Lower Austria has great connections to the rest of the country. The A1 autobahn, running from Upper Austria to Vienna, splits the province into two unequal halves to the south of the Danube (which also connects Upper Austria and Vienna by boat). The A2 runs south from Vienna to Graz through its lower region; off this branches the A3 towards Eisenstadt and Hungary and the S6 to northern Styria. Passing through Lower Austria's eastern fringe is the A4, which links Vienna with northern Burgenland and eventually Budapest.

Shadowing most of the major roads is an extensive rail system.

GETTING AROUND

Train connections are some of the best in Austria. *Postbus* (Post Bus) services are also good on weekdays, and well-maintained autobahn and *Bundesstrasse* (alternative routes) make it simple and safe to explore the entire region by car.

THE DANUBE VALLEY

The Danube, which enters Lower Austria from the west near Ybbs and exits in the east near Bratislava, Slovakia's capital, carves a winding path through the province's hills and fields. The dramatic stretch of river between Krems an der Donau and Melk is known as the Wachau and is Austria's most spectacular section of the Danube. Here the landscape is characterised by vineyards, forested slopes, wine-producing villages and imposing fortresses at nearly every bend. In 2000 the Wachau became a Unesco World Heritage site due to its harmonious blend of natural and cultural beauty.

Tourismusverband Wachau-Nibelungengau (☎ 02713-300 60 60; www.wachau.at; Schlossgasse 3, Spitz an der Donau; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Thu, 9am-2.30pm Fri) can help with information on the Wachau and its surrounds.

GETTING AROUND

A popular way of exploring the region is by boat, particularly between Krems and Melk, but it's also possible to travel from Passau to Vienna; see p208 for more details. The most popular time to take a boat trip on the Danube is between May and

September, when a several companies service the route.

DDSG Blue Danube (☎ 01-588 80; www.ddsg-blue-danube.at; 01, Friedrichstrasse 7, Vienna; Vienna-Dürnstein one way/return €19.50/26, Melk-Krems one way/return €17.50/22.50, Melk-Spitz & Spitz-Krems one way/return €10/13.50) does the routes Melk-Krems, Spitz-Melk, and Spitz-Krems from early April to October up to three times daily, and between Vienna and Dürnstein every Sunday from May till September.

Brandner (☎ 07433-25 90-21; www.brandner.at; Ufer 50, Wallsee; Krems-Melk return adult/child €22.50/11.50, one way adult/child €17.50/9) operates boats between Krems and Melk one to two times daily from mid-April to late October.

More popular is exploring the region by bicycle. A wonderfully flat cycle path runs along both sides of the Danube from Vienna to Melk, passing through Krems, Dürnstein, Weissenkirchen and Spitz (these are all on the northern bank). Many hotels and pensions (B&Bs) are geared towards cyclists and most towns have at least one bike-rental shop. For more information pick up a free copy of *The Donauradweg – Von Passau bis Bratislava* (from tourist offices and some hotels), which provides details of distances, hotels and information offices along the route.

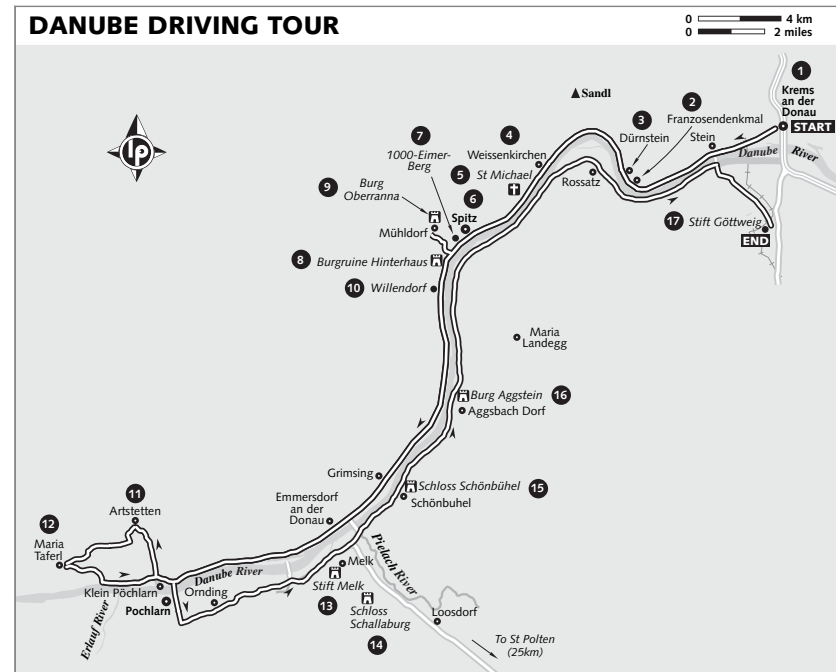
The roads on both sides of the Danube between Krems and Melk, where the B3 and the B33 hug the contours of the river, lend themselves well to a driving tour (see below). Vehicle bridges cross the river at Krems, Melk, Pöchlarn and Ybbs. A rail track runs along the Danube's northern bank and while it's a scenic trip, it's slow.

DRIVING TOUR OF THE DANUBE VALLEY

If you plan to take in just a few of the Danube Valley sights in Lower Austria, train and bus connections are adequate, but visiting many sights in one grab will, unfortunately, require having your own vehicle. See p170 for details on car rental.

This road trip is almost all-weather and needs little preparation. It follows the Danube for almost all of the 150km, taking in towns and sights on a circuit between Krems an der Donau and Maria Taferl (both on the north bank) and Melk and other significant sights on the south bank. The junctions only get tricky around Melk; but even if you only have limited experience driving on the right-hand

DANUBE DRIVING TOUR



side of the road, these shouldn't present a huge problem.

The best time to do the trip is on a Monday or Tuesday, when traffic is light. Allow about four hours, or a full day with stops.

From the **Krems-Stein roundabout (1)** take the B3 southwest towards Spitz. About 3km from Krems-Stein you approach the small settlement of Unterloiben, where on the right you can see the **Franzensendenkmal (2)**, French Monument), erected in 1805 to celebrate the victory of Austrian and Russian troops here over Napoleon. Shortly afterwards the lovely town of **Dürnstein (3; p171)**, 6km from Krems, comes into view and you can see the blue-towered Chorherrenstift backed by Kuernringerburg (p171), the castle where Richard the Lionheart was imprisoned in 1192.

The valley is punctuated by picturesque terraced vineyards as you enter the heart of the Wachau. In **Weissenkirchen (4)**, 12km from Krems, you'll find the pretty hilltop fortified **parish church** (☎ 02715-2203; Weissenkirchen 3; ☎ 8am-7pm Easter-Oct, 8am-5pm Sat & Sun Nov-Easter), whose front doors are approached by a labyrinth of

covered pathways. This Gothic church was built in the 15th century and has a baroque altar and a garden terrace with good views of the Danube. Below the church is the charming Teisenhoferhof arcaded courtyard, with a covered gallery and lashings of flowers and dried corn. The **Wachau Museum** (☎ 02715-2268; Weissenkirchen 32; adult/senior/concession & child €5/3.50/2.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, closed Nov-Mar) is also here and houses work by artists of the Danube school. Close to the river is the **Raffelsberger Hof** (☎ 02715-2201; www.raffelsbergerhof.at; s €72-85, d €104-124, ste €130-154; ☎ P), a four-star hotel in a small but beautifully renovated Renaissance castle.

A couple of kilometres on, just after Wösendorf, you find the church of **St Michael (5)**, in a hamlet with 13 houses. If the kids are along for this ride, now's the time to ask them to count the terracotta hares on the roof (seven, in case they're not reading this!).

Some 17km from Krems, the pretty town of **Spitz (6; p172)** swings into view, surrounded by vineyards and lined with quiet, cobblestone streets. There are some good

trails leading across hills and into *Heurigen* (wine taverns) here (p109).

Turn right at Spitz onto the B217 (Otten-schläger Strasse). The terraced hill on your right is **1000-Eimer-Berg (7)**, so-named for its reputed ability to yield a thousand buckets of wine each season. On your left, high above the valley opening, is the castle ruin **Hinterhaus (8)**. Continue along the B217 to the mill wheel and turn right towards **Burg Oberranna (9)**; ☎ 02713-8221; www.tiscover.at/burg-oberranna, in German; s/d €68/122; (P), 6km west of Spitz in Mühldorf. Surrounded by woods, this castle and hotel overlooking the valley is furnished with period pieces and has a refreshing old-worldly feel. Tours of the grounds cost €2 and run from 3pm to 6pm every weekend.

From here, backtrack down to the B3 and continue the circuit. The valley opens up and on the left, across the Danube, you glimpse the ruins of Burg Aggstein (opposite).

Willendorf (10), located 21km from Krems, is where a 25,000-year-old figurine of Venus was discovered. The original is today housed in the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna (p128). Continuing along the B3, the majestic **Stift Melk (p172)** rises up across the river. This section of the Danube has a power station and you'll notice that just above Melk-Emmersdorf the river slows to a placid pace. There's some decent swimming in the backwaters here if you're game to dip into the Danube.

At Klein Pöchlarn a sign indicates a first turn-off on Artstettner Strasse (L7255), which you can follow for 5km to **Artstetten (11)**; ☎ 07413-80060; Artstetten 1; adult/senior/student/child €6.50/5.80/4.70/3.60; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Apr-Nov), unusual for its many onion domes. The castle has endured lots of modifications over the past 700 years but gained fame through a former owner, the one and only Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Inside is a museum devoted to the luckless heir, displaying photos and stories of his and his wife's time at the castle and their fateful trip to Sarajevo where his murder there triggered WWI. Their tomb is in the church.

From here, a minor road L7257 winds 6.5km through a sweeping green landscape to **Maria Taferl (12)**; ☎ 07413-278; Maria Taferl 1; admission free; ☎ 7am-7pm) high above the Danube Valley. Created by Jakob Prandtauer (of Melk fame), this baroque church is notable for its two onion domes and dark dome-frescoes. Its altar is a complicated array of figures in gold. You'll find lots of hotels and pensions,

and some of the most spectacular views across the Danube here.

Backtrack 6km down towards the B3. Turn left at the B3 towards Krems and follow the ramp veering off to the left and across the river at the Klein Pöchlarn bridge. Follow the road straight ahead to the B1 (Austria's longest road) and turn left onto this towards Melk.

This first section along the south bank is uninteresting, but it will soon get better. Unless the weather isn't playing along, across the river you should be able make out Artstetten in the distance, and shortly **Stift Melk (13)**; p172), will rise up ahead in a golden shimmering heap.

From Stift Melk, a 7km detour leads south to the splendid Renaissance castle, **Schloss Schallaburg (14)**; ☎ 02754-6317; www.schallaburg.at; Schallaburg 1; adult/concession/child/family €8/7/3.50/16; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct). To reach the castle from the abbey in Melk, follow the signs to the *Bahnhof* (train station) and Lindestrasse east, turn right into Hummelstrasse/Kirschengraben (L5340) until it changes name to Roggendorf and reaches the B3A near the railway line and highway. Turn right onto the B3A and 2km later right again, continuing along the L5342 to the castle.

In a region packed with gems, this is one of the highlights. Just beyond the entranceway is the castle's architectural centrepiece, a two-storey arcaded Renaissance courtyard with magnificent terracotta arches and rich red-brown carvings. There are some 400 terracotta images, completed between 1572 and 1573; the largest figures support the upper-storey arches, of which the court jester sniggering in the corner is the most intriguing. Below these are pictorial scenes and a series of mythological figures and masks. The castle is host to an annual prestigious exhibition, based on different cultural themes. Combined tickets with nearby attractions, which change yearly, are usually on offer.

Backtrack to the B33. Be careful here that you stay on the south side of the river. When you reach Hummelstrasse you need to go one block beyond Lindestrasse to Abt-Karl-Strasse and back down to the Stift. Follow the B1 for 4km to **Schloss Schönbühel (15)**; admission free; ☎ dawn-dusk), a 12th-century castle standing high on a rock some 5km northeast of Melk. Continue along this lovely stretch of the B33 in the direction of Krems. About 10km from

Schloss Schönbühel the ruins of **Burg Aggstein (16)**; ☎ 02753-82281; www.ruineaggstein.at; admission €2; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-May & Sep-Oct, till 7pm Jun-Aug) swing into view. This 12th century hilltop castle was built by the Kuenringer family and now offers a grand vista of the Danube. The 'robber barons' of both Schloss Schönbühel and Burg Aggstein are said to have imprisoned their enemies on a ledge of rock (the Rosengärtlein), where the hapless captives faced starvation (unless they opted for a quicker demise by throwing themselves into the abyss below).

From the right bank of the Danube you now get a bird's-eye view of the towns and ruins you passed earlier. One of the exquisite pleasures of the region is its famous *Marillen* (apricots), and you'll see lots of orchards among the vineyards. Shops in the region also sell a variety of liqueurs made from apricots. The section of the B33 between Aggstein and Mautern (across from Krems) is dotted with *Heurigen* for those who are not at the wheel.

About 27km from Melk some pretty cliffs rise up above the road. From Mautern it's a detour of about 6km to **Stift Göttweig (17)**; p170). To reach it, at the roundabout near the bridge follow the road right from the B33 to Mautern and right again immediately afterwards towards Fürth. Stift Göttweig is signposted at the next roundabout on the L7071. From there it's a short drive back to Krems.

This road trip can also be done from St Pölten, situated 36km south of Krems an der Donau. If you do set out from there, be sure to include **Stift Herzogenburg** (p176).

KREMS AN DER DONAU

☎ 02732 / pop 23,900

Krems an der Donau is the prettiest of the larger towns on the Danube and marks the beginning of the Wachau. It has a small university and some good eating and drinking, and if the circus of history that can be Vienna in summer has not sated the appetite for past glories, Krems offers a very attractive historical aspect too. It rests on the northern bank of the Danube, surrounded by terraced vineyards, and has been a centre of the wine trade for most of its history.

Orientation & Information

Krems has three parts: Krems to the east, the smaller settlement of Stein (formerly a separate town) to the west, and the connecting suburb of Und. Hence the local witicism:

Krems und Stein sind drei Städte (Krems and Stein are three towns).

The centre of Krems stretches along a pedestrian-only street, Obere and Untere Landstrasse. The **tourist office** (☎ 826 76; www.tiscover.com/krems; Undstrasse 6; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 9am-4pm Sun May-Oct, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr) has an excellent walk-by-numbers *Krems Stadtrundgang* (Krems city walk; in German) map with route descriptions. It also stocks a *Heurigen* calendar and culinary guide and for those with their own car a *Weinstrasse Kremstal* map (in German) showing vineyards.

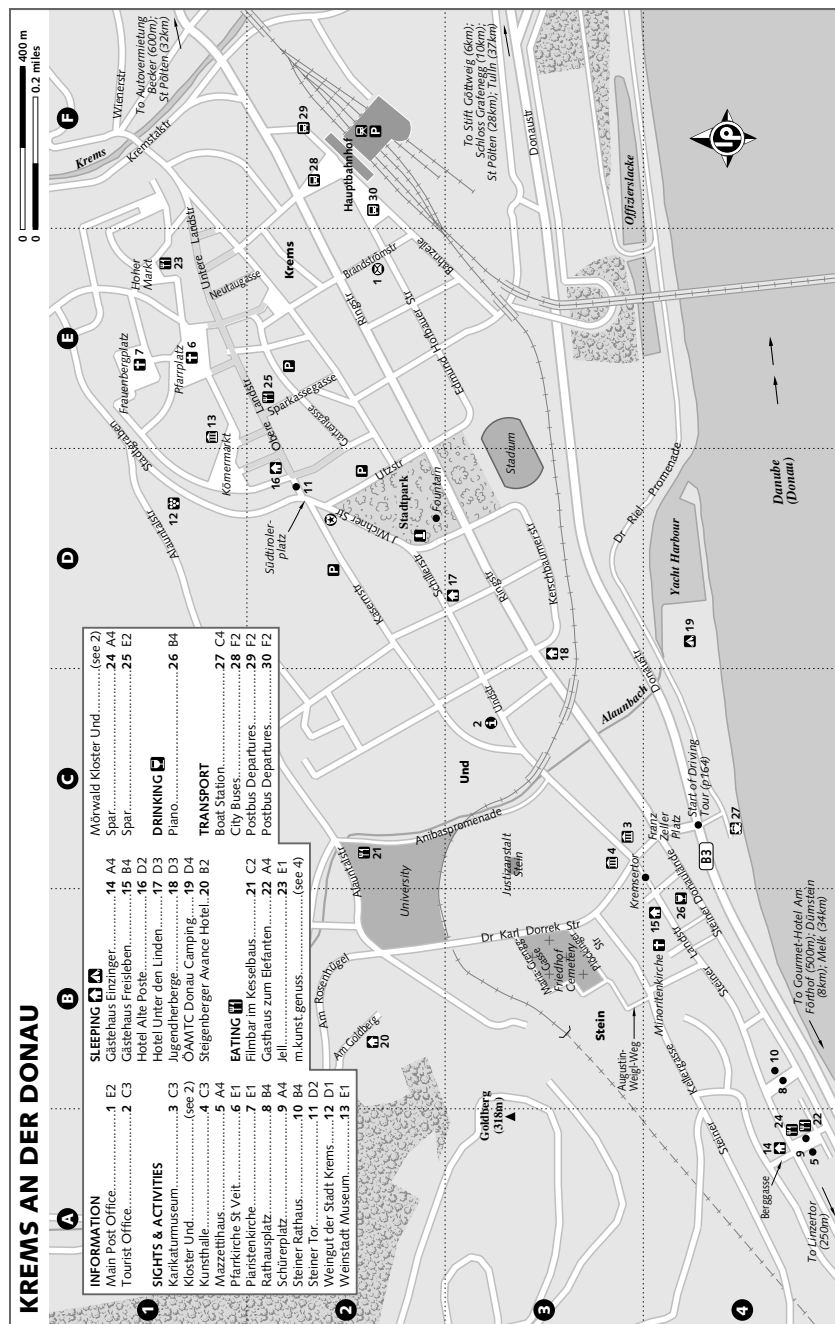
The **main post office** (☎ 677-3500; Brandströmstrasse 4-6) is near the *Hauptbahnhof* (main train station). The boat station is near Donaustrasse, about 2km west of the train station.

Sights

A walk through the cobblestone streets of Krems and Stein, especially at night, is one of the delights of a visit. Some of the most atmospheric parts to explore are on and behind **Schürerplatz** and **Rathausplatz** in Stein (don't miss these two wonderful squares), dominated by the baroque **Mazzettihaus** and the 18th-century **Steiner Rathaus** respectively; here you could be forgiven for thinking you had stumbled upon an isolated Adriatic village.

If you've picked up the tourist office's walking map, it leads you there via 20 stops, beginning at the imposing **Steiner Tor** on Obere Landstrasse, constructed in the 15th century and refashioned into a baroque gate in the 18th century. Another highlight along the way is the **Pfarrkirche St Veit** (☎ 832 85; Pfarrplatz 5; ☎ dawn-dusk), a baroque parish church resurrected from earlier Gothic and Romanesque forms. Its colourful frescoes are by Martin Johann Schmidt, an 18th-century local artist who was also known as Kremser Schmidt and occupied a house from 1756 near the Linzer Tor in Stein. Behind this is the **Piaristenkirche** (☎ 820 92; Frauenbergplatz; ☎ dawn-dusk), with Gothic vaulting, huge windows and baroque altars.

Just west of here is the **Weinstadt Museum** (☎ 801 567; www.weinstadtmuseum.at; Körnermarkt 14; adult/student/child €4/3/2; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Mar-Nov), housed in a former Dominican monastery; inside you'll find displays on the town's pride and joy (wine) and its production, and paintings by our friend, Kremser Schmidt.



Further west of here, along Steiner Landstrasse, you reach the **Kunstmeile** (Art Mile), the section of Steiner Landstrasse with museums and space for art and media. The rather forbidding building nearby is the local prison, and behind that is the leafy university.

The **Karikaturmuseum** (☎ 908 020; www.karikaturmuseum.at; in German; Steiner Landstrasse 3a; adult/student/child/family €9/8/3.50/18; combined ticket for 3 Kunstmeile museums €11; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Mar) features changing exhibitions and a large permanent collection of caricatures of prominent Austrian and international figures. Directly opposite is the town's arts centre, the **Kunststhal** (☎ 908 010-19; Steiner Landstrasse 3; adult/student/child/family €9/8/3.50/18; combined ticket for 3 Kunstmeile museums €11; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Mar). Small but often unusual changing exhibitions are held here.

Krems is a wine-making heartland and **Weingut der Stadt Krems** (☎ 801 441; Stadtgraben 11; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Sat) is the city-owned vineyard, yielding 200,000 bottles per year (90% is Grüner Veltliner and Riesling), some of which you can sample free and buy.

Sleeping

Krems is fairly well-supplied with hotels, pensions and private rooms, but booking ahead in summer is always advisable. Many private rooms, especially in Stein, are marked with signs; the tourist office can also help.

OAMTC Donau Camping (☎ 844 55; donaucamp.ingkrems@aon.at; Wiedengasse 7; campsites per person with tent €5.30; ☎ Easter-mid-Oct; ☎ P) This campsite is conveniently close to town.

Jugendherberge (☎ 834 52; oejhv.noe.krems@aon.at; Ringstrasse 77; dm €18.50; ☎ Apr-Oct; ☎ P) This popular Hostelling International (HI) hostel close to the tourist office is well geared for cyclists; it features a garage, an onsite bicycle repair service and packed lunches.

Gästehaus Einzinger (☎ 823 16; gaestehaus.einzinger@aon.at; Steiner Landstrasse 82; s €33, d €54-64) The courtyard in this 16th-century guesthouse will blow away even the most history-hardened: blackbirds buzz and chirp, budgies taunt them from a cage, and one portico after another opens up around a courtyard spilling with foliage. Rooms are a little basic but some have views to night-lit Stift Göttweig.

Hotel Alte Poste (☎ 822 76; www.altepost-krems.at; in German; Obere Landstrasse 32; s €30-45, d €55-75; ☎ P) This friendly guesthouse in a historic 500-year-old building has comfortable rooms,

an enchanting courtyard and a good traditional restaurant.

Gästehaus Freisleben (☎ 851 69; www.gaestehaus-freisleben.at; in German; Steiner Landstrasse 16; s €37-49, d €60-84) Freisleben is bright and tastefully furnished, with sparkling tiled surfaces, large rooms and a small table in each room where you can catch up on writing your travel journal.

Hotel Unter den Linden (☎ 821 15; www.udl.at; Schillerstrasse 5; s €45-70, d €66-92; ☎ P) This big, yellow, family-run hotel has knowledgeable and helpful owners, bright comfortable rooms and a convenient location in Krems itself. Book ahead as it gets bus groups and is arguably the best deal in town.

Gourmet-Hotel Am Förthof (☎ 833 45; www.hotel-fuerthof.at; Förthofer Donaulände 8; s €60-80, d €100-130; ☎ P) This country-style mansion about 500m west of Stein combines cosy rooms, romantic ambience, a pretty garden and a superb gourmet restaurant (mains €15, menus €22 to €44) serving Austrian classics such as *Tafelspitz* (boiled beef with apple and horseradish sauce), lamb, and fried liver with slices of apple.

Steigenberger Avance Hotel (☎ 710 10; www.krems.steigenberger.at; Am Goldberg; s €108-113, d €176-186; ☎ P) It's a stiff walk up the hill here but well worth it for a splurge in comfortable modern rooms. Views are across town and the valley, or over to the vineyards from the twin-level wellness/spa area with its infinity pool and panorama windows (it also has an outdoor pool and bar area). Reserve to get the best views from the outdoor restaurant patio.

Eating & Drinking

Filmbar im Kesselhaus (☎ 893 3599; www.filmbar.at; in German; Dr.-Karl-Dorreck-Strasse 30; mains €5-10; ☎ 11am-6pm Sun-Tue, 11am-11pm Wed-Sat) This sleek student restaurant and bar is the hub of eating and drinking activity on the university campus. Beyond that, it also shows art-house films usually related to the theme of shows in its associated exhibition space (www.filmgalerie.at). If the vegetarian offerings, salads, pasta and meats don't get you up here, then the lively indoor and outdoor bar or the cinematic aspect might.

m.kunst.genuss (☎ 908 010-21; Steiner Landstrasse 3; lunch buffets €8-15; ☎ 10am-6pm) Another eatery in the Toni Mörwald stable – excellent for breakfast, buffet or a quick coffee beside the Kunststhal.

Gasthaus zum Elefanten (☎ 850 16; Schürerplatz 10; mains €8.50-14.50; ☎ lunch & dinner Wed-Sun) Situated on a romantic baroque town square, 'the Elephant' serves classics such as Styrian chicken with beans and pumpkin oil, schnitzel and lamb in a cosy atmosphere indoors or at outdoor tables.

Jell (☎ 823 45; Hoher Markt 8-9; mains €16-24; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Fri, lunch Sat & Sun) Occupying a gorgeous stone house, Jell is hard to beat for a rustic atmosphere and fine wine from its own vineyard. The game goulash is a bit rich, but Jell has good food on the whole. It's friendly staff also adds to a great regional experience.

our pick Mörwald Kloster Und (☎ 704 930; Undstrasse 6; mains €20-33, menus €39-56; ☎ 10am-10pm Tue-Sat) Mörwald is most central of a crop of restaurants run by Toni Mörwald outside Vienna; it offers exquisite delights ranging from roast pigeon breast to beef, poultry and fish dishes with French influences. A lovely yard and an impressive wine selection round off one of the best restaurants in the Wachau.

You'll find one **Spar** (Obere Landstrasse 15) super-market in Krems, and a second **Spar** (Schürerplatz) in Stein.

Don't omit a *Heurigen* visit; most are out of the centre and provide an authentic eating and drinking experience. They're only open for two- or three-week bursts during the year; get the schedule from the tourist office.

Piano (☎ 858 09; Steiner Landstrasse 21; ☎ 5pm-2am Mon-Thu, 5pm-3am Fri & Sat, 5pm-midnight Sun) A cross-over crowd of students, young workers and mellow jazz types gathers at this lively and off-beat pub. It does a couple of local sausage snacks to go with its great selection of beer; a few other decent bars and restaurants are on this street.

Getting There & Away

Frequent daily trains depart from Krems for Vienna's Franz Josefs Bahnhof (€13.50, one hour). The quickest way to Melk is by train to Spitz and continue by bus (€4.40, five times daily, one hour).

Autovermietung Becker (☎ 82433; www.rent.becker.at, in German; Wachauer Strasse 30) rents cars from €49 per day and minibuses from €120.

Getting Around

From the train station, bus 1 does a long loop through Stein and back into the centre of Krems for the cost of €1.70. Bikes can be

hired at ÖAMTC Donau Camping (p169) and some hotels.

AROUND KREMS Stift Göttweig

It's difficult *not* to notice **Stift Göttweig** (Göttweig Abbey; ☎ 02732-85581-231; Furth bei Göttweig; adult/student & child €7/6.50, full/part-guided tour €3/2; ☎ 10am-6pm Oct-May, 9am-6pm Jun-Sep, tours 11am & 3pm), not least because of its brooding hilltop presence. Founded in 1083, the abbey you see today is mostly baroque due to restoration after a devastating fire in the early 18th century. Aside from the grand view back across the Danube Valley from its garden terrace and restaurant, the abbey's highlights include the **Imperial Staircase** with a heavenly ceiling fresco painted by Paul Troger in 1739, and the over-the-top baroque interior of the **Stiftskirche** (which has a Kremser Schmidt work in the crypt). Fully guided tours take in the abbey's Imperial Wing, church and summer vestry; shorter tours explore either the Imperial Wing or the church and vestry.

Only three direct buses on weekdays travel between Krems train station and Göttweig (€1.70, 25 minutes). The train is another possibility, but it's a steep walk up hill from the Klein Wien station (€2.90, 10 minutes).

Schloss Grafenegg

About 10km east of Krems near the road to Tulln is **Schloss Grafenegg** (☎ 02735-220 522; www.grafenegg.com; Haitzendorf; adult/senior/family €5/3/7.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun mid-Apr-Sep), a castle with the look and feel of an ornate Tudor mansion set in English woods. Built in a revivalist (neo-gothic) style by Leopold Ernst in the mid-19th century it is now a venue for exhibitions and concerts, but you can explore the interior, which includes a chapel and decadent state rooms, weighed down with plenty of wood, period furniture, carpets and fireplaces.

The castle's manicured gardens are perfect for a picnic, but for fine dining don't pass up **Restaurant & Hotel Schloss Grafenegg** (☎ 02735-2616-0; grafenegg@moerwald.at; Grafenegg 12; 3-/5-course menu €45/60; ☎ 10am-10pm Wed-Sun Easter-Oct; ☎) owned by celebrity chef and winemaker Toni Mörwald. Accommodation costs are €89 to €103 for a single, and €118 to €138 for a double. Two kilometres away in Feuersbrunn is his **Hotel Villa Katharina** (☎ 02738-229 80; rezeption@moerwald.at; Kleine Zeile 10; s €81-96, d €108-128; ☎), with its **Restaurant zur**

Traube (☎ 02738-229 80; Kleine Zeile 13-17; 3-/8-course menu €29/69; ☎ 10am-10pm).

To get to Schloss Grafenegg, catch one of the six daily trains to nearby Wagram-Grafenegg (€4.40, 18 minutes) and walk 2km northeast to the castle.

DÜRNSTEIN

☎ 02711 / pop 1000

The pretty town of Dürnstein, on a supple curve in the Danube, is not only known for its beautiful buildings but also for the castle above the town where Richard I (the Lionheart) of England was once imprisoned.

Orientation & Information

The train station and **tourist office** (☎ 200; www.duernstein.at; Dürnstein Bahnhof; ☎ 1-6pm mid-Apr-mid-May & late Sep-mid-Oct, 11am-6pm mid-May-late Sep) are about five minutes' walk east of Hauptstrasse, the town's main street. The **Rathaus** (town hall; ☎ 219; Hauptstrasse 25; ☎ 8am-noon & 1.30-4pm Mon-Fri), near the centre of the town, also offers information.

Sights

Kuenringerburg, the castle high on the hill above the town, is where Richard the Lionheart was incarcerated from 1192 to 1193. His crime was to have insulted Leopold V; his misfortune was to be recognised despite his disguise when journeying through Austria on his way home from the Holy Lands; his liberty was achieved only upon the payment of an enormous ransom of 35,000kg of silver (which partly funded the building of Wiener Neustadt). It was also here that the singing minstrel Blondel attempted to rescue his sovereign. There's not a lot to see but a heap of rubble, but the view is worth the 15- to 20-minute climb.

Of the picturesque 16th-century houses and other prominent buildings lining Dürnstein's streets, the meticulously restored **Chorherrenstift** (☎ 375; Stiftshof; admission adult/concession & child €2.40/1.50; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Oct) is the most impressive. It's all that remains of the former Augustinian monastery originally founded in 1410; it received its baroque facelift in the 18th century (overseen by Josef Mungenast, among others). Kremser Schmidt did many of the ceiling and altar paintings. Entry includes access to the porch overlooking the Danube and an exhibition on the Augustinian monks who once ruled

the roost here (up until the monastery was dissolved by Joseph II in 1788).

Sleeping & Eating

The tourist office can supply a list of private rooms, pensions and *Gasthöfe* (inns) in Dürnstein and neighbouring Oberloiben and Unterloiben.

Pension Böhmer (☎ 239; pension.boehmer@i-one.at; Hauptstrasse 22; s €35, d €60-70) This small pension in the heart of town has comfortable rooms at very reasonable prices. It's only a hop, step and a crawl to the castle from here.

Hotel Sängler Blondel (☎ 253; www.saenglerblondel.at; Klosterplatz/Dürnstein 64; s €64, d €92-98; ☎) One of the nicest options in town, this hotel has good-sized rooms furnished in light woods, some with sofas. A couple have views to the Danube and others look out onto the castle or garden. Meals are served in a fine tree-shaded garden restaurant (mains €9 to €17).

Richard Löwenherz (☎ 222; www.richardloewenherz.at; Dürnstein 8; s €96-116, d €166-191, apt €250; ☎) One of the best hotels in town, the 'Lionheart' has mid-sized rooms right on the Danube in a former monastery. These days the monastic side has been thrown overboard and there's no reason to do without comforts. The walled garden is superb, and the restaurant (mains €10.50 to €23) serving the Austrian classics such as seasonal baked calf's head or *Tafelspitz* is also very good.

our pick Hotel Schloss Dürnstein (☎ 212; www.schloss.at; Dürnstein 2; s €153-165, d €166-253, apt €338-365; ☎) This castle is the last word in luxury in town and has a high-end restaurant. Most rooms are furnished tastefully in antiques, a massage can be arranged for your arrival, and it has a sauna and steam bath. Stay five nights and you will be treated to a free 'surprise menu' in the terrace restaurant (mains €16 to €25) with staggering views over the river. Stay 10 and you get a night on the house (which might be useful if you happen to be broke by that stage).

Alter Klosterkeller (☎ 378; Anzuggasse 237; mains €5-15; ☎ 3-11pm Mon-Fri, noon-11pm weekends Apr-Nov) This attractive *Heuriger* is just outside the village walls (on the eastern side) and overlooks the vineyards close to the town. It's the perfect place to sample the local cuisine and wines.

Restaurant Loibnerhof (☎ 828 90; Unterloiben 7; mains €13-25, 4-course menu €37; ☎ 11.30am-9.30pm Wed-Sun) Situated 1.5km east of Dürnstein in Unterloiben, this family-run restaurant inside

a 400-year-old building has a lovely garden where you can enjoy delicious local specialties such as *Kalbsbeuschel* (veal lights), which traditionally uses the lung and heart of the calf.

Getting There & Away

Dürnstein's train station is called Dürnstein-Oberloiben. Krems and Weissenkirchen are both about 20 minutes away by Brandner boat (€10, twice daily May to September); it's cheaper and quicker by train though (€2.90, 11 minutes to Krems, seven minutes to Weissenkirchen, hourly).

SPITZ

☎ 02713 / pop 1800

Situated 17km west of Krems on the north bank of the Danube, Spitz is a pleasant town that doesn't get as clogged with visitors as Dürnstein, has a picturesque old town centre, and offers some good hiking in the surrounding forests and vineyards.

The train station is near the B3 and river. To reach the old town, turn left after leaving the station and right up Markstrasse to Kirchenplatz. The **tourist office** (☎ 02713-2363; www.spitz-wachau.at, in German; Mittergasse 3a; ☎ 9.30am-1pm & 2-7.30pm Mon-Sat, 2-6pm Sun May-Oct, 2-4pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr) is situated 400m west of the station. It has free maps of the town and hiking trails, including a good *Naturerlebnis Wachau* map (€1).

Spitz's major sight is its Gothic **parish church** (☎ 02713-2231; Kirchenplatz 12; ☎ 8am-6pm), unusual for its chancel, which is out of whack with the main body of the church. Other noteworthy features are the 15th-century statues of the 12 apostles lining the organ loft.

Many of the local hiking trails begin from the former medieval city gate, **Rotes Tor**, which offers nice views over the Danube, and if you're energetic even better views are had from the castle ruins of the 13th-century **Burggrüne Hinterhaus** (see p109).

If you decide to stay in town, the tourist office can help with accommodation, or look for signs advertising private rooms. **Hotel Wachauer Hof** (☎ 2303; www.wachauerhof-spitz.at, in German; Hauptstrasse 15; s/d €39/62; ☎) is very centrally located, with comfortable rooms and a restaurant with outside seating in summer. **Hotel Garni Weinberghof** (☎ 2939; www.weingut-lagler.at, in German; Am Hinterweg 17; s €45-48, d €70-80; ☎) is situated above the centre among the

pretty vineyards and is geared more to hikers and cyclists.

Regular trains run between Spitz and Krems (€4.40, 30 minutes), and frequent buses and less frequent train services connect Spitz and Schwallenbach (€2.90, three minutes). See opposite and p164 for bus and boat services. Bicycles can be rented from the train station (see opposite).

MELK

☎ 02752 / pop 5200

With its sparkling and majestic abbey-fortress, Melk is a high point for tourists visiting the Danube Valley. And they arrive here in hoards – either by the busload, by train or wearily trudging with bikes through the cobblestone streets.

The **tourist office** (☎ 523 07-410; www.tiscover.com/melk; Babenbergerstrasse 1; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon & 4-6pm Sat & Sun May, Jun & Sep, 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-noon & 5-7pm Sun Jul & Aug, 9am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat Apr, 9am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat Oct) east of Rathausplatz has maps and plenty of useful information.

Stift Melk

Of the many abbeys in Austria, **Stift Melk** (Benedictine Abbey of Melk; ☎ 555-232; www.stiftmelk.at; Abt Berthold Dietmayr Strasse 1; adult/student & child/family €7.50/4.10/15, with guided tour €9.30/5.90/18.60; ☎ 9am-5.30pm May-Sep, 9am-4.30pm mid-Mar-Apr & Oct-Nov) is the best known. Historically, Melk was of great importance to both the Romans and the Babenbergs, who built a castle here. In 1089 the Babenberg margrave Leopold II donated the castle to Benedictine monks, who converted it into a fortified abbey. Fire destroyed the original edifice, which was completely rebuilt between 1702 and 1738 according to plans by Jakob Prandtauer and his disciple, Josef Munggenast.

The huge **monastery church** is enclosed by the buildings, but dominates the complex with its twin spires and high octagonal dome. The interior is baroque gone barmy, with endless prancing angels and gold twirls. The theatrical high-altar scene, depicting St Peter and St Paul (the two patron saints of the church), is by Peter Widerin. Johann Michael Rottmayr did most of the ceiling paintings, including those in the dome.

Other highlights include the **Bibliothek** (Library) and the **Marmorsaal** (Marble Hall); both have painted tiers on the ceiling (by

Paul Troger) to give the illusion of greater height, and ceilings are slightly curved to aid the effect. Eleven of the **Imperial rooms**, where dignitaries (including Napoleon) stayed, are now used to house a **museum**.

From around November to mid-March, the monastery can only be visited by guided tour. Always phone ahead, even in summer, to ensure you get an English-language tour.

Sleeping & Eating

There is no shortage of hotels, but you're actually better off doing a day trip and staying in more attractive Dürnstein, Spitz or Krems.

If you do stay, **Hotel Restaurant zur Post** (☎ 523 45; www.post-melk.at, in German; Linzer Strasse 1; s €55-62, d €90-99, apt €138-198; ☎) is a bright and pleasant hotel in the heart of town and has the attraction of large, comfortable rooms in plush colours with additional nice touches such as brass bed lamps. There's a sauna, facilities for massages and free bike use for guests (€10 per day for nonguests). The restaurant is also very decent for Austrian classics.

Tom's Restaurant (☎ 524 75; mains €20, 4/9-course menu with wine €90/135; ☎ lunch & dinner Thu-Tue) is gourmet quality and changes its menu each week; it has an extensive wine cellar and a list as thick as a book!

Getting There & Away

Boats leave from the canal by Pionierstrasse, 400m north of the abbey; see p164 for more information. Almost hourly trains travel direct to Melk from Vienna's Westbahnhof (€15.50, 1¼ hours). To get to Schloss Schallaburg from Melk, **Taxi Türke** (☎ 523 16) runs a minibus from the Melk train station (€4 one way, leaving 10.25am, 1.15pm and 4pm daily). You might be able to negotiate other trips between runs, but expect to pay about €1 per kilometre (the going rate in summer for a driver).

Wachau Touristik Bernhardt (☎ 02713-2222; office@wachau-touristik.at; Laaben 1a in Spitz; €12 per day) rents out bicycles from the ferry station in Melk and from the train station in Spitz. Book ahead.

TULLN

☎ 02272 / pop 14,000

Tulln, the home town of painter Egon Schiele and situated 30km northwest of Vienna, has several interesting attractions and has recently put a lot of energy into pulling in visitors by staging world-class exhibitions and upgrading its museums.

Orientation & Information

The **tourist office** (☎ 675 66; www.tulln.at, in German; Minoritenplatz 2; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri & 10am-7pm Sat May-Sep, 8am-3pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr) is one block north of Hauptplatz (the fountain end) and a 15-minute walk northwest from the main train station. Tulln Stadt, an S-Bahn station (for suburban trains from Vienna), is just five minutes' walk south of Hauptplatz along Bahnhofstrasse.

Sights & Activities

The **Egon Schiele Museum** (☎ 645 70; Donaulände 28; adult/concession/child €5/3.50/3; ☎ 10am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct), housed in a former jail near the Danube, vividly presents the story of the life of the Tulln-born artist. It contains 100 of his paintings and sketches and a mock-up of the cell he was briefly imprisoned in (he was however jailed in Neulengbach). He fell foul of the law in 1912 following the seizure of 125 erotic drawings; some were of pubescent girls, and Schiele was also in trouble for allowing children to view his explicit works. Schiele fans should also make sure they visit the Leopold Museum in Vienna (p130).

Alongside the tourist office, the rococo **Minoritenkirche** (☎ 623 380; Minoritenplatz 1; ☎ 8am-7pm) from 1739 is decorated with a magnificent series of ceiling frescoes dedicated to St Johannes Nepomuk, culminating in one depicting his fall from a bridge at the hands of Bohemia's King Wenceslaus IV; the angel trying to save him is tumbling out of the frame. Also not to be missed is the **Pfarrkirche St Stephan** (☎ 623 380; Wiener Strasse 20; admission free; ☎ 7.30am-7.30pm summer, 7.30am-5pm winter) with its perfectly preserved 13th-century frescoed Romanesque funerary chapel.

The **Museum im Minoritenkloster** (☎ 690 442; Minoritenplatz 1; hr & price vary) adjoins the church. This city-promoted art space features excellent changing exhibitions such as one in 2007 of erotic art with works by Picasso, Warhol, Richard Lindner and Viennese artist Gottfried Helnwein among the many on show.

The town and its tourist office are well set up for cyclists as the Danube cycle-way cuts between the river on the town's northern border; to encourage green tourism, the city provides six free city bicycles, which you can pick up just off Hauptplatz from **2Rad Wegl** (☎ 626 95; Jasomirgottgasse 4). Bikes can also be hired from Donaupark Camping (see p174).

Sleeping & Eating

The tourist office can help with a list of accommodation options (including private rooms), and also provide a map of the town.

Donaupark Camping (☎ 652 00; www.campingtulln.at; Hafenstrasse 4; campsites per person/tent €6.50/4.50; ☹ Apr-Oct; P) This campsite is located just east of the centre on the river and alongside a pretty forest.

Jugendherberge Tulln (☎ 651 65 10; jugendherberge-tulln@aon.at; Marc-Aurel-Park 1; dm €18.90-28.90; P) This youth hostel near the Danube caters for seminar guests as well as tourists. All the dorms have their own showers, and there is table tennis, table football, a café, plus a handy ATM.

Zum Schwarzen Adler (☎ 626 76; Rathausplatz 7; s/d/tr €42/64/78; P) In a town short on mid-range or upmarket options, this hotel in the centre of town is the best choice; rooms are clean, the furnishings are modern, and it has a restaurant downstairs that brews its own dark and light beer and serves up honest Austrian nosh at very reasonable prices (menus €5 to €7, mains €6 to €13).

Verdi (☎ 0676/40 84 841; Hauptplatz 25; mains €8-19; ☹ lunch & dinner Wed-Mon) Verdi is a refreshing, all-round eating option with a range from fish through Austrian classics to Mediterranean flavours; there's a terrace for warm summer evenings.

Getting There & Away

Tulln is reached hourly by train (€7.60, 25 minutes) or S-Bahn (line 40; €7.60, 45 minutes) from Vienna's Franz Josefs Bahnhof. The train is quicker, but only stops at the main Tulln station, while the S-Bahn stops at Tulln Stadt. Heading west, trains go to Krems (€9.30, 30 to 45 minutes, hourly) or St Pölten (€9.30, one hour, hourly).

ST PÖLTEN

☎ 02742 / pop 51,000

St Pölten, a destination few may even notice as they scream through on their way from Vienna to Salzburg, may be Lower Austria's capital but it retains a very sleepy atmosphere. While it's not all that attractive or exciting, it does have a nice *Altstadt* (old town), with pedestrian-only cobblestone streets, juxtaposed by a new Landhaus

Viertel (Landhaus Quarter) with contemporary architectural delights.

HISTORY

In a strange twist of fate – first an ailing economy in the 1920s stalled the decision to give Lower Austria its own capital, and later the Nazis favoured making Krems the capital – St Pölten became capital of Lower Austria only in 1986, ending an anomaly in which Lower Austria was administered geographically from Vienna, but was in fact a separate province. This prompted the catch-cry, 'A province without a capital is like a goulash without juice'. Ironically, it happens to have the oldest known municipal charter – granted in 1159. The *Altstadt* is noted for its baroque buildings: baroque master Jakob Prandtauer lived and died in the city.

ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

The centre of town is a compact, mostly pedestrian-only area to the west of the Traisen River. Rathausplatz, is home to the **Rathaus** (town hall) and **tourist office** (☎ 353 354; tourismus@st-poelten.gv.at; Rathausplatz 1; ☹ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 10am-5pm Sun Apr-Oct, 8am-5pm Mon-Fri Nov-Mar). Ask for the *Übernachten in St Pölten* booklet (in German, but with useful listings). The main post office is near Herrenplatz, and internet access is available in Cinema Paradiso (see p176). The Landhaus Viertel is 700m east of Rathausplatz.

SIGHTS

Pick up the tourist office's *Your Personal City Guide* brochure (in English) that outlines two walking tours of the city which can be complemented by an audio guide (€1.45).

Rathausplatz is lined with eye-catching pastel-coloured buildings and dominated by the **Rathaus** and **Franziskanerkirche** (☎ 352 6211; Rathausplatz 12; ☹ dawn-dusk), which was completed in 1770 and has a grandiose altar offset by side altar paintings by Kremser Schmidt. Between the two is the tall **Dreifaltigkeitssäule** (Trinity Column).

Not far south and west of Rathausplatz is the **Institut der Englischen Fräulein** (☎ 352 188-0; Linzer Strasse 11; admission free; ☹ 8am-noon & 3-5pm Mon-Sat, 10am-noon & 3-6pm Sun), a convent founded in 1706, which has a classic baroque façade, black-and-gold organ and several frescoes by Paul Troger in the chapel. At the time of publication the **Stadtmuseum** (☎ 333-26 43;

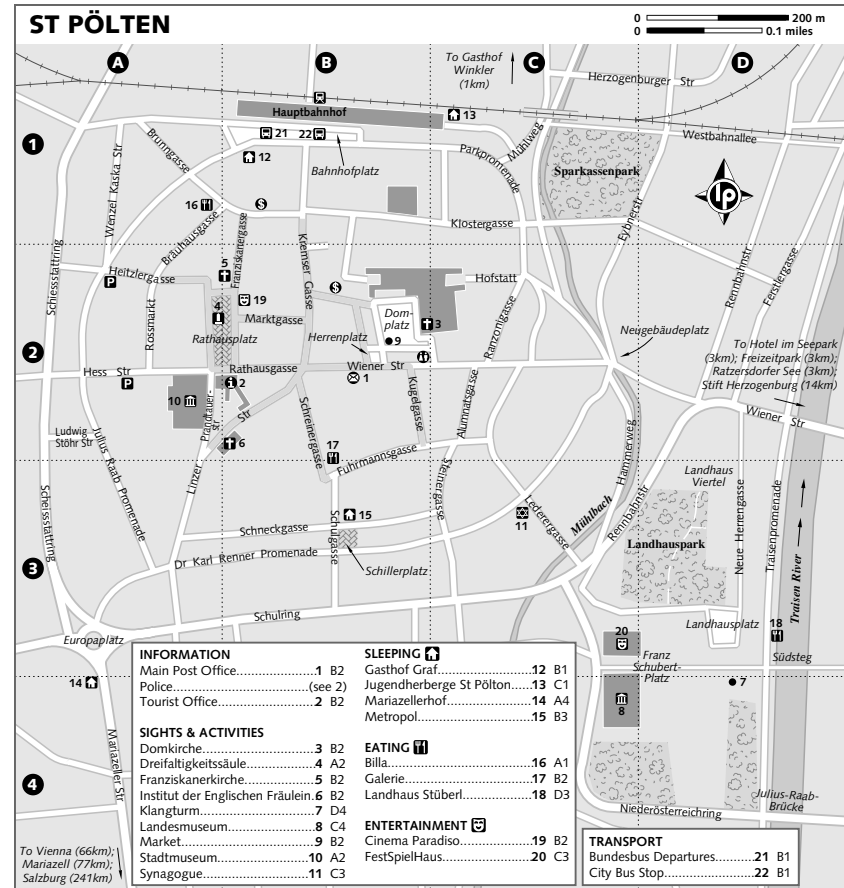
Prandtauerstrasse 2) was receiving a facelift and upgrade, but when this museum reopens it should have a permanent section on Art Nouveau and changing exhibitions on town history.

To the east of Rathausplatz is Domplatz, which hosts a **morning market** every Thursday and Saturday and is home to the **Domkirche** (☎ 353 402-0; Domplatz 1; ☹ dawn-dusk); its interior, with lashings of fake marble and gold, was designed by Jakob Prandtauer and is easily the most impressive in St Pölten.

From Domplatz walk down Lederergasse to the Landhaus Viertel, passing the town's former **synagogue** (Dr. Karl Renner-Promenade 22; admission free; ☹ 9am-3pm Mon-Fri). The building, which contains Art Nouveau frescoes,

dates from 1912; it was ravaged by the Nazis and restored to become an institute for Jewish history. The Jewish community itself couldn't be re-established. The **Landesmuseum** (☎ 90 80 90-153; Franz Schubert-Platz 5; adult/concession/child/family €8/7/3.50/16; ☹ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) is devoted to the history, art and environment of Lower Austria. A wave made from glass, frozen in movement above the entrance, sets the mood, and indeed water is a theme throughout. Its highlight in an art collection spanning the Middle Ages to the present is the 13th-century Lion of Schönggrabern.

For a bird's-eye view of the quarter take the lift to the top of the **Klangturm** (☎ 90 80 50; Landhausplatz; adult/child €7.50/3.50; ☹ 8am-7pm Mon-Sat, 9am-5pm Sun).



SLEEPING

The tourist office has a list of accommodation, including private rooms.

Hotel im Seepark (☎ 251 510; www.hotel-seepark.at; Am Ratzendorfer See; campsite per single-person tent €15.50, extra person €7.50, s/d €45/66; (P)) This lakeside pension, 3km to the northeast of the centre in the Freizeitpark, doubles as a camping ground and is a fine place to spend the day sunning and swimming.

Jugendherberge St Pölten (☎ 321 96; office 3100@hostel.or.at; Bahnhofplatz 1; dm €17.50) The youth hostel is about as convenient to the train station as it gets – it's virtually in the same building.

Mariazellerhof (☎ 769 95; www.pension-maria-zellerhof.at, in German; Mariazeller Strasse 6; s €33-42, d €52-64; (P)) The pink façade of family-owned Mariazellerhof faces a busy intersection, but double-glazing keeps the noise down. Many of the good-sized rooms come with kitchen facilities.

Gasthof Graf (☎ 352 757; www.hotel-graf.at, in German; Bahnhofplatz 7; s €55, d €76; (P)) This pleasant *Gasthof* directly across from the *Hauptbahnhof* is very good value for the price: it's clean and its modern rooms are pleasant. Furnishings, though veneer, include a coffee table and desk.

Metropol (☎ 707 00-0; www.austria-trend.at/met; Schillerplatz 1; s €250, d €300; (P) ♻️) Cosy, upmarket and aimed at a business and culture clientele, the Metropol is not cheap (low season prices are 20% less), but for these prices, you get free use of the sauna, steam bath and infrared lamps. Its restaurant (mains €14 to €22) serves up steak and good business-type meals.

EATING & DRINKING

Landhaus Stüberl (☎ 245 24; Landhausboulevard 27; breakfast €3.50-5, mains €5.50-12; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner Mon-Fri) Aimed at office workers in the quarter, Landhaus has good, cheap lunchtime dishes, including pasta; a terrace overlooks the Traisen River.

Gasthof Winkler (☎ 364 944; Mühlweg 64; mains €7-18; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun) This up-market restaurant has been serving delicious local and Austrian seasonal specialties for over a century. You'll find it about 1km north of the *Hauptbahnhof*.

Restaurant Galerie (☎ 351 305; Fuhrmannsgasse 1; mains €12.50-25.50, 4 courses €29.50; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri) Galerie serves delicious Viennese cuis-

ine and has a great wine list, especially for Italian and French vintages. Although Wiener schnitzel isn't on the menu, it's always available for the asking.

Cinema Paradiso (☎ 214 00; www.cinema-paradiso.at, in German; Rathausplatz 14; Sun breakfast buffet €6; ☎ 9-1am) This is one of the best centrally located places in town for a coffee or drink. It also does an all-you-can eat breakfast buffet on Sunday and, true to its name, is an art-house cinema.

Self-caterers should head for **Billa** supermarket on the corner of Brunnegasse and Bräuhäusgasse.

ENTERTAINMENT

The **Festspielhaus** (☎ 90 80 80-222; www.festspielhaus.at, in German; Franz Schubert-Platz 2) is a modern theatre which features an impressive array of music, theatre and dance performances from both Austria and abroad.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Trains run about every half hour from Vienna to St Pölten (€11, 40 to 75 minutes), continuing on to Linz (€20, one hour) and Salzburg (€34, 2½ hours). Hourly direct trains run to Krems (€7.60, 45 minutes) and several each day to Mariazell (€14.50, 2½ hours).

St Pölten has equally good road connections: the east-west A1/E60 passes a few kilometres south of the city and the S33 branches north from there, bypassing St Pölten to the east, and continuing to Krems.

AROUND ST PÖLTEN

Although the region around Lower Austria's capital won't bowl you over, the baroque Augustinian abbey **Stift Herzogenburg** (☎ 02782-831 12; Herzogenburg; adult/student/child €7/5.50/3/2; ☎ tours 9.30am, 11am, 1.30pm, 3pm, 4.30pm Apr-Oct) is a highlight. Admission is on a guided tour (in English, arrange in advance), which includes the **Stiftskirche** and a late Gothic collection of paintings by the Danube School of artists.

Herzogenburg lies on the main train line between Krems (€4.40, 30 minutes) and St Pölten (€4.40, 15 minutes); at least a dozen trains pass through the town's train station (which is 10 minutes' walk from the abbey) daily.

MOSTVIERTEL

The Mostviertel, in Lower Austria's southwestern corner, takes its name from apple cider which is produced and consumed in the area. By Lower Austrian standards, the landscape is spectacular, with the eastern Alps ever-present in its southern reaches. It's largely ignored by international tourists and is certainly an area off the beaten track.

One town not to be missed is **Waidhofen an der Ybbs**, with historic gabled houses, arcaded courtyards and dramatic onion domes. Staff at its **tourist office** (☎ 07442-511 255; www.waidhofen.at; Schlossweg 2; ☎ 9am-6pm) have information on the town and the eight **mountain bike trails** of varying degrees of difficulty around Waidhofen. Mountain bikes are available free of charge between 10am and 6pm, Thursday to Sunday from May to October (maximum period one week). Pick up the key to the lock and the tour map from the tourist office, and then the bike from the *Sporthalle* (sport hall) on Oskar-Czeija-Strasse.

From Gstadt, Bundesstrasse 31 leads through some lovely mountainous country and a string of pretty little villages such as **Göstling, Lunz am See** and **Gaming**.

In the eastern fringes of the Mostviertel, and only 23km south of St Pölten, is the **Cistercian monastery** (☎ 02762-524 20; www.stift-lilienfeld.at; Klosterrotte 1; tours adult/student & child €7/4, admission without tour €3/1; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm, tours 10am & 2pm Mon-Sat, 2pm Sun) of Lilienfeld. Founded in 1202, the foundations of the monastery are Romanesque, but have received Gothic and baroque make-overs.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Frequent daily trains go to Waidhofen an der Ybbs (€15.50, one hour, change at Amstetten) from St Pölten; only a couple of services run to Göstling (€9.30, 1¼ hours), daily services to Lunz (€11, 1½ hours) are more frequent. You'll need your own wheels for Gaming, which is 30km from Waidhofen.

WALDVIERTEL & WEINVIERTEL

Between them, the Waldviertel (Woods Quarter) and Weinviertel (Wine Quarter) take up most of the land north of the

Danube in Lower Austria. The Waldviertel to the northwest is a region of rolling hills and rural villages, and while there isn't actually much forest to speak of, there are a number of fine attractions. The Weinviertel, north and northeast of Vienna, is flat and agricultural, and has little of interest for the average tourist (unless you're crazy about Austrian wine). Both regions are places to escape the madding crowds.

Waldviertel's central **tourist office** (☎ 02822-54109-0; info@waldviertel.or.at; www.waldviertel.or.at, in German; Sparkasseplatz 4; telephone & email only) is located in Zwettl, a small town near a baroque **Cistercian Abbey** (☎ 02822-550; Stift Zwettl 1; tours adult/child €6/3; tours 10am, 11am, 2pm, 3pm & 4pm Mon-Sat, 11am, 2pm, 3pm & 4pm Sun May-Oct), which has one-hour tours in German with English description sheets. The B217 south of Zwettl leads through the heart of poppy country, a booming industry in Lower Austria.

Some 40km east of Zwettl are a group of interesting sights. First up is the Benedictine **Stift Altenburg** (☎ 02982-3451; www.stift-altenburg.at, in German; Stift 1; adult/child & student/family €9/4.50/16, includes English audio guide; ☎ 10am-5pm Apr-Oct), which can trace its foundations back to 1144. The abbey library (which has ceiling frescoes by Paul Troger) and the crypt (with frescoes by Troger's pupils) are highlights. The abbey's church, which is free to enter, contains some of Troger's best frescoes (you'll find them in the central dome, and above the high and side altars).

A few kilometres southeast of Altenburg is **Schloss Rosenberg** (☎ 02982-2911; www.rosenberg.at, in German; Rosenberg am Kamp; tours adult/child & student/family €10/8.50/24, extra €3 for falconry & pageantry; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm Tue-Sun Mar, Apr & Oct, 9.30am-5pm May-Sep), a Renaissance castle where splendid falconry shows take place at 11am and 3pm.

A further 18km east of Rosenberg, the quaint town of **Eggenburg** comes into view. It's still surrounded by much of its original defensive walls, but more intriguing is its **Österreichisches Motorradmuseum** (Motorbike Museum; ☎ 02984-2151; www.motorradmuseum.at, in German; Museumgasse 6; adult/student/child €6/5/3; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun mid-Jan-mid-Dec). This masterpiece of motorbike dedication has over 320 immaculately restored bikes on show. More unusual models include the NSU Max Sportversion, with its sharp angles, and the Böhmerland 600, the longest bike in the world.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Zwettl is best reached by bus from Krems (€9, 45 minutes to 1½ hours). Services are frequent but only a couple run on Sunday. Several direct trains travel from Krems to Horn daily (€9.30, one hour), stopping at Rosenberg (€7.60, one hour). From Horn, very irregular buses run to Altenburg (€2.20, 10 minutes). Eggenburg has plenty of daily train connections to Tulln (€9.30, 40 minutes).

DROSENDORF

☎ 02915 / pop 1280

Situated on the extreme northern fringe of the Waldviertel, hard on the Czech border, the lovely fortified town of Drosendorf is often overlooked by the Viennese – it's simply too far-flung. Yet, with a completely intact town wall, it is a unique and beautiful town.

An **information service** (☎ 232 10; ☎ 8am–4.30pm Mon–Fri) is located inside the castle, and an **information stand** with a useful walk-by-numbers brochure (in German) as well as an accommodation list is situated on Hauptplatz, inside the walls.

The **fortress walk** also begins here, passes the **Schloss**, a mostly baroque structure on top of Romanesque foundations, and exits through the **Hornertor**, the main gate in the southeast dating from the 13th to the 15th century. Cross the moat and follow the wall clockwise.

If you're staying overnight in town, there are several good options, but the most atmospheric is **Schloss Drosendorf** (☎ 232 10; schloss-drosendorf@drosendorf.at; Schlossplatz 1; s €34–50, d €60–70; ☐ ☑).

Poppies – or rather poppy-seed specialties – are a big local industry in the Waldviertel. **MOKA** (☎ 22 27; www.moka.at, in German; Hauptplatz 5; cake & coffee €6; ☎ 9am–7pm Thu–Mon Apr–Oct) does a delicious poppy-seed cake and coffee, and also has a few comfortable rooms right on Hauptplatz (single/double €35/70).

To reach Drosendorf from Vienna (Floridsdorf station), take the frequent train to Retz (€12.50, one hour), making sure it connects with one of several buses weekdays (€5.90, one hour).

NATIONALPARK THAYATAL

Straddling the border of Austria and the Czech Republic in the northwestern reaches of the Weinviertel is Austria's smallest national park, Thayatal. This unique stretch of land is actually two parks; its other half, Podjiji

National Park, is located across the border. Of the 3000 plant species found in Austria, about 1300 occur in Thayatal. Thayatal's landscape consists of a deep canyon cut by the Thaya river, numerous rock formations and steep slopes. Walking is the most popular activity in the park.

The **Nationalparkhaus** (☎ 02949-7005-0; www.np-thayatal.at, in German; exhibition adult/student & child €3.80/2.20; ☎ 9am–6pm Apr–Sep, 10am–4pm Mar, Oct & Nov), near Hardegg, has loads of information and an exhibition on the park's ecology. Hardegg, the natural jump-off point for the park, is not easy to get to without your own transport; it's best approached by train from Vienna to Retz (€12.50, one hour), from where the occasional bus runs to the town (€3.60, 20 minutes).

MARCH-DONAULAND

The March-Donauland stretches from the eastern border of Vienna to the Slovakian border, an area dominated by the Danube and its natural flood plains. It's an area rich in history and natural wonder – Carnuntum, an important Roman camp, and Nationalpark Donau-Auen are found here.

CARNUNTUM

The Roman town of Carnuntum was the most important political and military centre in the empire's northeast; with a population of 50,000 people at its peak, it made Vienna look like a village in comparison. The town developed around AD 40 and was abandoned some 400 years later. Today it exists as a relic of Roman civilisation in Upper Pannonia, and is integrated into two modern-day settlements set 4km apart: Petronell-Carnuntum and the larger spa town of Bad Deutsch-Altenburg.

Orientation & Information

Carnuntum consists of three parts: an open-air museum and nearby ancient victory arch in Petronell-Carnuntum, an amphitheatre halfway between Bad Deutsch-Altenburg and Petronell, and a museum in Bad Deutsch-Altenburg. Petronell's **Bahnhof** (train station) is 1km south of the main street, Hauptstrasse, which is home to the open-air museum, its **information office** (☎ 02163-337 70; www.carnuntum.co.at; Hauptstrasse 1; ☎ 9am–5pm

mid-Mar–mid-Nov) and the **Regionalbüro Auland-Carnuntum** (☎ 02163-3555-10; www.aulandcarnuntum.com, in German; Hauptstrasse 3; ☎ 9am–4.30pm Mon–Thu, 9am–2.30pm Fri).

Bad Deutsch-Altenburg also has its own **tourist office** (☎ 02165-629 00-11; www.baddeutsch-altenburg.at, in German; Erhardgasse 2; ☎ 7am–noon, 12.30–5pm Mon–Thu, 7am–1pm Fri May–Oct, 7am–noon & 12.30–4pm Mon–Fri Nov–Apr).

Sights

All four local attractions are covered by the one ticket (adult/student and concession/child €8/6/3, tours extra €3/2), including transport in the archaeological park bus on weekends (see right).

The **open-air museum** (☎ 02163-3377-16; www.carnuntum.co.at; Hauptstrasse 1; ☎ 9am–5pm mid-Mar–mid-Nov, tours 10am, 11.30am, 2pm & 3.30pm) lies on the site of the old civilian town. It includes ruins of the public baths and a reconstructed temple of Diana. Actors lead tours in tunics and togas, and you can buy replicas of Roman sandals and clothing here for your next toga party. The museum is enclosed and very touristy, but is interesting and good fun; descriptions everywhere are in English. The **Heidentor** (Heathen Gate; admission free) was once the south-west entrance to the city and now stands as an isolated anachronism amid fields of grain.

About 2km on from the park towards Bad Deutsch-Altenburg is the grass-covered **amphitheatre** (Wienerstrasse 52; ☎ 9am–5pm mid-Mar–mid-Nov) that formerly seated 15,000. It now hosts a theatre festival over summer.

Bad Deutsch-Altenburg's **Museum Carnuntinum** (Badgasse 40–46; ☎ noon–5pm Mon, 10am–5pm Tue–Sun mid-Mar–mid-Nov, tours 1.30pm & 3.30pm Sat & Sun) is the largest of its kind in Austria, having amassed over 3300 Roman treasures in its 100-year existence. The museums highlight, *Tanzende Mänade* (Dancing Maenad), a marble figure with a perfect bum, is usually here. The town is also a health spa, with 28°C iodine sulphur springs and a wonderful **Kurpark** (spa gardens) on the Danube.

Hainburg, 3km further east, has the depot for Museum Carnuntum, housed in the **Kulturfabrik** (☎ 02163-33 770; www.kulturfabrik-hainburg.at; Kulturplatz 1; adult/child €5/3; ☎ 10am–6pm). The depot can be toured with an advance booking and special exhibitions on archaeological themes are also held here. On top of this, it has splendid views over the Danube and **fenestra** (☎ 02165-63844; Kulturplatz 1; mains €8–16, ☎ 10am–

TAKING IN THE ROMANS

Getting from one Roman site to the next in Carnuntum can be difficult during the week. If you feel energetic, your best option on a weekday is either to hire a bike in Vienna and ride the 50km along the Danube (see p159 for bike hire in Vienna) or take the train out and hire a bike locally in Bad-Deutsch-Altenburg (see below). On weekends from mid-March to mid-November a free bus meets the Vienna train hourly from 10am and does the circuit of sites (the last bus from Museum Carnuntum is 4.30pm).

10pm), a café and gourmet restaurant with a changing seasonal menu. Hainburg itself is a pretty town with hilltop ruins. **Bratislava**, the Slovakian capital, is also an easy day trip from Carnuntum.

Sleeping & Eating

Bad Deutsch-Altenburg, with its pretty *Kurpark*, spa facilities and location near the Danube, is far more appealing than Petronell for overnighting. Much of the accommodation is found on Badgasse.

Gasthof Hotel zum Amphitheater (☎ 02165-627 37; Wienerstrasse 51; s/d/tr €28.60/45.20/66.60; ☐) Rising up from the road opposite the amphitheatre, this friendly, family-run hotel is packed with local atmosphere; rooms are spacious and some have views over the fields or amphitheatre.

Pension Riedmüller (☎ 02165-62473-0; www.tiscover.at/riedmueller.hotels; Badgasse 28; s/d €27/54; ☐) This hotel has massage facilities, free bike use for guests and organises tours or helps with bike tours to Bratislava (€40 each way). Rooms are fine, though not as good as their delicious apple strudel downstairs in the café.

Hotel König Stephan (☎ 02165-624 73-0; Badgasse 34; s/d €27/54; ☐) Run by the same people who operate Pension Riedmüller. This place also has a good restaurant (mains €7 to €17).

A nice place to relax and sip a beer while watching the Danube flow is the **Wirtshaus an der Donau** (☎ 10am–11pm) in the *Kurpark*.

Getting There & Around

From Vienna, the S7 train (direction Wolfsthal) departs Wien Floridsdorf hourly, via Wien Nord and Wien Mitte to Petronell (€9.30, 55 minutes), Bad Deutsch-Altenburg

(€9.30, one hour) and Hainburg (€10.90, 66 minutes).

The cycle path from Vienna goes along the north bank of the Danube, crosses to the south at Bad Deutsch-Altenburg, and continues into Slovakia. See p179 for information about buses and bikes.

NATIONALPARK DONAU-AUEN

Nationalpark Donau-Auen is a thin strip of natural floodplain on either side of the Danube, running from Vienna to the Slovakian border. Established as a national park in 1997, it was the culmination of 13 years of protest and environmentalist action against the building of a hydroelectric power station in Hainburg. You'll find plentiful flora and fauna, including 700 species of fern and flowering plants, and a high density of kingfishers (feeding off the 50 species of fish). Guided tours by foot or boat are available; for more information contact **Nationalpark Donau-Auen** (☎ 02212-355 55; www.donauauen.at, in German; Schlossplatz 1, Orth an der Donau; ☎ 9am-6pm mid-Mar-Sep, till 5pm Oct & 8am-1pm Mon-Fri Nov-mid-Mar).

From Vienna, the Nationalpark Donau-Auen is best explored either by bicycle (see p159 for details of bicycle hire in Vienna), or on summer Nationalpark-run 4½ hour tours leaving from the **Salztorbrücke** (☎ 01-4000 494-80; adult/child €10/4, booking necessary; ☎ depart 9am May-Oct).

WIENERWALD

The Wienerwald (Vienna Woods) encompasses gentle wooded hills to the west and southwest of Vienna, and the wine growing region directly south of the capital. For the Viennese, it's a place for walking and mountain biking, but it is often overlooked by tourists. Numerous walking and cycling trails in the area are covered in the *Wienerwald Wander und Radkarte*, available free from local tourist offices and the region's main office, **Wienerwald Tourismus** (☎ 02231-621 76; www.wienerwald.info; Hauptplatz 11, 3002 Purkersdorf; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri).

Attractive settlements, such as the grape-growing towns of **Perchtoldsdorf** and **Gumpoldskirchen**, speckle the Wienerwald. Picturesque **Mödling**, only 15km south of Vienna, was once favoured by the artistic

elite: Beethoven's itchy feet took him to Hauptstrasse 79 from 1818 to 1820, and Schönberg stayed at Bernhardgasse 6 from 1918 to 1925. More information is available from the **Tourismus-Information Mödling** (☎ 02236-267 27; tourismus@moedling.at; Elisabethstrasse 2; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri).

About 20km from Mödling is **Heiligenkreuz** and the 12th-century Cistercian abbey **Stift Heiligenkreuz** (☎ 02258-8703; www.stift-heiligenkreuz.at, in German; Heiligenkreuz 1; tours adult/student & child €6.40/3.20; ☎ tours 10am, 11am, 2pm, 3pm & 4pm Mon-Sat, 11am, 2pm, 3pm & 4pm Sun). The chapter house is the final resting place of most of the Babenberg dynasty, which ruled Austria until 1246. The abbey museum contains 150 clay models by Giovanni Giuliani (1663-1744), a Venetian sculptor who also created the Trinity column in the courtyard. Note that tours in English are by request only.

Mayerling, which lies 6km southwest of Heiligenkreuz, has little to show now, but the bloody event that occurred there (see the boxed text opposite) still draws people to the site. The **Carmelite convent** (☎ 02258-2275; Mayerling 1; admission €1.50; ☎ 9am-5pm) can be visited, but it's not really worth the effort; all you see is a chapel and a couple of rooms of mementos.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

To explore this region, it's best if you have your own transport. Trains skirt either side of the woods and the bus service is patchy. The Baden-Alland bus passes through Heiligenkreuz (€1.70, 35 minutes) and Mayerling (€3.40, 45 minutes) on an hourly basis Monday to Friday, but this drops to a trickle on weekends. From Mödling (reached on the Vienna Südbahnhof-Baden train route), there are frequent buses going to Hinterbrühl (€1.70, 11 minutes) which sometimes continue on to Alland via Heiligenkreuz (€3.40, 30 minutes).

The main road through the area is the A21 that loops down from Vienna, passes by Heiligenkreuz, then curves north to join the A1 just east of Altengbach.

BADEN BEI WIEN

☎ 02252 / pop 25,200

With its sulphurous mineral springs (giving it an egg-like smell in parts) and its lush green parks, gardens and woods, this spa town on the eastern fringes of the Wienerwald is a picturesque anomaly. Baden has a long his-

MYSTERY AT MAYERLING

It's the stuff of lurid pulp fiction: the heir to the throne found dead in a hunting lodge with his teenage mistress. It became fact in Mayerling on 30 January 1889, yet for years the details of the case were shrouded in secrecy and denial. Even now a definitive picture has yet to be established – the 100th anniversary of the tragedy saw a flurry of books published on the subject, and Empress Zita claimed publicly that the heir had actually been murdered.

The heir was Archduke Rudolf, 30-year-old son of Emperor Franz Josef, husband of Stephanie of Coburg, and something of a libertine who was fond of drinking and womanising. Rudolf's marriage was little more than a public façade by the time he met the 17-year-old Baroness Maria Vetsera in the autumn of 1888. The attraction was immediate, but it wasn't until 13 January the following year that the affair was consummated, an event commemorated by an inscribed cigarette case, a gift from Maria to Rudolf.

On 28 January, Rudolf secretly took Maria with him on a shooting trip to his hunting lodge in Mayerling. His other guests arrived a day later; Maria's presence, however, remained unknown to them. On the night of 29 January, the valet, Loschek, heard the couple talking until the early hours, and at about 5.30am a fully dressed Rudolf appeared and instructed him to get a horse and carriage ready. As he was doing his master's bidding, he reportedly heard two gun shots; racing back, he discovered Rudolf lifeless on his bed, with a revolver by his side. Maria was on her bed, also fully clothed, also dead. Just two days earlier Rudolf had discussed a suicide pact with long-term mistress Mizzi Caspar. Apparently he hadn't been joking.

The official line was proffered by Empress Elisabeth, who claimed Rudolf died of heart failure. The newspapers swallowed the heart failure story, though a few speculated about a hunting accident. Then the rumours began: some believed Maria had poisoned her lover, that Rudolf had contracted an incurable venereal disease, or that he had been assassinated by Austrian secret police because of his liberal politics. Even as late as 1982, Empress Zita claimed the heir to the throne had been killed by French secret agents. Numerous books have been written on the subject, but no-one can say what exactly occurred on that ill-fated morning.

Through all the intrigue, the real victim remains Maria. How much of a willing party she was to the suicide will never be known. What has become clear is that Maria, after her death, represented not a tragically curtailed young life but an embarrassing scandal that had to be discreetly disposed of. Her body was left untouched for 38 hours, after which it was loaded into a carriage in such a manner as to imply that it was a living person being aided rather than a corpse beyond help. Her subsequent burial was a rude, secretive affair, during which she was consigned to the ground in an unmarked grave (her body was later moved to Heiligenkreuz). Today the hunting lodge is no more – a Carmelite nunnery stands in its place.

tory of receiving notable visitors; the Romans came here to wallow in the medicinal waters, Beethoven blew into town in the hope of a cure for his deafness, and in the early 19th century it flourished as the favourite summer retreat of the Habsburgs. Much of the town centre is in the 19th-century Biedermeier style, resulting from rebuilding after Turkish invasions and severe fires. Note that Baden goes into hibernation between October and March.

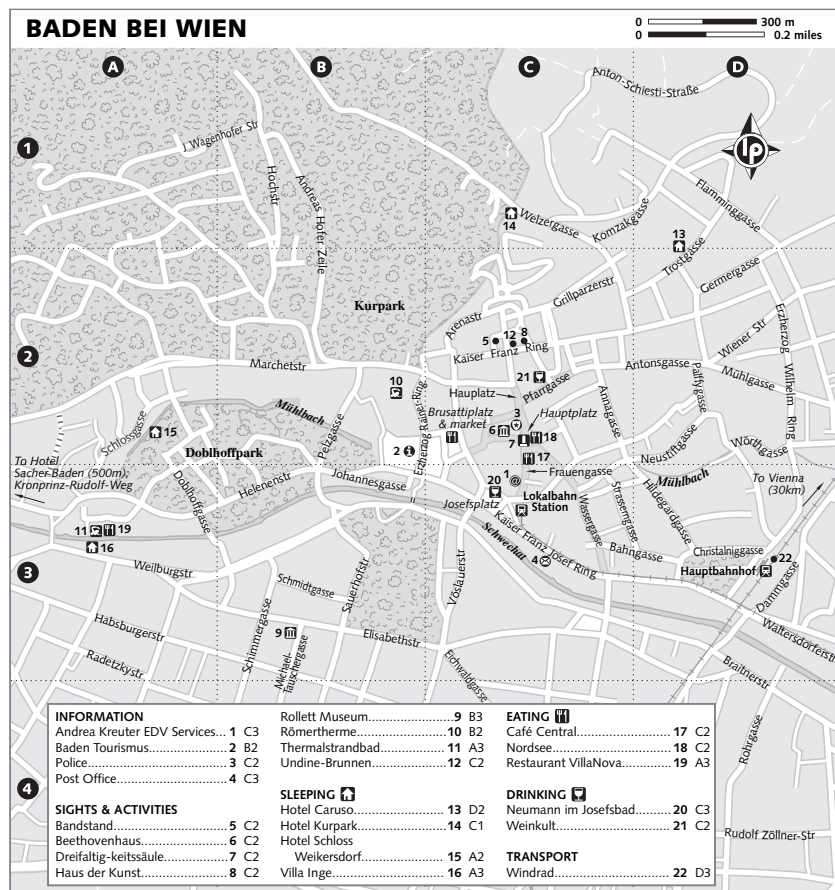
Orientation & Information

The town is centred on pedestrian-only Hauptplatz; the **Lokalbahn** (tram) station is just south of the Hauptplatz, while the **Hauptbahnhof** is 500m southeast. A couple of minutes' walk west of Hauptplatz is **Baden**

Tourismus (☎ 226 00-600; www.baden.at; Brusattplatz 3; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat May-Sep, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr); ask about the VIP Card (free if you stay two nights or more in any type of accommodation), which gives very useful benefits such as discounts on entry prices and free walking tours. In the centre, **Andrea Kreuter EDV Services** (☎ 444 22 22; Frauengasse 10; per hr €5; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) has internet access. The post office is squeezed between the Schwechat River and Kaiser Franz Josef Ring, 150m south of Hauptplatz.

Sights & Activities

Baden's prime attraction is its 14 **hot springs**, with a daily flow of 6.5 million litres. The waters emerge at a temperature of 36°C and are



enriched with sulphates. Its largest pool complex, the **Thermalstrandbad**, is actually dedicated to good old-fashioned fun (see opposite). The **Römertherme** (Roman baths; ☎ 450 30; www.roemertherme.at, in German; Brusattplatz 4; 2hr/all-day entry €8.90/13.10, 3hr family card €19.10-27.30; ☎ 10am-10pm) offers the same health benefits albeit without the fun.

The **Kurpark** is a magnificent setting for a stroll or as a place to repose on the benches in front of the **bandstand**, where free concerts are held from May to September. The tourist office can tell you about these and others held in winter in the **Haus der Kunst** (€3); an operetta festival takes place from June to September. Attractive flower beds complement monuments to famous artists (Mozart, Beethoven,

Strauss, Grillparzer etc). Near the southern entrance to the park, the **Undine-Brunnen** (fountain) is a fine amalgam of human and fish images.

Back in the town centre, one of the houses Beethoven stayed in has inevitably been turned into the **Beethovenhaus** (Rathausgasse 10; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 4-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-noon & 2-4pm Sat & Sun) with little to actually see; nearby, though, is the **Dreifaltig-keitssäule**, dating from 1714, dominating the Hauptplatz.

The **Rollett Museum** (☎ 482 55; Weikersdorfer Platz 1; adult/child €2.50/1; ☎ 3-6pm Wed-Mon), southwest of the town centre, covers important aspects of the town's history. The most unusual exhibit is the collection of skulls, busts and death masks amassed by the founder of phrenology,

EGGS BENEDICT IN THE BATH

Because of the sulphur content in its healing waters, Baden bei Wien has a distinctive 'poached egg' smell in parts of town. All the more unusual, therefore, when an outdoor swimming pool used for recreation and fun has this ubiquitous 'eggy' scent. If you've got a finely tuned nose, the egg smell is very in your face at the **Thermalstrandbad** (☎ 486 70; Helenenstrasse 19-21; all day entry with locker or cabin €5.30-8.20, child/student €3.80/2.70; ☎ 8am-6.30pm May-mid-Sep). With its dubious brownish stretch of sand backed by a functionalist building from 1926, the pool complex is a sulphurous Hades-meets-Majorca. Originally, the designers wanted to import sand from the Adriatic (not exactly known for sandy beaches, but anyway); in the end they settled for sand from Melk in the Danube Valley.

Josef Gall (1752-1828), who sparked the craze of inferring criminal characteristics from the shape of one's cranium.

Though interesting, the museums won't knock you over if you have seen those in Vienna, so **cycling** or **hiking** the 12-km long Kronprinz-Rudolf-Weg along the Schwechat River to Mayerling (see p180) is a good summer alternative. The tourist office has a free trail description (in German) and bikes can be hired in town (see p184). The trail can be combined with a 6km northern trail leading to Heiligenkreuz (see p180) to make a loop.

Sleeping

It's possible to visit Baden on a day trip from Vienna, and in summer the hotels can get very full. The tourist office has a good accommodation brochure.

Villa Inge (☎ 431 71; Weiburgstrasse 24-26; s/d €36/58; (P)) This large villa is set alongside the river and close to the Thermalstrandbad. Although the furnishing is rather long in the tooth, it's spacious and run by a friendly family. It offers good value for Baden.

Hotel Kurpark (☎ 891 04; www.hotel-kurpark.at; Welzergasse 29; s €49-52, d 74-84, apt €96-130; (P) (P)) This small hotel backing onto the Kurpark has a large garden, indoor and outdoor pools and bright, spacious, rooms.

Hotel Caruso (☎ 88 662-0; www.hotelcaruso.at, in German; Trostgasse 23; s €80-135, d €115-170, ste €166-210; (P) (P) (P)) One advantage of this four-star hotel is that it's large enough to cope with busy periods; facilities are excellent, rooms have modern furnishings, and it is situated in its own grounds. It caters for business people as well as tourists.

Hotel Schloss Weikersdorf (☎ 48 301-0; www.hotelschlossweikersdorf.at; Schlossgasse 9-11; s €135-155, d €170-190; (P) (P) (P)) For a weekend of pamper-

ing look no further. This hotel with modern rooms has massage services, relaxation coves and lounges and other wellness facilities; it's also set in beautiful gardens.

Eating & Drinking

Baden is no great shakes when it comes to eating and drinking; nor is it really a town where the nightlife has a wild call. A few practical or very decent places are to be found, however.

Nordsee (☎ 441-65; Hauptplatz 17; fish snacks €5, mains €10; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat) This fast-seafood chain is very convenient. The standard of freshness and hygiene is high, and the fish rolls are tasty.

Restaurant VillaNova (☎ 209 74 5; Helenenstrasse 19; mains €17-25; ☎ 5.30-11pm Tue-Sat) Veal roulade with carrot, ginger and polenta was on the ticket when we visited. The menu is changing, but the standard is consistently high – food often features Austrian cuisine with Asian influences.

Café Central (☎ 48 454; Hauptplatz 19; coffee €2.40-3; ☎ 7am-9pm Tue-Sat, 8am-9pm Sun) Central takes pride of place on the Hauptplatz. It's a '60s-style café that's a bit on the dark side but dripping with character.

Weinkult (☎ 699 1280 65 46; Pfarrgasse 7; antipasto plate €9; ☎ 1-8pm Mon-Wed, till 10pm Thu & Fri, 10am-5pm Sat) This wine shop sells almost 150 Austrian wines and serves 10 (mostly) Austrian wines by the glass, rotating the selection on a weekly basis. Antipasto is served to prime the palate.

Neumann im Josefsbad (☎ 252 212; Josefsplatz 2; ☎ 8am-2am Mon-Sat, 10am-1am Sun) This all-rounder serves light dishes such as chicken wings but is better known as a café and the hub of nightlife in town, with a DJ spinning on Friday and Saturday.

Getting There & Around

Frequent regional and S-Bahn trains run to Baden from Vienna's Südbahnhof (€4.50, 20 to 30 minutes). The *Lokalbahn* tram (€4.50, one hour, every 15 minutes) and buses (€4.50, 40 minutes, hourly) from Karlsplatz in Vienna do the same. Frequent trains run to Wiener Neustadt (€6, 20 minutes).

The north-south road routes, Hwy 17 and the A2, pass a few kilometres to the east of the town.

Bikes can be rented from **Windrad** (☎ 0664-511 37 38; Bahnhof; hire half day/day €6/9; ☹ 8-11.45am & 1-6pm Mon-Fri). Bus 362 runs between the Thermalstrandbad and Bahnhof (€1.50) via the centre.

SÜD-ALPIN

This southern corner of Lower Austria, known as the Süd-Alpin (Southern Alps), has some of the province's most spectacular landscapes. Here the hills rise to meet the Alps, peaking at Schneeberg (2076m), a mountain popular with the Viennese for its skiing and hiking possibilities. Nearby Semmering has long been a favourite of the capital's burghers, due mainly to its crisp alpine air. One of the greatest highlights of the area though is the journey there; the winding railway over the Semmering Pass has been designated a Unesco World Heritage site.

WIENER NEUSTADT

☎ 02622 / pop 39,650

Wiener Neustadt used to be known simply as Neustadt (New City) or Nova Civitas and was built by the Babenbergs in 1194 with the help of King Richard the Lionheart's ransom payment (see p171). It became a Habsburg residence in the 15th century during the reign of Friedrich III. His famous AEIOU (*Alles Erdreich Ist Österreich Untertan*; Austria rules the world) engraving can be found throughout the city. The town was severely damaged in WWII (only 18 homes were left unscathed), so the historic buildings of Wiener Neustadt needed careful reconstruction.

Orientation & Information

Wiener Neustadt is centred on the large Hauptplatz, where you'll find the **tourist office** (☎ 373-311; Hauptplatz 3; ☹ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon

Sat) which provides the free booklet, *Cultural Promenade*, describing the central sights and giving their locations on a map. Parts of the centre are pedestrian-only.

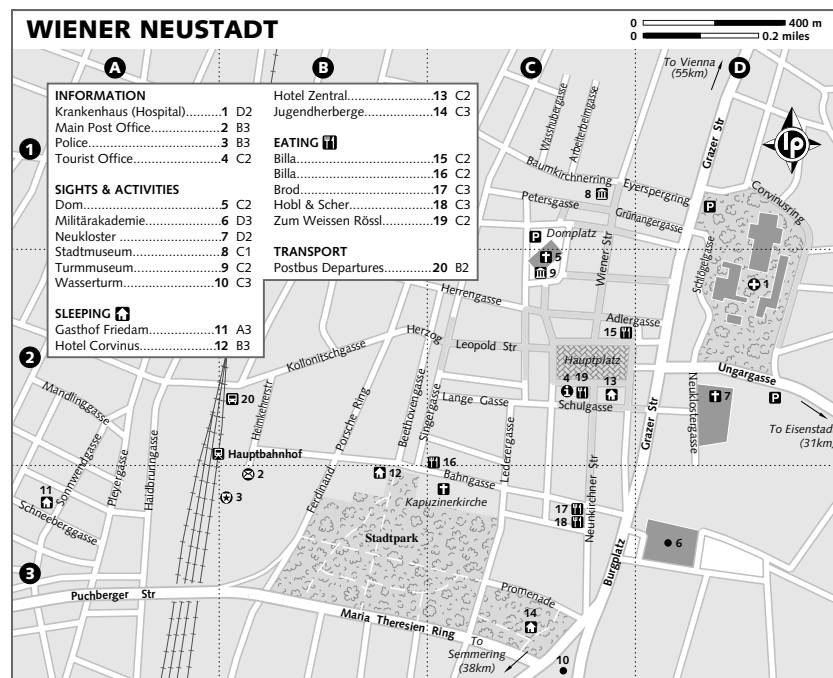
The **Hauptbahnhof** is about 750m south-west of the Hauptplatz; regional buses also stop here. It has bike rental, a travel agency and an ATM. The main post office is next door.

Sights

While the **Hauptplatz** is too big to be truly charming, it is lined with elegant buildings, not least of which are the three parts of the **Rathaus** (first built in 1401), featuring an arcade and colourful crests. East of Hauptplatz is **Neukloster** (☎ 231-02; Ungargasse; admission free; ☹ dawn-dusk), a 14th-century Gothic church with striking baroque fittings and a dark-wood pulpit. A finely carved tomb of Empress Eleonore, wife to Friedrich III, is behind the high altar.

To the north of Hauptplatz is the Romanesque **Dom** (☎ 373-440; Domplatz; admission free; ☹ dawn-dusk), erected in 1279 but subsequently rebuilt. It has a rather bare and grey exterior, two severe-looking square towers, and the interior has an unbalanced look, caused by the chancel being out of line with the nave as well as an asymmetric arch connecting the two. Fifteenth-century wooden apostles peer down from pillars and there's a baroque high altar and pulpit. At the Dom's southwest corner is the **Turmmuseum** (☎ 373-441; admission €2; ☹ 10am-5pm Tue & Wed, 10am-8pm Thu, 10am-noon Fri, 10am-4pm Sun May-Oct), a free-standing tower that provides grand views over the city's rooftops. The key for the Turmmuseum is available from the **Stadtmuseum** (☎ 373-950; Petergasse 2a; adult/student & child €3/1.50; ☹ 10am-5pm Tue & Wed, 10am-8pm Thu, 10am-noon Fri, 10am-4pm Sun), housed in the former St Peter's monastery. Its displays include artefacts from the Dom and photos of the devastation Allied bombing wrought on the town.

Heading south from the Hauptplatz, the imposing **Militärakademie** (Military Academy; ☎ 381-0; Burgplatz 1; admission free) soon comes into view. The four towers and walls of this former castle date from the 13th century, though it was completely rebuilt after WWII bombing. Since the mid-18th century it has housed a military academy (founded by Empress Maria Theresia) which at one time was commanded by the young Rommel



from his pre-'desert fox' days. Visits are by appointment only, or register at the gate. Within the complex is **St-Georgs-Kathedrale** (admission free; ☹ 10am-5pm), with a fine late-Gothic interior. Maximilian I, who was born in the castle, is buried under the altar. On the outside wall is the **Wappenwand** (Heraldic Wall) comprising 15th-century carvings of 107 coats of arms. This wall was all that survived the bombing during WWII (the stained glass had already been previously removed to the Altaussee salt mines in the Salzkammergut). The statue below the window is Friedrich III, whose AEIOU motto also appears on the wall.

Further south, rising between the convergence of two busy roads, is the town's **Wasserturm** (water tower) from 1910. Its shape intentionally apes the gilded goblet donated to the townsfolk by King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary after he took the town in 1487.

Sleeping

Jugendherberge (☎ 296 95; oejhv-noe@oejhv.or.at; Promenade 1; dm/s/d €12.50/16/32; ☹) This HI

hostel is situated in the Stadtpark, near the **Wasserturm**. Phone ahead as reception is not always open and it's often full.

Hotel Zentral (☎ 23 169; www.hotel-zentral.tos.at; Hauptplatz 27; s €40-43, d €73.50, tr €98, 4-bed €110; ☹) Situated right in the heart of town, all 45 rooms of Zentral are renovated, comfortable and decked out with modern furnishings. Some front the Hauptplatz.

Hotel Corvinus (☎ 24 134; www.hotel-corvinus.at; Bahngasse 29-33; s/d/tr €75/118/147; ☹ ☹) Catering to business and seminar guests as well as tourists, the Corvinus has bright rooms sweetened with extras such as a wellness area, a bar and a leafy terrace. The cube-like exterior may not appeal to all, but this four-star hotel is very comfortable inside.

Eating

Zum Weissen Rössl (☎ 233 04; Hauptplatz 3; mains €7-11; ☹ 7am-8pm Mon-Fri, 7am-5pm Sat) This *Gasthaus* may look a little dusty from the outside, but it's cosy and welcoming and serves solid Austrian food, including a choice of a small or large goulash. It has outdoor seating on the Hauptplatz.

Hobl & Scher (☎ 269 69; Neunkirchner Strasse 34; mains €7-18; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat, Vinothek 5pm-midnight Mon-Fri, 11am-2pm & 6pm-midnight Sat) At street level Hobl & Scher is a restaurant, but downstairs it's a vaulted cellar Vinothek where you can enjoy a drink after, say, a hearty steak with potato wedges or one of the vegetarian pasta options. The wine selection is quite good, with New World as well as Austrian and other European wines.

Brod (☎ 281 07; Bahngasse 1; 3-6 course menus €33-49; à la carte €10-20; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat) Situated in a lovely baroque house, this quality restaurant has the attraction of courtyard seating for warm summer nights. Austrian wines, especially those from Burgenland, feature prominently on its long wine list. Upmarket renditions of Austrian classics such as *Tafelspitz* or *Kalbskopf* (calf's head) share a place with delicious new cuisine.

Billa supermarkets can be found on Bahngasse and Hauptplatz, which also has no less than three *Würstel* (sausage) stands and one stand selling kebabs.

Getting There & Away

Half-hourly trains connect Wiener Neustadt with Vienna (€9.30, 45 minutes) and the Hungarian town of Sopron (€4.50, 25 to 45 minutes) daily. Postbus services depart from the northern end of Wiener Neustadt train station.

SEMMERING

☎ 02664 / pop 750

With its clean air and grandiose peaks rising out of deeply folded valleys, Semmering is a popular alpine resort for the Viennese, especially among a slightly older crowd who come to this spa town in summer for peaceful walks or to ride the railway; a younger set hits the ski pistes.

Orientation & Information

Semmering sits on a south-facing slope above the Semmering Pass. There's no real centre to the resort: it's mostly ranged along Hochstrasse, which forms an arc behind the train station.

Railway enthusiasts at the train station run an **Infostelle Bahnhof** (☎ 845 20; www.semmeringbahn.at, in German; ☎ 9-11.30am & 1.30-4.30pm May-Oct), with material on the Semmeringbahn as well as a good stock of the town's brochures. The *Semmering* booklet has useful addresses and

a handy sketch map of town. **Tourismusbüro Semmering** (☎ 200 25; www.semmering.at, in German; Passhöhe 248; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) is situated close to a bank.

Sights & Activities

Towering over Semmering to the south is the **Hirschenkogel** (1340m), where a modern cable car whisks walkers (one way €9, return €12.50) or skiers (day pass €28.50) to the top. Regional skiing day passes are also available for €31.

The tourist office and Infostelle have maps and brochures on walks. Two fairly easy trails follow the scenic route of the Semmeringbahn, starting behind the train station. One follows the line for 17km to Mürzzuschlag in Styria, where frequent trains chug you back to Semmering, and a second leads to Breitenstein and Klamm (Lower Austria), 9.5km and 15km respectively from the start. At Klamm the trail divides up and one route leads to Payerbach (21km from the start) and another to Gloggnitz (23km from the start).

The tourist office can provide information on ski schools or golf (on a horrendously steep course). The four-star **Hotel Panhans** (☎ 818 10; Hochstrasse 32) has a swimming pool and fitness centre that can be used by nonguests (day cards €9 weekdays, €14 weekends).

Sleeping & Eating

Most sleeping options are situated on Hochstrasse. Many have their own restaurants, which means there's only a short hobble between table and bed.

Gasthof Edelweiss (☎ 2284; edel-weiss@aon.at; Hochstrasse 57; s/d €32/64; ☎) This quaint wooden chalet is set back from the road in a grove of trees; it has a children's playground, a lovely secluded garden, and also rents bikes and organises skiing as well as airport shuttle services.

Pension-Restaurant Löffler (☎ 23 04; Hochstrasse 174; s/d €39/72; ☎) Löffler is a fresh, colourful and modern pension with a restaurant (mains €8 to €18) serving classic meat and fish dishes, including baby lamb, pepper steaks and trout.

Hotel-Restaurant Belvedere (☎ 22 70; hotel.belveder@telecom.at; Hochstrasse 60; s €40, d €80-96; ☎) The family-run Belvedere has alpine décor, rooms with balconies, and features such as a swimming pool, sauna and large garden and

SEMMERING PASS BY TRAIN

For its time, it was an incredible feat of engineering, something which took more than 20,000 workers years to complete. Even today, it never fails to impress with its switchbacks, 15 tunnels and 16 viaducts. This is the **Semmering railway** (www.semmeringbahn.at, in German), a 42km stretch of track that begins at Gloggnitz and rises 455m to its highest point of 896m at Semmering Bahnhof.

Completed in 1854 by Karl Ritter von Ghega, the Semmering line was Europe's first alpine railway, and due to its engineering genius, gained Unesco World Heritage status in 1998. It passes through some impressive scenery of precipitous cliffs and forested hills en route; the most scenic section is the 30-minute stretch between Semmering and Payerbach (€6). If you're leaving from Vienna, there are four direct IC/EC services daily to Semmering (€19, 1¼ hours), a few regional direct services, and others trains with a change at Wiener Neustadt.

patio area. The restaurant has a regional and seasonal focus (mains €6 to €18).

Panorama Hotel Wagner (☎ 25 12-0; www.panoramahotel-wagner.at, in German; Hochstrasse 267; s €106-215, d €158-300; ☎) Body and mind are catered for here: rooms have wood furniture, natural cotton bedding and grand views of the valley. Yoga, meditation and Qi Gong courses are offered and there are sauna, spa and massage facilities. Its highly rated restaurant (mains €8 to €16) uses organic products.

There is a **Billa** supermarket between Hotel Belvedere and the main highway.

Getting There & Away

At least once-daily direct EC/IC trains between Graz (€18, 1½ hours) and Vienna Südbahnhof (€19, 1½ hours) stop at Semmering. For trains from Vienna, see the boxed text (above).

If you're under your own steam, consider taking the small back road northwest of Semmering to Höllental via Breitenstein; the road winds its way down the mountain, passing under the railway line a number of times and taking in the spectacular scenery you see on the train trip.

SCHNEEBERG, RAXALPE & HÖLLENTAL

To the north of Semmering are two of Lower Austria's highest points, Schneeberg (2076m) and the Raxalpe (2007m). The area is easily reached by train from Vienna, making it popular for hiking (see p107).

The trailhead for hiking or taking the cog-wheel railway is Puchberg am Schneeberg, where the **tourist office** (☎ 02636-2256; www.puchberg.at; Sticklergasse 3; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Thu, 9am-noon Fri Oct-late May, 9am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Thu, 9am-noon & 3-5pm Fri, 9.30-11.30am Sat late May-Sep) can tell you about hiking conditions on Schneeberg. The

Schneebergbahn (☎ 02636-3661-20; www.schneebergbahn.at, in German; Salamander one way/return €21/29.60, steam train €27/36.60; ☎ late Apr-Oct) leaves from Puchberg am Schneeberg and takes about an hour on the Salamander and around 1¼ hours on the steam train; check the website for the train timetable.

A hotel and several huts are situated on the mountain if you want to stay overnight here (see p107), whereas in Puchberg itself **Gasthof Pension Schmir** (☎ 2636-2277; www.schmir.at; Muthenhofer Strasse 8; s €30, d €60-68; ☎) has comfortable rooms on the edge of town near the railway. Some have balconies, in others you can psyche yourself for the stiff climb ahead with window views of Schneeberg.

On the southern side of Schneeberg is the scenic **Höllental** (Hell's Valley), a deep, narrow gorge created by the Schwarza River. Rising to the south of Höllental is the **Raxalpe**, another place for walkers; from Hirschwang, a small village in Höllental, the **Raxseilbahn** (☎ 02666-52497; www.raxseilbahn.at, in German; return adult/child €17.60/15.70; ☎ year-round) cable car ascends to 1547m and hiking trails. The Raxseilbahn is the site of Austria's first cable car, built in 1926.

In Höllental, the **Hotel Marienhof** (☎ 02666-529 95; www.marienhof.at, in German; Hauptstrasse 71-73, Reichenau; s/d from €76/104; ☎), a grand old dame with a restaurant (mains €11 to €14), is not far from the Raxseilbahn.

Getting There & Away

There are hourly direct trains daily from Vienna to Puchberg am Schneeberg (€13.50, 1½ hours), going via Wiener Neustadt (€6, 45 minutes). Hirschwang (€7.60, 50 minutes) is only a little harder to get to; a train must first be taken to Payerbach, from where regular buses run up the Höllental valley.

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Burgenland



Often given a wide berth by tourists, Burgenland is all but the typical Austria you hear of or read about. It has neither bombastic architecture nor deep lakes and soaring mountains. On the contrary, it is small and sleepy, and in large sections a flat province situated on the border with Hungary. Even the jewel in its crown – Neusiedler See – has dried up and disappeared several times in its natural history – most recently in the mid-19th century.

This is the kind of place where everyday life takes precedence, but it is precisely this ‘every-day’ aspect that makes it interesting. The province receives a reputed 300 days of sunshine a year; couple this with a rich soil base and a wine history dating back to pre-Roman times, and you have Austria’s best wine-producing region. What better way to spend an afternoon than sampling local *Weine* (wines) in a *Heuriger* (wine tavern) under a warm sun? Throw in the shallow Neusiedler See and a section of it that is now the Neusiedler See-Seewinkel National Park, tack on a bike path that leads into the park and through Hungary before re-emerging in Austria, and add a swampy, medieval town such as Rust, and you might find yourself fascinated by Burgenland’s charms.

Stork-spotters will be in their element here in summer, when feathered friends populate the roofs of several towns near the lake – including Rust, one of the nicest places to observe them. Although it does have a handful of interesting cultural sights, such as Schloss Esterházy in Eisenstadt, the province’s small capital, Burgenland is more a place where people are content to enjoy good wine and food, and relax in the great outdoors.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Sipping golden wines and supping in one of Burgenland’s pretty **Heurigen** (p194), dotted across Burgenland
- Swimming, splashing or sailing in the **Neusiedler See** (p193), Austria’s slurping steppe lake
- Cycling at a leisurely pace through the **Neusiedler See-Seewinkel National Park** (p197), a haven for birdlife
- Staring into the face of the mummified Roman legionnaire Constantine on a grand tour of **Schloss Esterházy** (p191) in the capital, Eisenstadt
- Revelling in views from Eisenstadt’s **Bergkirche** (p191) after completing the Stations of the Cross



■ POPULATION: 279,300 ■ AREA: 3966 SQ KM ■ HIGHEST ELEVATION: GESCHRIEBENSTEIN 884M



History

Burgenland is the youngest of Austria’s provinces, arising after the collapse of the Austrian empire at the end of WWI. It’s so named for the ‘burg’ suffix of the four western Hungarian district names at that time – Pressburg (Bratislava), Wieselburg (Moson), Ödenburg (Sopron) and Eisenburg (Vasvár).

The region was first settled some 7000 to 12,000 years ago, and over the ensuing millennia many peoples tried their hand at settling permanently, including the Illyrians, Celts and Romans. However, the arrival of the Hungarians in the 10th century changed the face of Burgenland forever. The region soon became a buffer zone between the Hungarians and the Austrian-Germans,

who traded uneasy peace with outright war throughout the centuries.

The arrival of marauding Turks in the 16th century quashed both the Hungarians and the Austrian-Germans, and devastated the local population. Landlords, without anyone to tend their farms, invited substantial numbers of Croats to settle. Their presence is still felt today – around 10% of the population is Croatian, Croatian is a recognized local language and a few small towns in middle Burgenland bear Croat signs.

With the defeat of the Turks at the gates of Vienna in 1683 (p37), relative peace settled over the area. With the demise of the Habsburg empire after WWI Austria lost control of Hungary, but managed to retain the German-speaking western region of Hungary under the Treaty of St Germain. The new province of Burgenland was born, but Hungary was loath to lose Ödenburg (Sopron) to Austria, and a plebiscite held in December 1921 (under controversial circumstances) resulted in the people of Ödenburg opting to stay in Hungary. Burgenland lost its natural capital, and Eisenstadt became the new *Hauptstadt* (capital).

Climate

The Pannonian microclimate of hot summers and mild winters is perfect for wine production. The Neusiedler See, to the north of the province, consistently records some of the highest summer temperatures in Austria, but the large expanse of water ensures high humidity.

Language

With its close proximity to Hungary, it’s no surprise that some Burgenlanders speak German with a slight Hungarian accent. Burgenland is the only province to include Croatian and Hungarian alongside German as official languages.

Getting There & Away

Eisenstadt and the northern extension of Neusiedler See are easily reached by train from Vienna and Lower Austria. Lower and middle Burgenland are less accessible by train; here the bus is often your best option. The A2 autobahn, heading south from Vienna towards Graz and Carinthia, runs parallel to the western border of Burgenland.

Its many off-ramps provide quick, easy access to much of the province.

Getting Around

Like the rest of Austria, destinations not connected to the country's train network are covered by bus. From late April to October, ferries ply the Neusiedler See, linking Podersdorf with Rust and Breitenbrunn, and Illmitz with Mörbisch (p193).

Burgenland is a cyclist's dream – much of the landscape is flat or has gentle rolling hills – and is crisscrossed with well-marked cycle paths. Local tourist offices can supply cycle maps, or simply log on to www.bikeburgenland.at, in German.

EISENSTADT

☎ 02682 / pop 12,000

The small capital of Burgenland is perhaps best known for its most famous former resident, 18th-century musician and composer Josef Haydn. Although it doesn't have a large number of attractions for visitors, it does have a wonderful palace, a couple of good museums and a rather bizarre church. Its nightlife hums

rather than buzzes, but taking in its sights can easily be done on a day trip from Vienna or as an excursion from pretty, lakeside Rust.

History

Eisenstadt was first mentioned in 1264 (although archaeological digs have confirmed settlement since the Stone Age). At the time, the town was under control of the Hungarians, but it wasn't until 1371 that it gained its charter from the ruling nobility. In the ensuing centuries the Hungarians and the Habsburgs fought for control of Eisenstadt, but it was the Turks who decided the town's fate, by neutralising the Hungarian threat at the 1526 Battle of Mohács. In 1622 Eisenstadt became the residence of the Esterházy, a powerful Hungarian family, and in 1648 the town was granted the status of *Freistadt* (free city) by Ferdinand III. In 1925 it became the capital of Austria's newest province.

Orientation

Eisenstadt's pretty *Altstadt* (old town), centred on the pedestrian-only Hauptstrasse and Schloss Esterházy, is surrounded by a mod-

ern, uninteresting urban sprawl. It's about a 10-minute walk north along Bahnstrasse from the train station. The main bus station is on Domplatz, one block south of the Hauptstrasse. The tourist office's brochure map is useful for getting around town.

Information

INTERNET ACCESS

Ricky's Cafe (☎ 65 88 1; Pfarrgasse 18; ☎ 9.30am-2pm)

MEDICAL SERVICES

Hospital & Pharmacy (☎ 601; Esterházystrasse 26)

MONEY

There are a number of banks with ATMs on the Hauptstrasse and along its side streets.

POST

Main Post Office (☎ 62 27 10; Ignaz-P-Semmelweis-Gasse 7)

TOURIST INFORMATION

Burgenland Tourismus (☎ 0633 84-0; www.burgenland.info; Schloss Esterházy, Eisenstadt; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri)

Eisenstadt Tourismus (☎ 673 90; www.eisenstadt.at; in German; Hauptstrasse 37; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct, 8am-4pm Mon-Thu, 8am-1pm Fri Nov-Mar) Situated in the Rathaus, provides a useful brochure listing hotels, private rooms, restaurants, festivals and details of museums.

Sights & Activities

Eisenstadt's most significant attraction is **Schloss Esterházy** (☎ 719 3000; www.schloss-esterhazy.at; adult/student & child/family €6/5/14, grand tours €7.50/7/16, combined ticket palace & Haydn-Haus €8/7/19; ☎ tours 10am & 2pm Tue-Fri Jan-Mar & mid-Nov-Dec, noon, 2pm & 4pm Mon-Fri, hourly 10am-5pm Sat & Sun Apr & Oct-mid-Nov, hourly 10am-5pm May-Jun & Sep, hourly 10am-6pm Jul-Aug), a giant, Schönbrunn-yellow castle-cum-palace that dominates Esterházyplatz. Dating from the 14th century, the *Schloss* (castle) received a makeover in baroque, and later in neoclassical, style. Many of the 256 rooms are occupied by the provincial government, but 25 can be viewed on tours.

The regular tour covers 13 rooms and is very interesting in itself, but you need to take the grand tour to view the true highlights, culminating in the spectacularly frescoed **Haydn Hall**. The hall's original marble floor has been replaced by an aesthetically inferior but acoustically superior wooden floor (it's

rated the second-best concert hall in Austria, after Vienna's Musikverein). During Haydn's employment by the Esterházy from 1761 to 1790, he conducted an orchestra on a near-nightly basis in this hall.

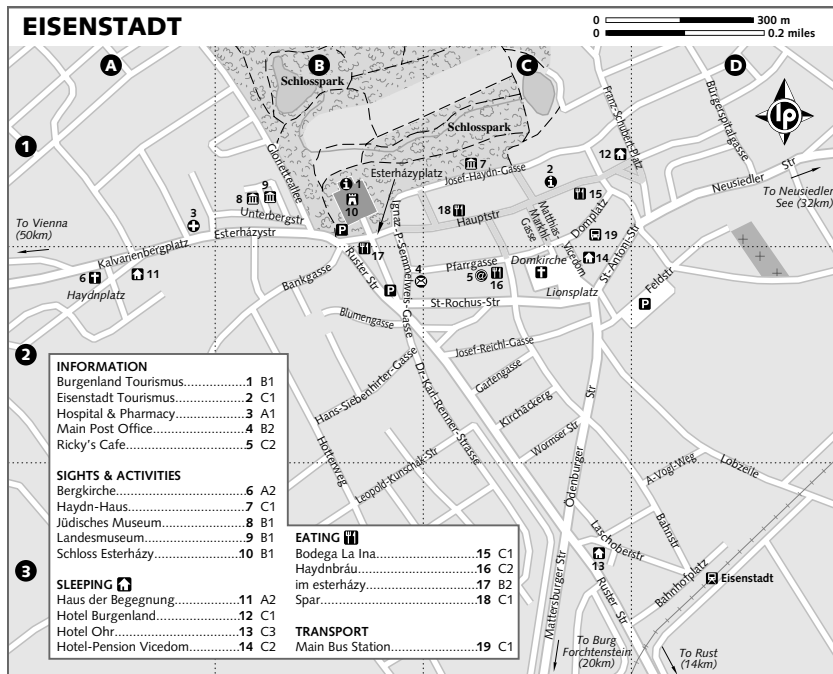
After that you view the **palace chapel**, completed in 1740 and now containing the remains of Constantine 'Conny' the Martyr, a mummified Roman legionnaire who converted to Christianity and was given to the Esterházy by Pope Innocent XI for services in fighting the Turks. (He's in a glass case and looks like he could do with a stiff Turkish coffee.)

Josef Haydn said that Eisenstadt was 'where I wish to live and to die'. He achieved the former, being a resident for 31 years, but it was in Vienna that he finally tinkled his last tune. He also rather carelessly neglected to give any directive about his preferred residence after death. His skull was stolen from a temporary grave shortly after he died in 1809, after which it ended up on display in a Viennese museum. The headless cadaver was subsequently returned to Eisenstadt (in 1932), but it wasn't until 1954 that the skull re-joined it.

The white marble tomb that now contains Haydn's reunited parts can be viewed in the **Bergkirche** (☎ 626 38; www.haydnkirche.at; in German; Haydnplatz 1; adult/student €3/1; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Apr-Oct). This unusual church began life as a small chapel and in 1701 was transformed into a bizarre representation of Calvary, the mountain outside Jerusalem upon which Christ is thought to have been crucified. Manage all the dungeon-like rooms and you'll quite literally be feeling the Stations of the Cross in your feet; get to the top of the 'mountain', though, and not a gaggle of stone-throwing sinners awaits you but a fantastic view over town.

For more on Haydn, visit **Haydn-Haus** (☎ 719 3900; www.haydnhaus.at; Josef Haydn Gasse 21; adult/student & child/family €3.50/2.50/8; ☎ 9am-5pm Apr-mid-Nov), the great composer's former residence to the east of the *Schloss*. The recently revamped museum has a strong permanent exhibition documenting Haydn's life and work.

Just west of the *Schloss* are two other interesting museums: the **Landesmuseum** (☎ 600 1234; www.burgenland.at/landesmuseum; in German; Museumgasse 1-5; adult/student & child/family €5/3/9; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun) and the **Jüdisches Museum** (☎ 651 45; Unterbergstrasse 6; adult/student & child €3.70/2.90; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Oct). The Landesmuseum plunges you deep into the local history of the region, and includes a collection of Roman



mosaics, ancient artefacts, wine-making equipment and some interesting propaganda posters from the 1920s. There's also a room devoted to Franz Liszt, replete with a warty death mask of the Hungarian composer. The latter museum primarily hosts temporary and permanent exhibitions on Jewish culture, and includes one of the few synagogues to survive the *Reichskristallnacht* (p36) of 1938.

Festivals & Events

The high point on Eisenstadt's cultural calendar is, of course, associated with Haydn. The **Internationale Haydnstage**, staged through much of September, attracts both local and international acts and features anything from chamber pieces to full-scale orchestral performances. Most events take place in the Haydn Hall or the Bergkirche; for more information contact the **Haydnfestspiele Büro** (☎ 618 66-0; www.haydnfestspiele.at).

Behind the palace is the **Schlosspark**, a picturesque park and the setting for the **Fest der 1000 Weine** (Festival of 1000 Wines) in late August.

Sleeping

Staff at the tourist office have a complete list of accommodation.

Hotel-Pension Vicedom (☎ 642 22; www.vicedom.at; Vicedom 5; s/d €44/72; ☑) This bright and breezy pension has quite simple but very clean and comfortable rooms in a new building located in the heart of town.

Haus der Begegnung (☎ 632 90; www.hdb-eisenstadt.at; Kalvarienbergplatz 11; s/d €44/74; ☑) This church-affiliated pension is spotless, very quiet and well run. Rooms are simple but comfortable and it has its own grassed café area. It's open to everyone, but obviously not the place to stay if you want to party all night.

Hotel Ohr (☎ 624 60; www.hotelohr.at; Ruster Strasse 51; s; €68-78, d €105-115, tr €150 ☑; restaurant mains €8-16; ☑ lunch & dinner, closed Mon Sep-Apr) The Ohr is a family-run hotel with nicely styled modern rooms and within walking distance of the centre. Its rustic restaurant is one of the best around: there's leafy outdoor/undercover seating on decking and it serves seasonal dishes often on a theme, such as goose around St Martin's day (late October & early November).

Hotel Burgenland (☎ 6960; www.hotelburgenland.at; Franz Schubert-Platz 1; s; €85-100, d €110-140, ste from €195; ☑) This centrally located business

and seminar hotel is the best of the crop, and defies its ugly exterior with comfortable modern rooms. The kitchen in the midrange restaurant downstairs is open all day.

Eating

Bodega La Ina (☎ 623 05; Hauptstrasse 48; tapas €3-8, menus €44-65; ☑ 10am-midnight Tue-Sat) Tapas and full-course menus featuring *Kalbsrücken* (saddle of veal) are the speciality in this up-market Austro-Andalusian restaurant with a quiet courtyard.

Haydnbräu (☎ 639 45; Pfarrgasse 22; mains €6.50-16; ☑ 8am-11pm) Duck into this microbrewery and restaurant for some of the best-value eating in town; culinary classics like schnitzel and goulash to seasonal lamb with polenta plus steaks are a treat here.

im esterhazy (☎ 628 19; Esterházyplatz 5; mains €17-20, menus €25-45; ☑ 9am-midnight Mon-Thu & Sun, to 2am Fri & Sat) This stylish eatery directly opposite the *Schloss* is a wonderful spot for coffee or a drink outside in summer, as well as a full meal from its international cuisine.

A **Spar** (Hauptstrasse 13) supermarket on the main street is handy for self-caterers.

Getting There & Away

Bus is one option for travel between Eisenstadt and Vienna; frequent direct buses leave from Vienna's Südtiroler Platz daily (€6, 1½ hours). Frequent trains make the same trip daily (from Südbahnhof), but a change is required at either Neusiedl am See or Wulkaprodersdorf (€14, 1½ hours).

AROUND EISENSTADT

Burg Forchtenstein

Straddling a dolomite spur some 20km southwest of Eisenstadt, **Burg Forchtenstein** (☎ 02626-812 12; www.burg-forchtenstein.at, in German; Melinda Esterházy-Platz 1; guided tour of castle & arsenal adult/student & child/family €7/6/20, treasury €9/8/27; ☑ 10am-6pm Apr-Oct) is another of Burgenland's imposing castles. This stronghold was built in the 14th century and enlarged by the Esterházys (who still own it today) in 1635. Apart from a grand view from its ramparts, the castle's highlights include an impressive collection of armour and weapons, portraits of regnal Esterházys in the **Ahnengalerie** (Ancestral Gallery; adult/student & child/family €6/5/18) and spoils from the Turkish wars (the castle curators will proudly tell you Forchtenstein was the only castle in the area not to fall to the Turks). Its

Schatzkammer (treasury) contains a rich collection of jewellery and porcelain.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

On weekdays four buses run directly from Eisenstadt (€5.10, 40 minutes) and three from Wiener Neustadt (€4.40, 30 minutes) to Forchtenstein.

Wiesen

About 5km north of Forchtenstein lies the small town of Wiesen which, during summer, morphs into Austria's version of Glastonbury. The series of summer festivals hosted here are the biggest in the country and range from jazz to reggae. For more information, log on to www.wiesen.at, in German.

Wiesen can be reached by bus or train from Vienna's Südbahnhof (€12, 1½ hours) on a regular basis Monday to Saturday.

NEUSIEDLER SEE

Neusiedler See, Europe's second-largest steppe lake, is the lowest point in Austria. But what it lacks in height, it makes up for in other areas. Ringed by a wetland area of reed beds, it's an ideal breeding ground for nearly 300 bird species and its Seewinkel area is a particular favourite for **bird-watching**. The lake's average depth is 1.5m, which means the water warms quickly in summer. Add to this prevailing warm winds from the northwest and you have a water enthusiast's dream come true. Thousands of tourists flock to the lake for **windsurfing** and **sailing** during the summer months. The best swimming beaches are on the eastern side of the lake, as the western shore is thick with reed beds. The lake's shallowness also attracts many families – the only drawback is that the water has a slightly saline quality, as there is no natural outlet.

The area is also perfect for **cycling**; a flat cycle track winds all the way round the reed beds, the ferries crisscrossing the lake carry bikes and most hotels and pensions cater well to cyclists. It's possible to do a full circuit of the lake but as the southern section stretches into Hungary, remember to take your passport (path open April to November).

To top it all off there are acres upon acres of vineyards, producing some of Austria's best wines. Rust, on the western shore of the lake, is a perfect place to sample wine in a *Heuriger*.

Much of the Neusiedler See closes down from October to late March. If you're over-nighting, ask whether the place you're staying at issues the free *Neusiedler See Gästekarte* (most do), which provides free admission to swimming areas and museums (including many in Sopron), the national park, free use of public transport (travel on ferries is half-price) and other perks.

Neusiedler See Tourismus (☎ 02167-8600; www.neusiedlersee.com; Obere Hauptstraße 24, in Neusiedl am See; ☑ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri) is the information centre for the lake region for telephone, post and email enquiries.

Getting Around

There is at least one *Radverleih* (bike hire) shop in every town on the lake; rental costs around €10 to €15 per day. Pick up a copy of the *Radtouren* map, available from tourist offices, which lists all *Radverleih* and marks out cycle routes around the lake.

Ferry services across the Neusiedler See are provided by a number of companies from around 9am to 6pm from May to the beginning of October; it costs €6 for ferries between Podersdorf and Breitenbrunn, Podersdorf and Rust, and between Mörbisch and Illmitz.

Bus connections are frequent; see the separate towns below for specific details.

RUST

☎ 02685 / pop 1700

Rust, 14km east of Eisenstadt, is one of the prettiest towns along the Neusiedler See. It brims with *Heurigen*, has a reed seashore and hidden boatsheds, giving it a sleepy, swampy feel on a steamy day, and in the summer months storks glide lazily overhead, make out with each other, and clack their beaks agitated from rooftop roosts. Dozens of storks roost on chimneys in town, although it's wine, not storks, that has made Rust prosperous. In 1524 the emperor granted local vintners the right to display the letter 'R' (a distinctive insignia as a mark of origin from Rust) on their wine barrels and today the corks still bear this insignia. It's best to sample this history in one of the town's many *Heurigen*.

Orientation & Information

Postbus services stop at the post office, 100m from Conradplatz, a small square that leads to the town hall and Rathausplatz, the focal point of the village.

The **tourist office** (☎ 502; www.rust.at; Conradplatz 1, Rathaus; ☎ core hr 9am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Thu all year, also 9am-noon Fri Jan-Feb & Nov-Dec, 9am-noon & 1-4pm or later Fri Apr-Oct, 9am-noon & 1-4pm Sat Apr-Oct, 9am-noon Sun Aug & Sep) has a list of wine growers offering tasting, plus hotels and private rooms in the town.

Sights & Activities

Rust's affluent past has left a legacy of attractive burgher houses on and around the main squares. **Storks**, which descend on the town from the end of March to rear their young, take full advantage of these houses (and their kindly owners, who have erected metal platforms on chimneys to entice the storks). The clacking of expectant parents can be heard till late August. A good vantage point is from the tower of the **Katholische Kirche** (Haydengasse; ☎ dawn-dusk Apr-Oct) at the southern end of Rathausplatz. The **Fischerkirche** (☎ 502; Rathausplatz 16; ☎ dawn-dusk Apr-Oct), at the opposite end of Rathausplatz, is the oldest church in Rust, built between the 12th and 16th centuries.

Access to the **lake and bathing facilities** (☎ 591; Seebad; adult/child per day €4; ☎ 9am-7pm May-mid-Sep) is 1km down the reed-fringed Seepromenade. The swimming is very reedy.

Sleeping

Storchencamp (☎ 595; office@gmeiner.co.at; Ruster Bucht; campsite per adult/tent/car €5.20/4/4; ☎ Apr-Oct) With a large children's playground, cheap bike rental, close proximity to the lake and free access to the bathing area, this campsite is a great place for families.

Ruster Jugendgästehaus & Pension (☎ 591; www.seebad.rust.at; Ruster Bucht 2; dm/s/d €17/33/60; ☎ year-round) This HI hostel is right on the harbour, forms part of the bathing complex and has modern, clean rooms.

Alexander (☎ 301; www.pension-alexander.at, in German; Dorfmeistergasse 21; s €55, d 76-110; ☎ P) Though situated on the northern outskirts of town and more suitable if you have your own bike or car, Alexander is a great deal for comfortable three- and four-star rooms; take advantage of its sauna, garden and outdoor swimming pool.

Hotel Sifkovits (☎ 276; Am Seekanal 8; s/d €68/104; mains €10-17; ☎ P) Close to the centre of town, Sifkovits is a fine family-run hotel with large rooms and extras, like a downstairs lounge for reading and relaxing, a fruit bowl and a refrigerator stocked with free mineral water. It also has one of the finest restaurants in town.

Eating

When in Rust, do as the locals do and head for one of the many **Heurigen**. They're easy to spot – just look for the **Buschen** (small bush) hanging in front of doorways. Some operate under restaurant licenses and are therefore open throughout the summer.

our pick **Weingut Gabriel** (☎ 236; www.weingut-gabriel.at; Hauptstrasse 25; cold platter about €10; ☎ from 4pm Thu & Fri, from 2pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct) Not only is the pay-by-weight buffet brimming with delicious sausage and cold cuts (plus one warm), the wine is a treat, and in season the idyllic cobblestone courtyard is a wonderful vantage point to observe storks.

Peter Schandl (☎ 265; Hauptstrasse 20; mains €6-12; ☎ 4pm-midnight Mon & Wed-Fri, from 11am Sat & Sun Apr-Oct) With more of a restaurant feel, here you can enjoy game goulash and other warm dishes just off Rathausplatz.

Inamera (☎ 64 73; Oggauer Strasse 29; mains €9-22, menus €44-69; ☎ dinner Wed & Thu, lunch & dinner Fri-Sun) With its lovely stone interior, tiled floor and the small pond in the charming garden, Inamera is packed with atmosphere. It rates among the best restaurants in the Neusiedler See region.

Bla Bla (☎ 379; Hauptstrasse 18; ☎ from 9pm) It's easy to overlook this tiny champagne bar – until it opens up and the night owls move in for some bubbly and fun.

Getting There & Away

One to two hourly buses connect Eisenstadt and Rust (€3.40, 25 minutes). For Neusiedl am See (€6.80, one to 1½ hours), a change is required in Eisenstadt. Ferries cross the lake to Podersdorf from mid-May to September (€6).

MÖRBISCH AM SEE

☎ 02685 / pop 2350

Mörbisch am See, a quiet town 6km south of Rust and only a couple of kilometres from the Hungarian border, is pleasant for soaking

THE WINES OF BURGENLAND

The wine produced throughout this province is some of the best in Austria, due in no small part to the 300 days of sunshine per year, rich soil and excellent drainage. Although classic white varieties have a higher profile, the area's reds are more unusual, and the finest of the local wines is arguably the red Blaufränkisch, whose 18th-century pedigree here predates its arrival in the Danube region and Germany.

Sweet dessert wines are currently enjoying a renaissance in Austria. *Eiswein* (wine made from grapes picked late and shrivelled by frost) and selected late-picking for sweet or dessert wines are being complemented by *Schilfwein*, made by placing the grapes on reed (*Schilf*) matting so they shrivel in the heat. The guru of *Schilfwein* is Gerhard Nekowitsch from **Weingut Gerhard Nekowitsch** (☎ 02175-2039; www.nekowitsch.at, in German; Urbanusgasse 2, Illmitz).

Middle Burgenland, especially around the villages of Horitschon and Deutschkreutz, has a long tradition of Blaufränkisch, which is also at home in southern Burgenland, although this area is better known for Uhudler, a wine with a distinctly fruity taste.

One of the easiest ways to experience wine in the Neusiedler See region is to hire a bicycle in Neusiedl am See and pedal south through the vineyards towards the national park (p197). Along the way you'll pass vineyards and places where you can taste the local wine.

up a relaxed atmosphere and taking in quaint whitewashed houses with hanging corn and flower-strewn balconies.

The town's sleepy mood changes dramatically during the evening from mid-July to August with the **Seefestspiele** (www.seefestspiele-moerbisch.at), a summer operetta festival that attracts some 200,000 people each year. Its biggest competitor is the **Opfern Festspiele** (www.ofs.at, in German; ☎ early Jul-late Aug), an opera festival held in an old Roman quarry near St Margareten, around 7km northwest of Mörbisch.

The local **tourist office** (☎ 8430; www.moerbisch.com; Hauptstrasse 23; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat & Sun Mar-Jun & Sep-Oct, to noon & 1-6pm Jul & Aug, to 3pm Mon-Thu Nov-Feb) can advise on accommodation and what's available, the festivals, lakeside facilities and give you a list of *Heurigen*.

Frequent buses pass through Rust on their way to Mörbisch from Eisenstadt (€3.40, 40 minutes). A foot- and cycle-only **border crossing** (☎ 6am-10pm Jun-Sep, 8am-8pm Apr, May & Oct) into Hungary, 2km south of Mörbisch, is handy for those circumnavigating the lake. If you've forgotten your passport, or don't have the energy, jump on the ferry.

PURBACH AM SEE

☎ 02683 / pop 2500

Purbach am See, 17km north of Rust, is another pretty town along the lake. Its small, compact centre is filled with squat houses and it is still protected by bastions and three gates – reminders of the Turkish wars.

While there isn't a lot to see in the town – nor has it direct access to Neusiedler See – it's nice to soak up the slow pace of life and wander from one **wine cellar** (☎ from 4pm 1st Sat in month Apr-Oct) to the next along historic Kellergasse and Kellerplatz, both outside the town's walls.

The **tourist office** (☎ 5920-4; www.tiscover.at/purbach; Hauptgasse 38; ☎ 9am-noon & 3-6pm Mon-Sat, to noon Sun Apr-Sep, to noon & 3-6pm Mon-Fri Oct-Mar) has information on accommodation and wine. If you need a place to stay, look no further than **Camping Purbach & Jugendberge** (☎ 51 70; office@gmeiner.co.at; Türkenhain; campsite per adult/child/tent/car €4.50/3/2.60/2.40, dm €19) on the edge of the reed beds, or **Purbachhof** (☎ 55 64; www.tiscover.com/purbachhof; Schulgasse 14; d/tr/q €80/99/112), a converted wine-maker's house that could easily double as a folk museum.

our pick **Weingut & Weingasthof Kloster am Spitz** (☎ 5519; www.klosteramspitz.at, in German; Waldsiedlung 2; s €63-70, d €96-130; 6-course menu €75 with wine, mains €13-21; ☎ dinner Wed, lunch & dinner Thu-Sun Mar-Dec), on the northwest fringe of town located among vineyards (follow Fellnergasse), is a small former monastery with a modern hotel. Wines from the vineyard are produced organically and served in its very highly rated restaurant. Roast venison with ginger couscous and a pumpkin-plum chutney is one dish you may find on its seasonal menu.

Frequent daily trains heading for Neusiedl am See from Eisenstadt pass through Purbach (€4.40, 20 minutes).

NEUSIEDL AM SEE

☎ 02167 / pop 5900

Neusiedl am See is the region's largest town, the most accessible from Vienna, and a good springboard into the region.

Neusiedl's city **tourist office** (☎ 2229; www.tiscover.at/neusiedl.see; Hauptplatz 1; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-4.30pm Mon-Thu, 9am-1pm Fri Oct-Apr, 8am-noon & 1-4.30pm Mon-Fri May, Jun & Sep, 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon & 2-6pm Sat, 3-6pm Sun Jul & Aug) has a map of the town and the lake, as well as information on other towns. If you do stay in town, **Rathausstüberl** (☎ 2883; www.rathausstueberl.at; Kirchengasse 2; s €42-67, d €84-104; ☐) has bright rooms and a lovely midrange restaurant.

Neusiedl has good train connections from Vienna's Südbahnhof (€11, 40 minutes). Hourly buses travel down the eastern side of the lake, passing through Podersdorf (€3.40, 15 minutes) and Illmitz (€5.10, 30 minutes). Regular trains to Eisenstadt (€6, 35 minutes) pass through Purbach (€4.40, 15 minutes). For Rust, change to the bus in Eisenstadt.

Fairly regular city buses (€1) go to town from the train station, or call a **taxi** (☎ 5959). **Fahrräder Bucs** (☎ 207 90; train station, Neusiedl am See; ☎ Apr-mid-Oct) rents bikes (with seven to 24 gears) for €15 per day at the station, where the Neusiedler See bike trail leads south.

PODERSDORF AM SEE

☎ 02177 / pop 2050

Podersdorf am See, on the eastern shore, is the only town which can truly claim to be *Am See* (on the lake). It's the most popular holiday destination in the Neusiedler See region (and Burgenland), largely due to good wind conditions and a reed-free location by the lake.

The town's **tourist office** (☎ 2227; www.podersdorfamsee.at; Hauptstrasse 2; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon & 2-4pm Sat, 9am-noon Sun Jun-Sep, 8am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Fri, Oct-May) can help find accommodation.

Sights & Activities

Podersdorf offers the most convenient bathing on Neusiedler See, with a long grassy **beach** (adult/child €4/2; ☎ 7.30am-6pm Apr-Sep) for swimming, boating and windsurfing. Windsurfing costs an extra €3.50, even with your own board, and paddle/electric boat hire is €6/10 per day. Wind and water enthusiasts can head for the Südstrand (South Beach), where **Fun & Sail** (☎ 0676-407 23 44; www.fun-and-sail.at; in German; boards per hr/day €9/45, 2-day kite surfing courses €199) has

equipment for hire and offers kite-surfing courses; **Surf- & Segelschule Nordstrand** (☎ 23 20; www.nordstrand.at; in German; Seeufergasse 17; boats per hr €14) rents out sailing boats and holds weekday sailing courses (from €160).

If you haven't already picked up a bicycle – the perfect way to see the Seewinkel wetlands, which start about 5km south of town – six places around town rent for between €7 and €15 per day, depending on the category of bike.

Sleeping & Eating

Book ahead for July and August. Seestrasse, the street leading from the tourist office to the lake, has many small places to stay.

Strandcamping (☎ 2279; Strandplatz 19; campsites per adult/child/tent/car €6.80/4/4.80/4.90; ☎ end-Mar-Oct) Right by the beach, this popular camping ground is one of the largest around and has plenty of shade from sweltering heat.

Steiner (☎ 2790; www.steineragg.at; Seestrasse 33; s/d €26.50/53; ☐) This *Gästehaus* has friendly staff, a quiet, homy atmosphere and super clean rooms with modern bathrooms and balcony. Don't let the cat out, though.

Hotel-Restaurant Pannonia (☎ 2245; www.pannonia-hotel.at; in German; Seezeile 20; s €54-57, d €77-114; ☐ ☐ ☐) Set back from the waterfront, this recently renovated hotel has a New World feel, ultra-modern furnishings (including glass doors to the bathroom) and a large grassed area where children can play. The owners run a second hotel across the road. The restaurant (meals €10 to €20, open lunch and dinner) has an enormous wine list and seasonal dishes such as venison carpaccio served on bear's garlic pesto with tomatoes.

Seewirt (☎ 2415; www.seewirtkärner.at; Strandplatz 1; s €72-84, d €99-162; ☐) Four-star Seewirt is especially popular because it occupies a prime spot right next to the ferry terminal and beach. Its restaurant (€12 to €14, open lunch and dinner) serves uncomplicated Austrian cuisine.

Zur Dankbarkeit (☎ 2223, Hauptstrasse 39, Podersdorf; mains €8-19; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon, Tue, Fri, 11.30am-9pm Sat & Sun) Zur Dankbarkeit is a lovely old restaurant that serves some of the best regional cooking around. The inner garden, with its mature trees and country ambience, is perfectly complimented by a glass of wine.

Weinklub 21 (☎ 21 170, Seestrasse 37; tastings €10; ☎ 9am-noon & 4-9pm May, Aug & Sep, 2-7pm Fri-Sun Oct-mid-Dec & mid-Feb-Apr) This excellent Vinothek represents 21 wine producers in

town and the region; it holds regular tastings and events.

Getting There & Away

Hourly buses make the journey between Neusiedl and Podersdorf on weekdays but are infrequent on the weekend (€3.40, 15 minutes). Ferries connect Podersdorf with Rust (€6) and Breitenbrunn (€5.50) on the western shore.

SEEWINKEL

☎ 02175

Seewinkel is the heart of the Neusiedler See-Seewinkel National Park, and a grassland and wetland of immense importance to birds and other wildlife. The vineyards, reed beds, shimmering waters and constant birdsong make this an enchanting region for an excursion. This is an excellent area for **bird-watching** and explorations on foot or by bicycle.

The protected areas cannot be directly accessed by visitors, so to really get into the bird-watching you need a pair of binoculars. There are viewing stands along the way.

The park has its own information centre on the northern fringes of Illmitz, the **Nationalparkhaus** (☎ 344 20; www.nationalpark-neusiedlersee.org; in German; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct, 8am-4pm Mon-Fri Nov-Mar). It has a small display on the ecology and staff can tell you the best places to spot local wildlife.

The town of **Illmitz**, 4km from the lake, is surrounded by the national park and makes for a good base. Staff at its **tourist office** (☎ 2383; www.tiscover.at/illmitz; Obere Hauptplatz 2-4; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon & 1-5pm Sat, 9am-noon Sun Jul & Aug, 8am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Fri Sep & Nov-Jun, 8am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat & Sun October) can provide information on the region. **Arkadenweingut-Gästehaus** (☎ 3345; www.tiscover.at/arkadenweingut-fam.heiss; Obere Hauptstrasse 20; s/d €29/50) is a lovely arcaded homestead in the centre of Illmitz.

Illmitz is connected with Mörbisch by ferry (€6) and Neusiedl am See by one-to-two hourly buses (€5.10, 30 minutes).

MIDDLE & SOUTHERN BURGENLAND

Heading south, the flat expanse of the Neusiedler See is soon forgotten as you enter an undulating landscape replete with

lush hills, forested glens and castles that rise up in the distance. It's a region often overlooked by visitors and a place where life is still very much connected to the land; the influence of long-resident Hungarian and Croatian settlers can be felt here.

LOCKENHAUS & AROUND

Lockenhaus, in the centre of Burgenland, is famous for its **castle** (☎ 02616-23 94; www.tiscover.com/burg.hotel.lockenhaus; adult/student/child €5/4/2.50; ☎ 8am-4pm Sat & Sun Mar, to 4pm Apr, to 6pm May-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Christmas, closed late-Dec-Feb), or more accurately, for its former resident Elizabeth Bathory. Better known as the 'Blood Countess', she has gone down in history for her reign of terror early in the 17th century, when she reputedly tortured and murdered over 600 mainly peasant women for her own sadistic pleasure. The castle has long been cleansed of such gruesome horrors but still contains an impressive torture chamber, complete with an Iron Maiden.

If you want to sleep inside a castle, the **Burghotel Lockenhaus** (☎ 02616-23 94; www.tiscover.com/burg.hotel.lockenhaus; s/d €65/100) has antique-furnished rooms and a sauna.

Some 13km east of Lockenhaus is the tiny village of **Klostermarienberg**, home to a now-defunct monastery housing the only dog museum in Europe, the **Europäisches Hundemuseum** (☎ 2611-22 92; www.kulturimkloster.at; in German; Klostermarienberg; adult/student/child/family €4/3/2/8; ☎ 2-5pm Sat & Sun May-Oct). The odd collection of dog paraphernalia includes paintings, statues and intriguing photos of dogs dressed for war during WWI and WWII, complete with gas masks. Take a few minutes to visit the monastery's crypt, a chamber containing archaeological finds dating from the 13th and 14th centuries.

Bernstein, 15km west of Lockenhaus, is another town dominated by an impressive **castle** (☎ 03354-63 82; www.burgbernstein.at; r €150-190; ☎ end Apr-mid-Oct; ☐). Ten of the castle's rooms, all of which are tastefully decorated with period furniture, are now used to accommodate guests. The castle, whose foundations date from 1199, is a delightful retreat from the stress of modern-day living and a time warp back to more rustic days. In the town centre is a small **Felsenmuseum** (☎ 03354-66 20-14; www.felsenmuseum.at; in German; Hauptplatz 5; adult/child €5/2; ☎ 9am-6pm Jul & Aug, 9am-noon & 1.30-6pm Mar-Jun & Sep-Dec), which concentrates its displays on the gemstone

serpentine and its local mining (it was first mined in the town in the mid-19th century).

If your body needs some TLC, stop in at the spa-town of **Bad Tatzmannsdorf**, 15km south of Bernstein. Aside from taking the waters at the **Burgenland Therme** (☎ 03353-89 90; www.burgenlandtherme.at; Am Thermenplatz 1; daycard adult/child €17.50/12; ☎ 9am-10pm), you can visit the **Südburgenländisches Freilichtmuseum** (☎ 03353-83 14; Bahnhofstrasse; admission adult/child €2/1; ☎ 9am-6pm May-Oct), a small but rewarding open-air museum filled with thatched buildings from 19th-century Burgenland. The local **tourist office** (☎ 03353-70 15; www.bad.tatzmannsdorf.at; Joseph-Haydn-Platz 3; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2.30pm Sat, 9.30-11.30am Sun Apr-mid-Oct, 8am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30-11am Sat mid-Oct-Mar) helps with accommodation.

Getting There & Away

You're better off with your own transport in this region, as bus connections can be thin. A couple of direct buses connect Lockenhaus and Eisenstadt (€12.30, 1½ hours), but just one on Sunday. Taking a direct bus north from Oberwart (where there's a train station) to Bad Tatzmannsdorf (€2.20, 5 minutes; every two hours), Bernstein (€4.30, 30 minutes; every one to three hours) or Lockenhaus (€5.90, one hour, twice each weekday) is manageable on weekdays.

GÜSSING & AROUND

If you're not castled-out by this stage, head 40km south of Bad Tatzmannsdorf to Güssing, a peaceful town on the banks of the Strembach river. Here the arresting **Burg Güssing** (☎ 03322-434 00; www.burggussing.info, in German; adult/child & student €5.50/3.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Easter Mon-Oct) rises dramatically over the river and town. The castle, which is a mix of ruins and renovations, contains plenty of weapons from the Turks and Hungarians, striking portraits from the 16th century and a tower with 360-degree

views. Also on display is an iron safe with a tiny statue of a dog at the bottom – a sign that the owner was *auf den Hund gekommen* (had gone to the dogs). A modern 100m **funicular railway** (tickets €1; ☎ same hr as castle) helps those with weary legs reach the castle.

A visit to the **Auswanderer Museum** (☎ 03322-425 98; Stremtalstrasse 2; adult/child €2/1; ☎ 2-6pm Sat & Sun May-Oct), to the north of the castle, is also worthwhile; it relays the story of the mass exodus of *Burgenlander* (including Fred Astaire's father) to America before and after WWI. Most emigrated due to lack of work or poor living conditions.

If you missed the open-air museum in Bad Tatzmannsdorf, head 5km west of Güssing to the **Freilichtmuseum** (☎ 03328-322 55; Gerersdorf bei Güssing 66; adult/child & student €4.50/2; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct) at **Gerersdorf**. An hour or two could easily slip by while you explore the 30-odd buildings and their traditional furniture and fittings, which capture the rural culture of Burgenland in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The **tourist office** (☎ 03322-440 03; www.tiscover.at/guessing; Hauptplatz 7; ☎ 9am-noon Mon-Fri Jan-Jun & Sep-Dec, 8am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Fri Jul & Aug) in Güssing can help with private rooms, otherwise try **Landgasthof Kedl** (☎ 03322-42 40 30; www.tiscover.at/gasthof.kedl; Urbersdorf 33; s/d €34/52; ☎), 3km north of Güssing in Urbersdorf. The castle's restaurant, **Burg Güssing** (☎ 03322-444 74; mains €8-17, menu €25; ☎ 10am-10pm Tue-Sun May-Oct), has a filling six-course Knight's menu (with chicken in barley juice) and a terrace with extensive views over the countryside.

Getting There & Away

Two to four direct buses daily connect Güssing (€6.50, 50 minutes) with Oberwart. On weekdays and Saturday several direct buses connect Güssing and Geresdorf (€1.70, 10 minutes).

Upper Austria



While Upper Austria may not exactly leap off the map as a holiday destination, it revels in the unexpected. Its cutting-edge cityscapes, Gothic architecture and glorious countryside aren't yet well known, but they will be. The capital, Linz, is a bit of a rebel by Austrian standards. Once considered an industrial backwater, the city is now catapulting into the 21st century: where there was dull concrete now there are flagship museums – high-tech temples of glass, steel and clean lines. With its edgy bars, boutique hotels and mushrooming avant-garde arts scene, this is clearly a city on the move.

Venture south from Linz and the countryside takes on a dreamlike quality, with rambling *Vierkanter* (four-sided) farmhouses and cornfields fading off into a watercolour distance. Pick a random spot on the map to explore on foot or by bike, or go straight for the biggies: St Florian's striking Augustine abbey, Steyr's knot of medieval lanes, the radon-laced waters of Bad Hall and the limestone pinnacles of the Nationalpark Kalkalpen grazing the border to Styria. Winding along scenic country lanes, the landscape switches from thick evergreen forests to undulating hills in the Traunviertel, where earthy locals and a pitcher of *Most* (cider) are never far away.

The northern stretch of the Mühlviertel strikes an entirely different chord – Gothic churches, mist-enshrouded forests and an air of Bohemian melancholy are evidence that the Czech Republic is close by. Stepping slightly east, the Innviertel is where, in the space of a day, you can roam the banks of the Inn River in Braunau, soak in Geinberg's Caribbean lagoon and sleep sweetly above the treetops in Kofing. Upper Austria boring? We think not.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Flying high above Linz's rooftops at the futuristic **Ars Electronica Center** (p203)
- Marvelling at the golden Tassilo Chalice in Kremsmünster's sublime **Benedictine Abbey** (p213)
- Quaffing potent brews and staggering around centuries-old fortifications in **Freistadt** (p215)
- Wandering cobblestone lanes in medieval **Steyr** (p211), squeezed between the Enns and Steyr Rivers
- Sipping cider in the orchards and soaking in the thermal baths of **Bad Hall** (p213)



■ POPULATION: 1.3 MILLION ■ AREA: 9480 SQ KM ■ HIGHEST ELEVATION: GROSSE PRIEL 2515M



Climate

The temperate climate of the Mühlviertel is characterised by long summers and harsh winters. Heading south, milder temperatures are more prevalent until the Alps rise from the east.

Getting There & Away

Upper Austria has good connections; the A1 autobahn runs east-west to Vienna and Salzburg, the A8 north to Passau and the rest of Germany and the A9 south into Styria. 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.

Getting Around

Upper Austria's excellent bus and train services are covered by **Oberösterreichischer Verkehrsverbund tickets** (☎ 0810-240 810; www.oöevv.at, in German). Prices depend on the number of zones you travel (one zone is €1.60, 10 zones cost €8.10). As well as single tickets, daily, weekly, monthly and yearly passes are available.

LINZ

☎ 0732 / pop 203,000

Linz dares to defy the braces-and-breeches image of Austria; a city with an urban edge, a

thriving youth culture and its feet firmly in the 21st century. It may not have old-world architecture to rival the giddy heights of Vienna or Salzburg, but it comes up trumps in the modern art and new technology stakes, with crystalline venues like Lentos and the Ars Electronica Center.

And who would have thought that this industrial powerhouse had it in it to become European Capital of Culture 2009? By injecting life into the centre in recent years, the city has successfully reinvented itself: where people once diverted their gaze from unsightly smoke stacks, they now crane their necks to ogle glass-walled galleries displaying Kokoschka or daring public art installations. This sleeping city has finally awoken, even though she may not be a classic beauty.

While Linz takes contemporary design seriously, it has not become a soulless space. Alongside the modernist cubes are snug cafés where you can indulge in a slice or two of scrumptious *Linzer Torte*, hip bars lining the narrow streets of the *Altstadt* (old town) and a creaking railway that has crept into the Guinness Book of Records. So next time you're passing through this corner of Austria, hop off the train to see why this city is worth more than a cursory glance.

History

Linz was a fortified Celtic village by the time the Romans arrived, who took over and named it *Lentia*. By the 8th century, when the town came under Bavaria's thumb, its name had changed to *Linze*, and by the 13th century it had mushroomed into an important trading town for raw material 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. However, the Counter-Reformation made a spectacular comeback, knocking the stuffing out of the place for the following century. Its resurgence in the 19th century was largely due to the development of the railway, when Linz became an important junction.

Adolf Hitler may have been born in Braunau am Inn (p217), but Linz was his favourite (he spent his school days here), and his (largely unrealised) plans for the city were grand. 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 the US-administered zones. Since 1955, Linz has flourished into an important industrial city, port and provincial capital.

Orientation

Linz straddles both sides of the Danube (Donau), with the *Innenstadt* (city centre) and most attractions huddling on the south bank. Most sights on the north bank cluster in the district of Urfahr, squatting in the shadow of 537m-high Pöstlingberg. The main hub is Hauptplatz, an elongated square that is mostly car-free and abuts Landstrasse, the main shopping thoroughfare with a long pedestrian-only section. The *Hauptbahnhof* (main train station) is about 1km south of Hauptplatz.

MAPS

A free map, with information in both German and English and an enlargement of the *Innenstadt*, is available from Tourist Information Linz.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

Thalia (☎ 76 15-0; Landstrasse 41; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat) A small selection of English-language books.

INTERNET ACCESS

Atlas Media (☎ 78 10 05; Graben 17; per hr €2.40; ☎ 9.30am-11pm Mon-Sat, 1-11pm Sun) Internet access, discount international calls, Skype and copying available. **Hotspot Linz** Offers free wi-fi at 120 hotspots in the city centre; details are given online at www.hotspotlinz.at, in German.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Linz.info.at (in German) Links to the city's prominent cultural venues, firms and transport providers. **www.linz-termine.at** Listings of cultural events and exhibitions throughout the year.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Krankenhaus der Stadt Linz (☎ 78 06-0; Krankenhausstrasse 9) The main hospital, 1km east of the centre. **Unfallkrankenhaus** (☎ 69 20-0; Garnisonstrasse 7) Emergency hospital.

MONEY

There are a number of banks with ATMs in the *Innenstadt*; the airport also has a bank. The *Hauptbahnhof* has an ATM and



a money exchange office (☎ 7.30am-4pm Mon-Thu, 7.30am-1.30pm Fri).

American Express (☎ 66 90 13; Bürgerstrasse 14; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri) Financial and travel services under one roof.

POST

Main Post Office (Bahnhofplatz 11; ☎ 7am-9pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat) Near the *Hauptbahnhof*; has an ATM.

Post Office (Domgasse 1; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri) This post office is handier to the centre.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist Information Linz (☎ 7070 1777; www.linz.at; Hauptplatz 1; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat & Sun May-Oct, 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun Nov-Apr) Brochures, accommodation listings, free room

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reservation service and a separate Upper Austria information desk can be found here.

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STA Travel (☎ 77 58 93; Herrenstrasse 7; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri)

Sights & Activities

Before setting off, consider purchasing the Linzer Museumskarte (€12) for entry to 12 museums, or the Linzer City Ticket (€20) for entry to all museums, a €10 restaurant voucher and a return trip on the Pöstlingbergbahn. The Junior Linz Ticket (€8, for ages six to 14) is also available. All three tickets are valid the entire year.

In preparation for Linz seizing the reigns of European Capital of Culture in 2009, many sights are undergoing renovation, including the Pöstlingbergbahn. The Ars Electronica Center is moving to a temporary home (Graben 15) until early 2009.

LENTOS KUNSTMUSEUM

The gleaming **Lentos Kunstmuseum** (☎ 7070 3614; www.lentos.at; Ernst-Koref-Promenade 1; adult/child €6.50/4.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Mon, to 10pm Thu) stops you dead in your tracks. Defined by razor-sharp lines, this glass-and-steel landmark was designed by Zurich architects Weber & Hofer, who decided to leave a large gap in the base of its rectangular shape. The gallery showcases a world-class collection of contemporary art,

including works by Warhol, Schiele, Klimt and Kokoschka, which is complemented by rotating exhibitions.

Next to Lentos onto the southern bank of the Danube is the **Donaupark** (Danube Park), the city's green escape vault. Modern sculptures rise above the bushes in the well-tended gardens, which are a magnet to walkers, joggers, skaters, picnickers and city workers seeking fresh air in summer.

ARS ELECTRONICA CENTER

On the opposite side of the Danube is the **Ars Electronica Center** (☎ 72 72-0; www.aec.at; Hauptstrasse 2; adult/child €6/3; ☎ 9am-5pm Wed-Fri, 10am-6pm weekends), where virtually anything is possible – from diving to the depths of the Danube to flying high above Linz. This temple of interactive wizardry is devoted to the evolving world of technology (the lift projects graphics and a remote-controlled robotic arm tends to the entrance-hall flower garden). The must-do attractions are Humphrey II, a flight simulator that (literally) sweeps you off your feet, and Gulliver's World, where you can redesign the planet by shaping landscapes, moving mountains and putting yourself in the picture.

LANDESGALERIE

Housed in a sumptuous 19th-century building, the **Landesgalerie** (☎ 77 44 82-0; www.landesgalerie.at; Museumstrasse 14; adult/child €4/2.20; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) exhibits

20th-century paintings, photography and installations that bear some relation to Upper Austria. Alongside masterpieces by Dürer and Kokoschka, you'll find a peerless collection of fantastical works by the Austrian expressionist Alfred Kubin. The open-air **Skulpturenpark** juxtaposes modern sculpture with the gallery's classic architecture.

BOTANISCHER GARTEN

Rest beside the rhododendrons and orchids in Linz's **botanical garden** (☎ 7070 8160; Roseggerstrasse 20-22; adult/child €2/1; ☎ 8am-5pm Nov-Feb, to 6pm Mar & Oct, to 7pm Apr & Sep, 7.30am-7.30pm May-Aug). This peaceful pocket of greenery south of the centre nurtures 10,000 species, from native alpine plants to tropical palms and one of Europe's largest cacti collections.

PÖSTLINGBERG

Linz spreads out beneath you atop **Pöstlingberg** (537m), which affords bird's-eye views over the city and the snaking Danube. It's a gentle hike to the top or a precipitous 15-minute ride aboard the narrow-gauge **Pöstlingbergbahn** (adult/child €4/2, combined ticket with Tram 3 €6.20/3.10; ☎ every 20-30min 5.40am-8.20pm Mon-Sat, 7.15am-8.20pm Sun). This gondola features in the Guinness Book of Records as the world's steepest mountain railway – quite some feat for such a low-lying city!

At the summit is the turn-of-the-century **Grottenbahn** (☎ 3400 7506; Am Pöstlingberg 16; adult/child €4.50/2.30; ☎ 10am-6pm Jun-Aug, to 5pm Sep-Nov & Mar-May), where families – and anyone that loves a bit of cult kitsch – can board the dragon train to trundle past gnomes, glittering stalactites and scenes from Grimm's fairytales.

Walking Tour

Kick off your one-hour walk of Linz's **Innenstadt** at the effervescent **Hauptplatz** (1), where street performers wow the crowds and locals chill in pavement cafés. Pause to admire the pastel-coloured baroque houses framing the square and its centrepiece, the **Dreifaltigkeitssäule** (2) (trinity column), a striking 20m pillar of Salzburg marble carved in 1723 to commemorate the town's deliverance from war, fire and plague. Opposite is the **Altes Rathaus** (3) housing **Linz-Genesis** (☎ 7070 1920; Hauptplatz 1; admission free; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Fri), unravelling the city's history and celebrating famous sons such as Johannes Kepler and Anton Bruckner.

Turning into Klosterstrasse, you'll spy the sleek grey-and-white façade of the 13th-

century **Minoritenkirche** (4), famed for its rococo stuccowork and frescoes (the brushwork of Bartolomeo Altomonte). Next door is the **Landhaus** (5); wander into the arcaded courtyard to see the **Planet Fountain** (1582), which predated the arrival of the great astronomer Johannes Kepler, who taught here for 14 years. Across the way, appreciate the Renaissance architecture of **Mozarthaus** (6), where Amadeus composed the *Linzer Sinfonie* in 1783, before soaking up the ambience in the *Altstadt's* maze of cobbled streets.

Crossing the Alter Markt, take the steps up the Hofberg to medieval **Schloss Linz** (7) for great views of the Danube. Time permitting, pop into the **Schlossmuseum** (☎ 77 44 19; Tummelplatz 10; adult/child €3/1.70; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) to glimpse a fine collection of Gothic art. From here, follow Römerstrasse to the 8th-century **Martinskirche** (8). This humble little church is one of Austria's oldest, as the Roman oven inside confirms.

Head back along Römerstrasse towards Promenade, presided over by the mighty **Landestheater** (9), then onto Herrenstrasse, where you'll be forced to look up at the **Neue Dom** (10), a neo-Gothic giant with a riot of skinny spires and fabulous stained glass windows depicting Linz's history. The cathedral's height was apparently restricted to 134m, so as not to outshine Stephansdom (p124) in Vienna. Veer onto Bichofstrasse for a peak at Michael Pruckmayer's handiwork – the baroque **Bischofshof** (11) residence.



Continue along Landstrasse, the city's main artery dominated by the twin onion-domed towers of former nunnery **Ursulinenkirche** (12), then nip down Domgasse to admire the 17th-century **Alter Dom** (13) (☎ 770 866-0; Domgasse 3; ☎ 7am-7pm), where Anton Bruckner served as church organist. Step inside to admire the interior – the architectural equivalent of a wedding cake, with its theatrical pink marble altar and lavish white stuccowork. Bearing left on Domgasse brings you back to the **Hauptplatz**.

Tours

If you'd prefer to explore the city with a group, Tourist Information Linz organises 1½-hour **walking tours** (tour €8; ☎ 11am & 2.30pm May-Sep), which go ahead regardless of the weather or the number of people.

Festivals & Events

Linz's most celebrated festival is the **Brucknerfest** (☎ 7612 2170; www.brucknerhaus.at; tickets €11-92) in September, when the Brucknerhaus or the Stiftskirche in St Florian (p209) stage world-class concerts. It's preceded by the **Ars Electronica Festival**, an innovative art and technology event held in early September. Both festivals coincide with free **Klangwolke** concerts in Donaupark.

The **Linz Fest**, a huge shindig in late May or early June, runs for three or four weeks and brings free rock, jazz and folk concerts to the city. In July, musicians, jugglers and acrobats from across Europe take to the city's streets for the three-day **Pflasterspektakel** street festival.

Sleeping

Besides traditional pensions, the city has a growing crop of no-nonsense hostels and designer boutique hotels. Tourist Information Linz offers a free accommodation booking service for visitors, but only face-to-face and not over the phone.

BUDGET

Camping Linz-Pichlingersee (☎ 30 53 14; Wienerstrasse 937; campsites per adult/child/tent €4/2.60/4.50; ☎) Escape to the country at this tree-shaded site, where you can wake up with a swim in Pichlingersee lake. There is a playground, kitchen and a restaurant serving Portuguese food. Hop on bus 2051 from the **Hauptbahnhof**.

Herberge Linz (☎ 0699-1180 7003; herberge.linz@aon.at; Kapuzinerstrasse 14; dm/s/d €15/22/36) Within staggering distance of the big sights, this bright yellow hostel has a friendly vibe. The spacious dorms all have lockers, fridges and showers. Chill over drinks in the leafy garden.

Jugendgästehaus (☎ 66 44 34; jgh.linz@oejhv.or.at; Stanglhofweg 3; dm/s/d €19.50/29.50/44; ☎) This modern HI hostel is 1.5km from the centre. The rooms won't win any design awards, but the above-par facilities include a tennis court and common room.

Wilder Mann (☎ 65 60 78; wilder-mann@aon.at; Goethestrasse 14; s/d €35/60; ☎) Don't be put off by the '70s wallpaper in the corridors at this simple pension, the high-ceilinged rooms are quiet, spacious and a bargain, given the central location.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Goldenes Dachl (☎ 77 58 97; goldenesdachl@gmx.de; Hafnerstrasse 27; s/d €45/85) Few can beat this place for price and proximity to the centre. Rooms aren't flash but they're comfy, with wooden floors, sofas and loads of space. There's a restaurant and beer garden downstairs.

Goldener Anker (☎ 77 10 88; Hofgasse 5; s/d €55/90) Set in a 17th-century inn, this family-run place just off Hauptplatz is a superb deal, with cosy rooms, a beer garden and a vaulted tavern serving Austrian staples and monastic brews.

Zum Schwarzen Bären (☎ 77 24 77; baer@linz-hotel.at; Herrenstrasse 9-11; s/d €68/90; ☎) Modern art glams up this three-star hotel, offering free wi-fi throughout. The warm-hued rooms are quiet and comfy, but bathrooms are a bit poky. You can upgrade to a room with a waterbed if the mood takes you.

Wolfinger (☎ 77 32 91; www.hotelwolfinger.at; Hauptplatz 19; s/d €87/126; ☎) The scent of fresh-cut flowers hits you upon entering this ever-so-posh hotel. One of the top addresses in Linz, its historical feel is accentuated by archways, stuccowork and period furniture. Ask for one of the back rooms with a balcony.

Drei Mohren (☎ 77 26 26-0; www.drei-mohren.at; Promenade 17; s/d €108/142; ☎) Anton Bruckner tops the list of famous past guests at this grand 16th-century hotel with plush touches like marble floors, chandeliers and gold drapes. Its 25 Biedermeier-style rooms are individually furnished.

our pick Spitz Hotel (☎ 73 64 410; www.spitzhotel.at; Fiedlerstrasse 6; r €120-250; ☎) Isa Stein is

the brainchild of the Spitz Hotel's futuristic design. The wow factor is there from the moment you enter the lobby, decked out with pod-shaped stools, sphere lighting and a wall screening clips from the Prix Ars Electronica. Clean lines, open-plan bathrooms and hardwood floors define minimalist chic in the rooms, where free wi-fi and flat-screen TVs are standard.

Eating

Linz's cuisine is a melting pot of Austrian classics, world flavours and fusion cuisine. The city has recently jumped on the organic bandwagon, so you'll find plenty of healthy vegetarian and fair-trade options. The *Linz is(s)t gut* booklet, available from the tourist office, lists most restaurants in town.

RESTAURANTS

Gragger (Hofgasse 3; snacks €2-5; ☎ 7.30am-8pm Mon-Thu, to 11pm Fri & Sat) Antipasti, chunky soups and organic breads are served at a communal wooden table in this little gem of a café.

Ikaan (☎ 77 19 40; Altstadt 16; mains €5-12; lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat) Zesty lime walls and bamboo set the scene at this ethnic restaurant blending organic Asian and European flavours. Create-your-own salads and stir-fries top the menu. The chilli-chocolate mousse and mango lassis are divine.

Pius (☎ 070-77 05 70; Hauptplatz 2; mains €6-10; ☎ 11am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat) Health-conscious locals pack into this home-grown shop and café to fill up on organic salads, handmade pasta and vegetarian dishes. The freshly squeezed juices pack a punch.

p'aa (☎ 070-77 64 61; Altstadt 28; mains €7-11; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) p'aa dishes up vegan and organic dishes, from feisty curries to pumpkin schnitzel, in a trendy lounge setting with low seating and mellow music.

Tom Yam (☎ 94 69 69; Johann-Konrad-Vogel-Strasse 11; mains €7-15; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, dinner Sun) The King of Thailand beams down from the wall and Thai pop plays at this funky little restaurant with a terrace the size of a postage stamp. Breathe fire with a green papaya salad or the house special – tom yam prawn soup.

Mia Cara (☎ 78 57 28; Pfarrplatz 13; mains €8-16; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Mario cooks up a storm in the kitchen at this buzzing Italian *osteria*. Sample antipasti from the counter or home-made penne with a nice glass of Chianti. The patio is popular in summer.

Niu (☎ 78 67 78; Klamstrasse 1; mains €8-15; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Fri) Zen-style minimalism and Asian fusion cuisine draw foodies to this hole-in-the-wall restaurant. The aromatic yellow porcini mushroom curry and chilli beef noodles come recommended.

Alte Welt (☎ 77 00 53; www.altewelt.at, in German; Hauptplatz 4; mains €9-16; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat) Opening onto an inner courtyard, Alte Welt is a bit of a Jekyll and Hyde: by day it serves hearty fare such as crispy roast pork and potato gnocchi, while by night it becomes a haunt for students, artists and musicians (the cellar hosts jam sessions, live jazz and plays).

Klosterhof (☎ 77 33 73; Landstrasse 30; mains €9-18; ☎ 9am-midnight) Klosterhof's tree-shaded beer garden is arguably the best in Linz, with space for 1500. If this isn't enough to tempt you, tasty *Knödel* (dumplings) with Stiegl beer in the vaulted tavern at the front should.

Los Caballeros (☎ 77 89 70; Landstrasse 32; mains €10-19; ☎ 11am-2am) Decked out with fake cacti and sombreros, this Mexican place is cheesy but a good laugh for a group. Potent shark shots (tequila and Tabasco) help wash down T-bone steaks and enchiladas.

Zum Kleinen Griechen (☎ 78 24 67; Hofberg 8; mains €13-26; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Close to Schloss Linz, this classy little number tempts with well-prepared Greek specialties such as octopus, stuffed vine leaves and ouzo-drenched figs. The award-winning cuisine is definitely worth it.

SELF-CATERING

Self-caterers will have no problem finding a supermarket; there are two Billas and a Spar on Landstrasse. For fresh local produce, head to the *Bauernmärkte* (farmers markets) on Hauptplatz (9am to 2pm Tuesday and Friday) and outside the Neuen Rathaus (8am to noon Saturday). Cheap *Würstel* (sausage) stands line the Volksgarten.

Drinking

Linz's young, fun-loving population ensures plenty of after-dark action. The tourist office hands out *Linzer Nacht Meile* with night-life listings, but it's fairly easy to pinpoint the main drag; the glut of watering holes around Landstrasse, Hauptplatz and the area nicknamed the 'Bermuda Triangle', one block west, are safe bets for a night out on the tiles.

BARS

Thüsen Tak (Walterstrasse 21; ☎ 5pm-4am) This spit 'n' sawdust pub is pure rock 'n' roll, with loud music and walls smothered in posters of Led Zeppelin, Thin Lizzy and Deep Purple. Enjoy a beer and natter with Mike at the bar, or surf the web for free.

Strom (☎ 73 12 09; Kirchengasse 4; ☎ 2pm-2am Sun-Thu; to 4am Fri & Sat) DJs spin hip-hop, electro and funk at this lively bar. Upstairs is rough and ready, while downstairs is more laid-back, with partygoers spilling out onto Kirchengasse. Next door is Stadtwerk, which hosts clubbing events.

Cheese (☎ 79 28 27; Waltherstrasse 11; ☎ 6pm-4am Tue-Sat) A grinning Cheshire cat welcomes you to this party-hearty bar, reeling in a young crowd with wacky events – from Latino parties and all-you-can-eat spaghetti feasts to ear-splitting karaoke nights on Thursdays.

Divino (☎ 070-94 74 73; Domgasse 20; ☎ 2-10pm Mon-Fri, to 10pm Sat) Pillar-box red walls, gleaming wine bottles and huge hunks of Serrano ham set the scene in this Spanish *vinoteca*, where flamenco music plays and glasses tinkle.

Count Davis (☎ 0664-1984 732; Landstrasse 71-75; ☎ 6pm-4am Mon-Sat) Sounds of the sax fill this

uber-cool jazz club; the place to sip a mojito and see up-and-coming homegrown talent perform.

CAFÉS

While in Linz, it would be rude not to try the famous *Linzer Torte*, an almond pastry and redcurrant (not raspberry!) tart. The recipe has been around since the 17th century, and it's the greatest rival to Vienna's own *Sacher torte*.

k.u.k. Hofbäckerei (☎ 78 41 10; Pfarrgasse 17; coffee & cake €3-6; ☎ 6.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 7am-12.30pm Sat) Fritz Rath (below) pours passion into creating the best *Linzer Torte* in the city's oldest café (first mentioned in 1371). Whiffs of sugar and butter permeate the wood-panelled café, crammed with Sissi portraits and Habsburg curios.

Café Jindrak (☎ 77 92 58; Herrenstrasse 22; lunch menus €5-7; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Sat) Join the old dames for sticky cakes at this celebrated café. You would need a huge appetite (and fork) to tackle the legendary *Linzer Torte* that set a Guinness World Record in 1999, measuring 4m high and weighing 650kg.

Traxlmayr (☎ 77 33 53; Promenade 16; coffee & cake €2.50-6; ☎ 8am-10pm Mon-Sat) A blast from

VOICES: FRITZ RATH, LINZ BAKER

Fritz Rath has known the secret of the *Linzer Torte* since he was knee-high. He runs the k.u.k. Hofbäckerei in Linz, where he can often be seen flitting to and fro with a wagon-wheel-sized *Linzer Torte*. Here he reveals his lifelong passion for baking cakes according to age-old family recipes.

Did you always want to continue the family baking tradition? I felt tied to the kitchen as a teenager and needed to get out and experience the world – spread my wings a bit. So I worked in Sweden and the Midlands for a while in the late '60s. It was quite an eye-opener, but eventually you always come back to your roots.

What does baking mean to you? Baking holds up a mirror up to culture: Austria is the king of cakes, Germany rye bread, France baguettes...

What is the key ingredient in Linzer Torte? I recently met a lady in Berlin who insisted *Linzer Torte* is made with raspberry jam. My god, raspberry! It's redcurrant! But she was right in a way. The tart is world famous and each country interprets the recipe differently. It just tastes better in Linz because that's where it comes from.

So what's the secret to baking Linzer Torte? You need the right balance of ingredients (almonds, flour, butter, spices, redcurrant jam) and I usually add a dash of milk to the dough. But a lot boils down to instinct. My father used to say baking cakes is like playing music: if you take the same piano, sheet of music and 10 musicians the mixture is the same, but each one produces a slightly different result.

the 1920s, Traxlmayr is a Viennese-mould coffee house with a buzzing atmosphere, high ceilings and dickie-bow-tied waiters carrying trays piled high with dainty sandwiches and strudel.

Both the Lentos Kunstmuseum and Ars Electronica Center have ultramodern cafés that afford fine views over the Danube and city.

Entertainment

Brucknerhaus (☎ 76 12-0; www.brucknerhaus.linz.at, in German; Untere Donaulände 7) The Brucknerhaus is the city's premier music venue, staging regular classical and jazz concerts, plus a dedicated programme for kids ('mini' and 'midi' music).

Posthof (☎ 77 05 48-0; www.posthof.at, in German; Posthofstrasse 43) This venue near the docks headlines Linz's avant-garde events with an eclectic line-up of music, dance and theatre. Raves are occasionally held here.

Landestheater (☎ 76 11-0; www.landestheater-linz.at, in German; Promenade 39) Opera, ballet and musicals take to the stage of Linz's main theatre, which hosts largely classic productions. The u/hof team keeps kids amused with plays aimed at a young audience.

Shopping

Antique shops, galleries and musty bookshops line Bischofstrasse; this is a great street to rummage for handcrafted jewellery, paintings and kooky gifts. If you've got the spare change and a well-padded suitcase, check out the designer glasswork in the **Glas Galerie** (☎ 77 10 11; Bischofstrasse 11; ☎ 11am-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat).

At the other end of the scale, the city's **Flohmärkte** (flea markets) spring forth in front of the **Neues Rathaus** (☎ 7am-2pm Sat Nov-Mar) and on the **Hauptplatz** (☎ 6am-2pm Sat Mar-Oct).

The glass-roofed **Arkade** (☎ 79 38 07; Landstrasse 12; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) mall is the place to hibernate when it rains. Alongside high-street names like Boss and Agatha, you'll find a smattering of boutiques, speciality shops and a juice bar.

Honey you can eat, drink and bathe in (including chestnut and acacia tree varieties) fills the shelves at the **Imkerhof** (☎ 77 17 09; Altstadt 15; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat).

Getting There & Away

AIR

Austrian Airlines, Lufthansa, Ryanair and Air Berlin are the main airlines servicing the

Blue Danube Airport (☎ 07221-600-0; www.linz-airport.at). There are flights to Vienna, Salzburg and Graz, as well as Berlin, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, Stuttgart and Zürich. Ryanair has daily flights to London Stansted; see p397

BOAT

The **Schiffsstation** (Untere Donaulände 1) is on the south bank next to the Lentos Kunstmuseum. **Wurm + Köck** (☎ 78 36 07; www.donauschiffahrt.de, in German) sends boats westwards to Passau (one-way/return €22/25, six to seven hours, 9.45am and 2.20pm Tuesday to Sunday May to October) and east to Vienna (€52/64, 11½ hours, 9am Saturday May to September).

BUS

Regional buses depart from stands at the main bus station adjacent to the **Hauptbahnhof**. Information can be obtained from the **bus information counter** (☎ 61 71 81; ☎ 7.50am-5.30pm Mon-Fri).

TRAIN

Linz is on the main rail route between Vienna (€27.90, two hours) and Salzburg (€19.90, 1½ hours), and express trains run twice hourly in both directions. Slower trains also service this route and others. At least three trains depart daily for Prague (€58, five hours). Aside from the obligatory **information desk** (☎ 8am-6.50pm), there are also some snack bars and an ATM at the **Hauptbahnhof**.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Linz airport is located 12km southwest of the town. A direct airport bus service connects the **Hauptbahnhof** (€2.30, 20 minutes) with the airport hourly.

BICYCLE

Bikes are available for hire at **Donau Touristik** (☎ 20 80 38; Lederergasse 4-12; bike per day/week €10/63; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, to 4.30pm Fri).

CAR

One-way systems, congested roads and pricey parking make public transport preferable to driving in central Linz, although a car is a definite plus if you're keen to explore more of Upper Austria. There are some free car parks along Obere Donaulände. Linz has offices for all the major car hire firms:

Avis (☎ 0722-1600 6300; Flughafenstrasse 1)

Denzel Drive (☎ 0501-0541 70; Bahnhofplatz 3-6)

Hertz (☎ 78 48 41; Bürgerstrasse)

LaudaMotion (☎ 0900 240 120) Has an office at the **Hauptbahnhof**.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Linz has an extensive bus and tram network (☎ 3400 7000, www.linzag.at), but by early evening some services stop or become infrequent. Single tickets (€1.60), day passes (€3.20) and weekly passes (€10.70) are available from pavement dispensers and **Tabak** (tobacconist) shops. Drivers don't sell tickets – buy and validate your tickets before you board.

AROUND LINZ

ST FLORIAN

☎ 07224 / pop 5600

Unassuming St Florian, a market town 15km southeast of Linz, hides one of the best abbeys in Upper Austria, if not the whole country. St Florian was a Roman who converted to Christianity and was drowned in the Enns River (in AD 304) for his pains. In many Austrian churches he is represented wearing Roman military uniform and dousing flames with a bucket of water.

The centre of town is Marktplatz, just below the abbey. Here you'll find a small **tourist office** (☎ 56 90; st.florian@oberoesterreich.at; Marktplatz 2; ☎ 9am-1pm Mon-Fri), a few guesthouses and the post office.

Sights & Activities

AUGUSTINER CHORHERRENSTIFT

Rising like a vision above St Florian, the **Augustinian Abbey** (☎ 89 02; www.stift-st-florian.at; Stiftstrasse 1; tours adult/concession €6/5; ☎ tours 10am, 11am, 2pm, 3pm & 4pm Apr-Oct) dates at least to 819 and has been occupied by the Augustinians since 1071. The main entrance is flanked by statues and is particularly striking when bathed in afternoon sunlight.

You can only visit the abbey's interior by guided tour, which takes in the lavish apartments, resplendent with rich stucco-work and emotive frescoes. They include 16 emperors' rooms (once occupied by visiting popes and royalty) and a galleried library housing 145,000 volumes. The opulent **Marble Hall** pays homage to Prince Eugene of

Savoy, a Frenchman who frequently led the Habsburg army to victory over the Turks. Prince Eugene's Room contains an amusing bed featuring carved Turks, which gives a whole new meaning to the idea of sleeping with the enemy!

A high point of the tour is the **Altdorfer Gallery**, displaying 14 paintings by Albrecht Altdorfer (1480–1538) of the Danube School. The sombre and dramatic scenes of Christ and St Sebastian reveal an innovative use of light and dark. Altdorfer cleverly tapped into contemporary issues to depict his biblical scenes (for example, one of Christ's tormentors is clearly a Turk).

The **Stiftskirche** (admission free; ☎ approx 7am-10pm) is almost overpowering; its altar is shaped from 700 tonnes of pink Salzburg marble and the huge 18th-century organ, which is literally dripping with gold, was Europe's largest at the time it was built. To hear the organ in full song, catch one of the **concerts** (adult/concession with tour €8/7; ☎ 2.30pm Mon, Wed-Fri & Sun mid-May–mid-Oct).

Anton Bruckner was a choirboy in St Florian and church organist from 1850 to 1855; he is buried in the **crypt** below his beloved organ. Also in the spooky crypt are the remains of 10,000 people believed to be Roman, which were unearthed in the 13th century. Stacked in neat rows behind a wrought iron gate, their bones and skulls create a spine-tingling work of art.

Every little boy's dream is the **Historisches Feuerwehrzeughaus** (Fire Brigade Museum; ☎ 42 19; Stiftstrasse 2; adult/concession €2.50/1.50; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-4pm Tue-Sun May-Oct) opposite the **Stiftskirche**, housing historic fire engines, hoses, buckets and other firefighting paraphernalia.

Sleeping & Eating

The tourist office hands out a useful accommodation booklet listing hotels and private rooms in and around St Florian.

Gästehaus Stift St Florian (☎ 0664-1358 243; Stiftstrasse 1; s/d €40/78) An oasis of calm, this guesthouse within the abbey's walls overlooks the cloisters and groomed gardens. The design is sleek and simple, but antique furniture and candlelight add character. The light-flooded rooms feature solid wood floors and Art Nouveau touches.

Landgasthof zur Kanne (☎ 42 88; www.gasthof-koppler.at; Marktplatz 7; s/d €52/86; ☎) This yellow

fronted, 14th-century guesthouse on the main square scores points for its clean, snug rooms and restaurant serving fresh produce from the Koppler family's farm.

Zum Goldenen Löwe (☎ 89 30; Speiserberg 9; mains €7-13; ☞ lunch & dinner Thu-Tue) The sound of the chef pounding humungous schnitzels welcomes you to this wood-panelled restaurant opposite the abbey gates. The sunny terrace out the back overlooks rolling countryside.

Getting There & Away

St Florian (officially Markt St Florian) is not accessible by train. There are a zillion buses departing from the main bus station at Linz's *Hauptbahnhof* Monday to Friday (€2.40, 22 minutes), but only five on Sunday.

MAUTHAUSEN

☎ 07238 / pop 4850

Nowadays Mauthausen is an attractive small town on the north bank of the Danube east of Linz, but its status as a quarrying centre prompted the Nazis to site **KZ Mauthausen** (☎ 22 69; Erinnerungsstrasse 1; adult/concession €2/1; ☞ 9am-5.30pm) concentration camp here. Prisoners were forced into slave labour in the granite quarry and many died on the so-called *Todesstiege* (stairway of death) leading from the quarry to the camp. Some 100,000 prisoners died or were executed in the camp between 1938 and 1945.

The camp, about 3km northwest of the centre, has been turned into a museum, retelling its history, and the history of other camps such as those at Ebensee and Melk.

SMALL PLEASURES

Getting on your bike to village-hop through Upper Austria's unspoilt countryside reveals plenty of wee treasures. In the Traunviertel, take a detour to **Adlwang's** orchards, where tonnes of ripe apples go into making juice, *Most* (cider) and schnapps. At farmhouse **Gangl** (☎ 07258-40 18; Mandorferstrasse 28), Leopold Höllhuber sells award-winning stuff that will knock your socks off.

Pedalling through the gently rolling fields of the Mühlviertel, pause in **Hirschbach** to follow a steep 13km trail up to a high-altitude herb garden, which grows 150 different types of herbs, some famed for their healing properties. Organic peppermint and melissa are among hundreds of varieties for sale at **Bergkräuter-Genossenschaft** (☎ 07948-87 02; Thierberg 32; ☞ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri).

Further west in the misty hills of the Böhmerwald, stop off in sweet-toothed **Bad Leonfelden** for yummy homemade gingerbread. **Kastner** (☎ 07213-63 26-0; Lebzelterstrasse 243; ☞ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) has been guarding a secret recipe since 1599; sample freshly baked fruit, nut, honey and chocolate varieties at the bakery shop.

Visitors can walk through the remaining living quarters (each designed for 200, but housing up to 500) and see the cramped and disturbing gas chambers. The former Sick Quarters now shelters most of the camp's harrowing material – charts, artefacts and many photos of both prisoners and their SS guards. It is a stark and incredibly moving reminder of human cruelty.

Getting There & Away

From Linz the quickest way to Mauthausen is by train (€4, 30 minutes). You can rent a bike from the station, which eases the 5km journey to the camp (follow the KZ Mauthausen signs).

THE TRAUNVIERTEL

Punctuated with apple orchards and sprawling *Vierkanter* farmhouses, the Traunviertel is a swathe of green and pleasant countryside; the perfect place to kick back, twiddle your thumbs and enjoy the view after a few days in Linz. Gentle hills rise slowly above fields of ripening corn as they roll south towards the Nationalpark Kalkalpen. If the thought of mingling with the locals over *Most* (cider) and drinking fresh-from-the-cow milk at breakfast appeals, overnight in one of the region's farms that offer private rooms. When you tire of all that *Gemütlichkeit* (cosiness), picture-perfect villages, spa towns and cities with cultural clout like Steyr and Wels beckon.

STEYR

☎ 07252 / pop 40,100

Undoubtedly one of the prettiest cities in Upper Austria, Steyr grew fat on the riches of the iron industry in the Middle Ages and it shows: cobbled squares fan out into a warren of alleyways stacked with houses in sweet-shop colours. When the weather warms, the locals pile into gelaterias or spill out onto pavement terraces. The turquoise Enns and Steyr rivers converge here and create a spectacular backdrop for walking and cycling along willow-fringed banks.

Orientation & Information

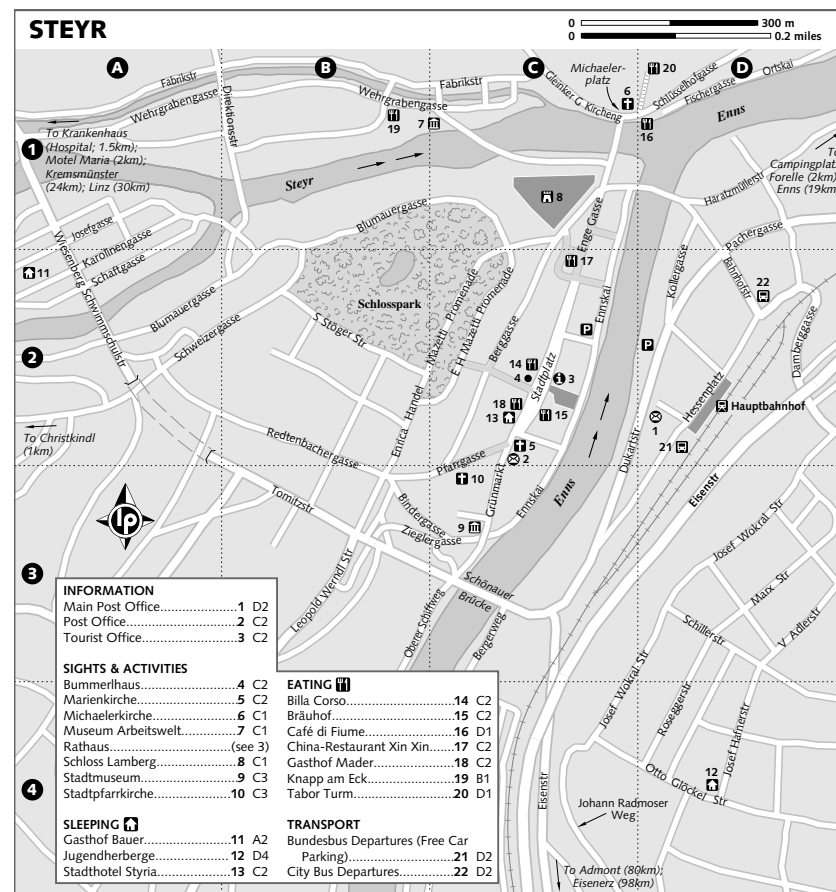
The pedestrianised town centre is caught between the ice-cold Enns and Steyr, while the

Hauptbahnhof is situated on the eastern bank of the Enns, eight minutes' walk from the pivotal *Stadtplatz*. The **tourist office** (☎ 532 29-0; www.steyr.info; Stadtplatz 27; ☞ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) is on the main square in the Rathaus.

Close to the *Hauptbahnhof* is the **main post office** (Dukartstrasse 13; ☞ 7.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-11pm Sat); the other **post office** (Grünmarkt 1; ☞ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri) is more handy to the *Stadtplatz*.

Sights & Activities

Steyr's compact centre is best explored on foot, with most sights clustering on the *Stadtplatz*. First up is the 18th-century **Rathaus**, with its church-like belfry and rococo façade. Opposite is the steep-gabled, late-Gothic **Bummerlhaus**



(Stadtplatz 32). In the 19th century, blurry-eyed punters to this former inn called the golden lion on the sign *Bummerl* (small, fat dog) and the name stuck. Also worth a peek is **Franz Schubert's house** (Stadtplatz 16), where he found inspiration to pen the *Trout Quintet*. The southern end of Stadtplatz is dominated by the peaches-and-cream **Marienkirche** (☎ 531 29; Stadtplatz 41; ☼ daylight hr).

Next to the Bummerlhaus, a steep passageway with overhanging arches squeezes through the old city walls and climbs up to **Berggasse**. This narrow street weaves past crumbling frescoes and sculptures to baroque-style **Schloss Lamberg**, towering high above the Steyr River and backing onto the shady **Schlosspark** gardens.

Further north, across the Steyr River, the tall steeple of **Michaelerkirche** (Michaelerplatz; ☼ daylight hr) casts its shadow almost as far as the river bank. To the west of Michaelerkirche – through cobblestoned streets with one house piled on top of the next – is **Museum Arbeitswelt** (☎ 773 51; Wehrgrabengasse 7; adult/concession €5/3.50; ☼ 9am–5pm Tue–Sun Mar–Dec). Housed in a converted factory, this excellent museum delves into Steyr's industrial past with exhibits on working-class history, forced labour during WWII and the rise of the Socialist party.

Up the hill to the west, the punctured spire of the Gothic **Stadtpfarrkirche** (Brucknerplatz 4; ☼ daylight hr) soars skywards. It shares features with Stephansdom in Vienna and the same architect, Hans Puchsbaum. Down the steps is the **Stadtmuseum** (☎ 575 348; Grünmarkt 26; admission free; ☼ 10am–4pm Tue–Sun Apr–Oct, to 4pm Wed–Sun Nov–Mar). Set in a 17th-century granary, the museum traces Steyr's culture and folklore and features an impressive collection of baroque nativity figurines.

Sleeping

The helpful tourist office can arrange private rooms, which are a good deal if you're willing and able to venture out of the centre.

Campingplatz Forelle (☎ 780 08; www.forellesteyr.com, in German; Kematmüllerstrasse 1a; campsites per adult/tent/car €4.70/3/4.40; (P)) This leafy campsite on the banks of the Enns River has a playground and facilities for cyclists (take bus 1 from the centre).

Jugendherberge (☎ 455 80; jugend@steyr.gv.at; Josef Hafnerstrasse 14; dm €12–15) Just behind the **Hauptbahnhof** (bus 3 runs close), this HI

SANTA'S LETTERBOX

If you happen to arrive in Steyr over Christmas, head for the suburb of **Christkindl**, to the west of the old centre. During the festive season, a special **post office** (Schulweg; ☼ 9am–5pm 28 Nov–6 Jan) is set up in the Christkindlkirche to handle the almost two million letters posted around the world.

hostel is bang in the middle of suburbia, but the dorms are totally fine.

Gasthof Bauer (☎ 544 41; Josefgasse 7; s/d €35/62; (P)) Situated on an island in the Steyr River, this family-run *Gasthof* has a homely ambience, comfy rooms and a chestnut tree-shaded garden. The restaurant (mains €7.50 to €9.50) uses fresh, locally sourced produce. It's 10 minutes' walk from the town centre.

Motel Maria (☎ 710 62; www.motel-maria.at, in German; Reindlgutstrasse 25; s/d €35/70; (P)) Set in a lovingly converted *Vierkanthof* farmhouse, 2km west of town (bus 2B stops nearby), this peaceful guesthouse offers bright, country-style rooms decorated with pinewood furniture and opening onto balconies facing the garden.

Stadthotel Styria (☎ 515 51; www.stadthotel.at; Stadtplatz 40; s/d €81.60/121.20; (P) (A)) The granddaddy of Steyr's plush hotels, this 400-year-old townhouse blends vaulting with modern creature comforts like a hammam and wi-fi. The frescoed Renaissance breakfast room overlooks Steyr's rooftops.

Eating

Stadtplatz has lots to offer self-caterers; it hosts an open-air market on Thursday and Saturday mornings, has snack stands, as well as a **Billa Corso** (Stadtplatz 30).

Café di Fiume (☎ 871 21; Michaelerplatz 11; lunch menu €5; ☼ 8am–7pm Tue–Sat, 1–7pm Sun) Mismatching chairs, relaxed staff and views of the Enns from a sunny terrace create a chilled atmosphere in this little gem of a café. Try the excellent vegetarian dishes, organic coffee and freshly squeezed juices.

China-Restaurant Xin Xin (☎ 470 34; Enge Gasse 20; lunch menu €6, mains €7–12.50; ☼ lunch & dinner) Adding a touch of spice to Steyr's mix is this value-for-money Chinese restaurant with the added bonus of a peaceful, tree-shaded garden.

Bräuhof (☎ 420 00; Stadtplatz 35; mains €8–18; ☼ 10–1am) If you're seeking homemade Austrian

fare, this lantern-lit restaurant delivers with favourites like gooey *Kasnocken* (cheese noodles). The contemporary wine bar is the place to nibble antipasti with a glass of Rioja.

Gasthof Mader (☎ 533 58; Stadtplatz 36; mains €8–18; ☼ 10.30am–midnight Mon–Sat) Delicious smells waft out of the kitchen at Mader, where you can nurse a glass of wine in the cellar's red-brick vaults, or feast on fresh seabass in the arcaded inner courtyard.

our pick Knapp am Eck (☎ 762 69; www.knappameck.at; Wehrgrabengasse 15; mains €11–19; ☼ lunch & dinner Tue–Sat, lunch Sun) Down the cobbled lane and beside the fast-flowing Steyr River is this gorgeous tavern with a boho feel. The menu places emphasis on seasonal, local produce; flavours like sage-stuffed pork and lamb with polenta are served at chunky wooden tables. By night, candles and lanterns illuminate the ivy-covered walls, trailing roses and chestnut trees in the secluded garden.

Tabor Turm (☎ 729 49; Taborweg 7; mains €16–24; ☼ 10.30am–midnight Wed–Sun, to 5pm Mon) A steep climb up to this gourmet haunt (occupying a former church) works up an appetite for specialities such as breast of pigeon with gnocchi. There are panoramic views of Steyr and the misty peaks of Nationalpark Kalkalpen from the terrace.

Getting There & Away

Some trains from Linz (€6.50, 50 minutes) require a change at St Valentin; there are fewer services on Sundays. Trains then continue south into Styria. The **Hauptbahnhof** has a restaurant, a travel information office and left-luggage lockers. For Wels (€10.50, 1¼ hours, hourly), most trains and buses require a change in St Valentin.

Regional buses depart from the **Hauptbahnhof** (where there's also free car parking), while city buses leave from outside the **Hauptbahnhof** to the north. Buses run to Linz (€6.50, 70 minutes) approximately hourly Monday to Friday, less on weekends. Steyr is on Hwy 115, the road branching from the A1/E60 and running south to Leoben.

BAD HALL

☎ 07258 / pop 5200

Situated 18km west of Steyr is the sleepy spa town of Bad Hall, where the big draw is **Tassilo Therme** (☎ 77 30-0; Kurhausstrasse 10; adult/child €12.10/6; ☼ 9am–9pm). The iodine-rich waters that gush from its thermal springs are famed for their

therapeutic properties and leave the skin silky smooth. The outdoor pool offers massage jets and views of the Kalkalpen, while inside salt rooms, Roman baths and whirlpools vie for your attention. There's a splash pool to keep tots amused and a separate **sauna complex** (adult/child €15.20/8.40; ☼ 11am–10pm Mon–Fri, 10am–10pm Sat & Sun) for those who dare to bare.

After drifting away in the spa, a walk in the sculpture-dotted **Kurpark** (☼ daylight hr) opposite is invigorating. Kids and big kids love making a noise on the *Klangskulpturen*, larger-than-life musical instruments that include a glockenspiel and wind harp. To inhale the iodized salt for free, head for the central pavilion, where 1000L of the stuff filters through twig walls every hour.

A number of family-run farmhouses and guesthouses in Bad Hall offer good-value rooms; expect to pay €15 to €20 per person. Pick up a list at the **tourist office** (☎ 07258-72 00; www.badhall.at; Kurpromenade 1; ☼ 8.30am–4pm Mon–Fri, 9am–noon Sat).

From Steyr, there are frequent buses to Bad Hall (€4, 35 minutes).

NATIONALPARK KALKALPEN

The Nationalpark Kalkalpen is a diverse and almost untouched wilderness of jagged limestone pinnacles, high moors and pristine forest. Bordering Styria, the reserve is Austria's second-largest national park after Hohe Tauern. Its valleys and gorges cut through classic alpine landscapes, dominated by **Hoher Nock** (1963m), the park's highest peak. It's particularly popular with hikers, cyclists, rock-climbers and cross-country skiers who come to glide across the glistening snow in winter.

Information on the park is available from **Nationalpark Zentrum Molln** (☎ 07584-36 51; www.kalkalpen.at, in German; Nationalpark Allee 1; ☎ 8am–5pm Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm Apr–Oct), an ultramodern, eco-friendly centre near the northern entrance to the park; staff can help with accommodation, including the 15 mountain huts within the park. A good map covering walking, cycling and cross-country skiing trails of the park is Kompass map 70 (1:50,000). Regular direct buses from Steyr to Molln (€4.90, one hour) normally only run on weekdays.

KREMSMÜNSTER

☎ 07583 / pop 6440

Looming large above the fertile Krems Valley, Kremsmünster's bombastic **Benedictine abbey**

(☎ 07583-5275-150; www.stift-kremsmuenster.at, in German; Stift 1; adult/child/family €6.50/3/14; ☞ tours 10am, 11am, 2pm, 3pm & 4pm Apr-Oct, 11am, 2pm & 3.30pm Nov-Mar) dates to 777, but was given a baroque facade in the early 18th century. Elaborate stucco work and frescoes shape the long, low **Bibliothek** (library), where shelves creak under the weight of 160,000 volumes, and **Kaisersaal** (Emperor's Hall). The most priceless piece in the **Schatzkammer** (treasury) is the gold Tassilo Chalice, which the Duke of Bavaria donated to the monks in about 780. You can visit all three on a one-hour guided tour.

The star attraction is the 50m-high **Sternwarte** (observatory tower; adult/child/family €7.50/3/14; ☞ tours 10am & 2pm May-Oct), dedicated to numerous schools of natural history. Spanning seven floors, the mind-boggling collection steps from fossilised starfish to the skeleton of an Ice Age cave bear. It's a giddy climb up a spiral staircase to the top floor, which displays the Keppler sextant and affords a bird's-eye perspective of Kremsmünster and the gently rolling countryside.

What can be seen without greasing the palms of the abbey with silver are the **Stiftskirche** (☞ daylight hr) and **Fischbehälter** (Fish Basin; ☞ 10am-4pm). The marvellously over-the-top baroque church is crisscrossed with white stucco work, draped in Flemish tapestries and festooned with dark, brooding paintings. The Fischbehälter's cloisters are quite a surprise; built in 1690, they comprise five fish ponds, each centred on a mythological statue. The trickle of water is calming and you can feed the carp (for €0.20).

Getting There & Away

Kremsmünster is on the rail line between Linz and Graz (from Linz €7.60, 40 minutes); the longest you'll have to wait for a train is 1½ hours. Buses from Wels (€3.30, 30 minutes, Monday to Friday only) and Steyr (€5.70, 50 minutes) run on a regular basis.

WELS

☎ 07242 / pop 61,637

What lies on the surface is only half the story in Wels, a Roman-rooted city with hidden inner courtyards, secret gardens and a smattering of Renaissance architecture. The largest city in the Traunviertel, Wels is an excellent base to explore Linz (15 minutes away) and slip under the skin of rural Upper Austria. When the weather warms, the centre comes

alive with open-air concerts, film festivals and markets.

Information, maps and audio guides (€4) of the city are available from **Tourismusverband Wels** (☎ 434 95; www.stadtmarketing-wels.at; Kaiser-Josef-Platz 22; ☞ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri), two blocks north of the main square, Stadtplatz.

Sights & Activities

Most of the action centres on the **Stadtplatz**, which is framed by slender townhouses that conceal arcaded inner courtyards. Pick of the bunch is the ivy-clad courtyard at Stadtplatz 18, nurturing palms, rhododendrons and Japanese umbrella trees. At the front, glance up to spy the 2000-year-old **Römermedallion** (Roman medallion) relief.

Nearby the **Haus der Salome Alt** (House of Salome Alt; Stadtplatz 24) takes its name from one-time occupant Salome Alt, mistress of Salzburg's Prince-Archbishop Wolf Dietrich. The illusionary red-and-cream Renaissance façade stretches back to the serene flower gardens fringing Burg Wels. Opposite is the refreshingly simplistic **Stadtpfarrkirche** (☞ daylight hr), where light illuminates the Gothic stained glass. The medieval **Ledererturm** tower, built in 1376, overshadows the western end of Stadtplatz.

Just behind the Haus der Salome Alt, **Burg Wels** is where Maximilian I drew his last breath in 1519. The castle **museum** (☎ 235 7350; Burggasse 13; adult/concession €4.15/1.60; ☞ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 2-5pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun) showcases everything from canon balls to Biedermeier costumes. Must-see exhibits are the horse-drawn cider press and the cylinder-shaped room that's a shrine to traditional baking, with walls smothered in animal-shaped pastries and enormous pretzels.

Sleeping & Eating

The friendly tourist office staff can help you find somewhere to stay. In summer, the Stadtplatz and its tributaries offer alfresco dining with a lively vibe.

Jugendherberge (☎ 23 57 570; jugendherberge@wels.at; Dragonerstrasse 22; dm with/without shower €13.35/11.45; (P)) A five-minute stroll north-west of Stadtplatz, this laid-back HI hostel features spacious dorms and a common room with cable TV.

Kremsmünstererhof (☎ 466 23; Stadtplatz 62/63; s/d €48/68; (P)) Set in a 15th-century townhouse with an inner courtyard, this three-star hotel

on the main square has large, light-filled rooms with parquet floors, sunny paint-jobs and bold poppy prints.

Café Urban (☎ 460 51; Schmidtgasse 20; cake around €2; ☞ 8.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat) This convivial café's glass counter is piled high with hard-to-resist pralines and pastries – try the famous *Igel*, a hedgehog-shaped meringue.

Olivi (☎ 91 19 00; Hafergasse 3; mains €6-9; ☞ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) This popular pizzeria serves tasty antipasti and wood-fired pizza in a buzzy setting.

Knödelwirt (☎ 472 05; Grünbachplatz 14; mains €6-10; ☞ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) It's best not to count calories at this rustic tavern dishing up homemade *Knödel* (dumplings), including spinach, potato, strawberry and plum varieties.

Jaxx (☎ 911 956; Stadtplatz 52; ☞ 4pm-2am Sun-Thur, to 4am Fri-Sat) Perfect for late-night nibbles, Jaxx is a funky café that morphs into a party haunt by night. Munch Snaax open sandwiches (tasty little morsels at €1 a piece) on the terrace.

Getting There & Away

Trains and buses arrive at the **Hauptbahnhof**, 1.25km north of Stadtplatz. The town is on the InterCity (IC) and EuroCity (EC) express rail route between Linz and Salzburg, just 15 minutes southwest of Linz (€4, several per hour). There's also a line running to Passau (€12.20, one hour and 20 minutes, hourly) on the German border.

THE MÜHLVIERTEL

A region of misty pine forests and hills speckled with chalk-white *Steinbloass* farmhouses, you can feel you're close to Bohemia in the Mühlviertel – and not just because there's decent beer and goulash! Scratch the surface to discover a mysteriously beautiful corner of Upper Austria with abundant Gothic architecture and warm-hearted locals. Separating Linz from the Czech Republic, this offbeat region is the sort of place where you're more likely to come face-to-face with a cow than a tourist. It's pure escapism.

FREISTADT

☎ 07942 / pop 7200

A mere hop and a skip from the Czech border, Freistadt has the best-preserved fortifications of all the medieval towns in Austria and the beer isn't bad either – the nectar-

loving locals are apparently so passionate about *Freistädter* brews that they avoid places where it isn't on tap. Beer aside, much pleasure can be had strolling the town's narrow streets to admire medieval gate towers and relax in the gardens that have taken root in the original moat.

Orientation & Information

The Hauptplatz is the focal point of the town centre, jammed between the old city walls. Here you'll find the **Mühlviertler Kerntourist office** (☎ 757 00; kernland@oberoesterreich.at; Hauptplatz 14; ☞ 9am-noon & 2-4pm Mon-Fri, 2-5pm Sat & Sun), which provides information on the town and its surrounds. The main north-south route, connecting Linz with the Czech border, skirts the western section of the city walls; the local **post office** (Promenade 11) is located here.

Sights & Activities

Pick up the handy *City Walk* brochure from the tourist office, which pinpoints Freistadt's key attractions. Topping the list are the sturdy 14th-century **city walls** complete with gate towers – particularly the medieval **Linzertor** and skeletal **Böhmertor** – which reflect Freistadt's past need for strong defences as an important staging point on the salt route to Bohemia. The moat encircling the town is now given over to gardens and allotments.

The elongated **Hauptplatz** has some attention-grabbing buildings with ornate façades, such as the Gothic **Stadtpfarrkirche** (☞ daylight hr) capped with a baroque tower. Waaggasse, just west of the Hauptplatz, is lined with striking architecture, including some sgraffito designs.

Just beyond the Hauptplatz is the city's 14th-century **Schloss**, with a square tower topped by a tapering red-tiled roof. Inside is the **Schlossmuseum** (☎ 722 74; Schlosshof 2; adult/concession €2.40/1.60; ☞ 9am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 2-5pm Sat), exhibiting 600 works of engraved painted glass. Climb the 50m Bergfried tower for far-reaching views over Freistadt.

Sleeping & Eating

Freistadt has a handful of decent places to sleep and eat; the following recommendations (apart from Camping Freistadt) are in the old town.

Camping Freistadt (☎ 725 70; Eglsee 12; campsites per adult/child/car/tent €4/2.50/3/4.50; (P)) This shady camping ground on the banks of the Feldaisth

BUYING INTO YOUR FAVOURITE BEER

Freistadt is a *Braucommune*, a town where the citizens actually own their brewery – buy a house and you automatically buy a share of your favourite tipple. Ownership is limited to the 149 households within the town walls, but if you have the spare change and *really* like your beer, properties sell for around €350,000. Realistically, the brewery cannot be taken over, as the business would have to buy the whole town in order to take control.

The arrangement started way back in 1777 when the brewery opened. In the ensuing centuries the lucky owners would receive their share of the profits in liquid form, which would be distributed in *Eimer Bier* containers holding 56L. Each owner might get up to 130 containers! Nowadays, for better or worse, owners get a cash payment of equivalent value (which, on Friday and Saturday nights, often goes straight back to the brewery).

Practically every bar in town serves the local brew, so it's not hard to see why the brewery remains a profitable business. If you'd like to learn more about Freistadt beer, there are **tours** (☎ 75777; Promenade 7; www.freistaedter-bier.at; brewery tours €7.50; ☎ tours 2pm Wed) of the brewery; three small beers are thrown in with the price of the tour. Call ahead if you'd like to take a tour.

River is five minutes' walk northeast of the centre. The great facilities include table tennis and a sauna.

Pension Pirklbauer (☎ 724 40; pension.pirklbauer@aon.at; Höllgasse 2-4; s/d €25/42) Nudging up against medieval Linzertor is this charming pension. Christine is a dab hand at making her guests feel at home: from the rooftop terrace to country cottage-style rooms with pinewood, floral fabrics and squeaky-clean bathrooms.

Hotel Goldener Adler (☎ 721 12; goldener.adler@hotels-freistadt.at; Salzgasse 1; s/d €49/78; P) Polished stone slabs, wrought iron banisters and vaulted passages crammed with antique wagons and spinning wheels give the Goldener Adler its unique edge. Unwind in the sauna and whirlpool, or tuck into the famous beer-marinated Bohemian pork shoulder in the beer garden (mains €6-16).

Vis à Vis (☎ 742 93; Salzgasse 13; pizzas €6-7; ☎ 9am-2am Mon-Fri, 5pm-2am Sat) Pretzels dangle on racks at the bar at this cheery local haunt with a sunny conservatory. The kitchen whips up tasty pizzas (including vegetarian options), salads and generous portions of Austrian fare.

Getting There & Away

Freistadt is on a direct rail route from Linz (€7.70, one hour, hourly). This line then wriggles its way north to Prague; Czech rail fares are lower than those in Austria, so you can save money by waiting and buying (in Czech currency) your onward tickets once you've crossed the border.

Highway 125, the main route to and from Linz, runs adjacent to the walled cen-

tre and then continues its way northwards towards Prague.

KEFERMARKT

☎ 07947 / pop 2100

It's silent enough to hear a pin drop in the tiny village of Kefermarkt, home to the **Pfarrkirche St Wolfgang** (☎ 62 03; Oberer Markt 1; ☎ approx 7am-8pm). The pilgrimage church's main claim to fame is its breathtaking Gothic *Flügelaltar* (winged altar). A masterpiece of craftsmanship, the limewood altarpiece towers 13.5m, with latticework fronds rising towards the ceiling. At the centre are three expressive figures, carved with great skill (left to right as you face them): St Peter, St Wolfgang and St Christopher. The wings of the altar bear religious scenes in low relief.

our pick Schlossbrauerei Weinberg (☎ 71 11; Weinberg 2; s/d €29/50; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun; P) Perched on a hill overlooking the forest and Schloss Weinberg's red turrets is this brewery guesthouse, 10 minutes' walk from Kefermarkt. The affable owners serve homebrews and specialities like beer-drenched goulash, beer-battered schnitzel and fresh-from-the-pond trout in the vaulted restaurant (mains €6-10) or on the chestnut tree-shaded terrace. After a beer (or three), you'll sleep like a baby in one of the quiet rooms with porthole-like windows that afford snapshot views of the castle.

Four daily trains (more on weekdays) travel between Kefermarkt and Freistadt (€1.60, 10 minutes). The church is about 1km north of the train station.

THE INNVIERTEL

Ping-ponged between Bavaria and Austria over the centuries, the Innviertel is a fertile farming region sliced in two by the Inn River, whose banks are a drawcard for cyclists in summer. As well as beautiful baroque and Gothic architecture in Schärding and Braunau, the region has a few other surprises worth sticking around for: from overnights in a treehouse (p218) to splashing around in a Caribbean lagoon.

BRAUNAU AM INN

☎ 07722 / pop 16,700

A stone's throw from Germany, Braunau am Inn is a favourite pit-stop for cyclists pedalling the Inn Trail to Innsbruck (p78). This border town has achieved unwanted attention as the birthplace of Hitler, though it would prefer to be described as *die gotische Stadt* (the Gothic city).

The long main square, **Stadtplatz**, is lined with elegant homes in pastel shades. At the northern end is the **tourist office** (☎ 626 44; www.tourismus-braunau.at; Stadtplatz 2; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat), while its southern end narrows to the **Torturm**, a 16th-century gate tower. To the west of Stadtplatz rises the spire of late-Gothic **Stadtpfarrkirche St Stephan** (Kirchenplatz; ☎ daylight hr). At almost 100m, it's one of the tallest in Austria.

Not far from the Torturm is **Hitler's Geburtshaus** (birth house); born in 1889, he only spent two years of his life here before moving with his family to Linz. The inscription outside his birth house simply reads *Für Frieden Freiheit und Demokratie, nie wieder Faschismus, Millionen Tote Mahnen* (For peace, freedom and democracy, never again fascism, millions of dead admonish).

Sleeping & Eating

Jugendherberge (☎ 816 38; int.osternberg.braunau@aon.at; Osternbergerstrasse 57; dm €15; ☎ Feb-Nov; P) Directly on the Inn–Danube cycle path, this hostel 1km south of the Stadtplatz is well set up for cyclists.

Hotel Mayrbräu (☎ 633 387; Linzer Strasse 13; s/d €39/62; P) This four-star hotel's large, warm rooms are good value. A vaulted gallery full of contemporary art and a vine-clad inner courtyard add flair to the place.

Bogner (☎ 683 43; Stadtplatz 47; mains €7-10; ☎ 9am-1am) Supposedly Austria's smallest brewery,

STANDING BY YOUR NAME

In the far western corner of the Innviertel stands a tiny village with a big name, Fucking (pronounced 'fooking'). Naturally the name has caused a few giggles, and a few problems along the way (signs go missing all the time), but the village is *stolz* (proud) of its unique name. Recently residents were asked to vote on a name change but decided to stick with it; village spokesman Siegfried Hoeppl stated that 'Everyone here knows what it means in English, but for us Fucking is Fucking – and it's going to stay Fucking.' The name derives from a certain Herr Fuck who settled in the area some 100 years ago.

Bogner is a rustic pub-restaurant with solid Austrian fare and several home-brewed beers to guzzle.

Getting There & Away

By train, at least one change is normally required from either Linz (€15.40, 2¼ hours) or Salzburg (€11.10, 1½ hours) by train. From Wels, there are two daily direct trains (€13.80, 1½ hours).

SCHÄRDING

☎ 07712 / pop 5200

Schärding is an easy-going town on the Inn River, with peaceful riverfront walks and a baroque centre studded with merchants' houses in myriad pastel shades.

The **tourist office** (☎ 43 00-0; www.schaerding.at; Innbruckstrasse 29; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri & 11am-3pm Sat & Sun Jun-Sep, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-Mar), near the bridge spanning the river into Germany, is a mine of information on the town. Look no further than the **Silberziele** (silver row), a line of richly coloured houses with identically shaped gables, for accommodation and food. **Pension Lachinger** (☎ 22 68; Silberzeile 13; s/d €29/48; P) and **Haus Mayr** (☎ 30 80; Silberzeile 8; s/d €30/52) are two uncomplicated pensions with comfy rooms and friendly staff.

If you have your own transport, the approach to Schärding from Linz, via Engelhartzell along the Danube, is beautiful and certainly off the beaten track. A more leisurely alternative is a boat trip between Passau (see p208) and **Schärding** (☎ 73 50; www.innschiffahrt.at, in German; Kaiserweg 1; adult/child one-way

HIGH ABOVE THE TREETOPS

Tarzan wannabes shouldn't miss the chance to take a head-spinning walk above the treetops at **Baumkronenweg** (☎ 07763-228 92-0; www.baumkronenweg.at; Kopfing; adult/child €6/3.50 🕒 10am-6pm Apr-Oct), a new canopy boardwalk in Kopfing, 21km east of Schärding. Stretching 2.5km, the trail is billed as one of the longest in the world and it's certainly a stunner – snaking high above misty spruce trees and comprising lookout towers, hanging bridges and platforms that afford bird's-eye perspectives over the forest. For a room with a view, check into the 10m-high **Baumhotel** (r €62-80), six pine-built tree houses perched on stilts. After some quality shut-eye, you'll awake to birds twittering in the treetops. Hotels don't get much greener than this...

€6/3, return €9/4; 🕒 11am, 2pm & 4pm Apr-Oct). Trains connect Linz with Schärding (€12.20, 80 minutes) roughly every hour.

GEINBERG

☎ 07723 / pop 1350

Sandwiched between Braunau am Inn and Schärding, Geinberg is making waves with **Therme Geinberg** (☎ 85 00-0; www.therme-geinberg.at; Thermenplatz 1; 4hr ticket adult/child €13/9.30 Mon-Fri, €15/11.30 weekends; 🕒 9am-10pm Sat-Thu, to 11pm Fri), one of Austria's top spas. In the heart of rural Upper Austria, it's a surreal experience to soak in a bath-warm Caribbean saltwater lagoon,

as underwater music plays and palms sway, but it certainly beats a chilly dip in the Inn. In the adjoining complex, saunas imitate a starry sky or smell deliciously of coconuts. After a steam, the icy sleet shower is quite a shocker. For those who want to be pampered, the Vitalzentrum offers an arm-long list of treatments, from hot stone therapy to underwater massage.

Trains operate roughly every hour between Braunau am Inn and Geinberg weekdays, less frequently at weekends (€4, 20 minutes). There are several trains daily between Schärding and Geinberg (€7.30, one hour).

Styria



Styria (Steiermark) is Austria's best-kept secret. When you ask someone in Austria for advice on the best places to visit in their country, and they answer with the mountains of Tyrol, the lakes of Salzkammergut and the cultural joys of Vienna, they're just trying to keep you out of Styria.

Austria's second-largest province is a perfect combination of culture, architecture, rolling hills, vine-covered slopes and, of course, mountains. Its capital Graz, Austria's second-largest city and among its most attractive, has one of the highest standards of living in Europe. Head south from Graz and you're in wine country, dubbed the 'Styrian Tuscany' for its uncanny resemblance to that region of glorious wine and golden sun. This is also *Kürbiskernöl* (strong, dark pumpkin-seed oil ubiquitous in Styrian cooking) country.

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, created from the rich imagination of Friedensreich Hundertwasser. If you prefer the latter, Schloss Riegersburg stands head and shoulders above most castles, not only in Styria, but the entire country.

The landscape of Styria's northern and western reaches is an untamed region of cold, fast-flowing alpine rivers, towering mountains and carved valleys. Complementing the area's natural wonders is a handful of man-made gems, including Admont Abbey and the Erzberg open-cast mine.

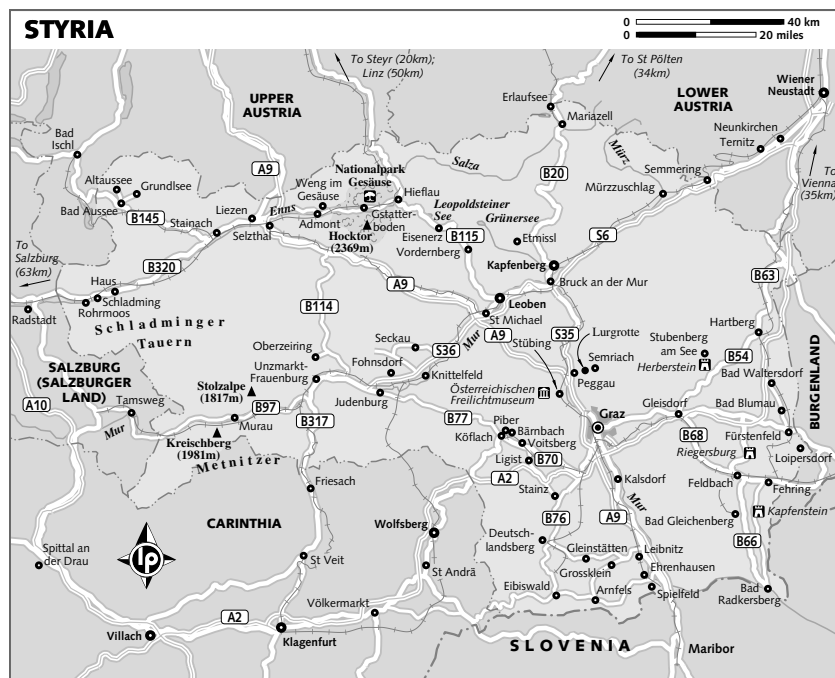
Note that the northwestern reaches of Styria stretch into Salzkammergut.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Exploring Styria's capital **Graz** (p232) and its bars and clubs
- Catching one of the fascinating changing exhibitions at **MuseumsCenter Leoben** (p241)
- Visiting Admont's spectacular **abbey** (p243) and exploring its fascinating museums
- Tripping underground, or overground, at Eisenerz's **open-cast mine** (p242)
- Cruising the mountain bike trails around **Mariazell** (p238)



■ POPULATION: 1.2 MILLION ■ AREA: 16,392 SQ KM ■ HIGHEST ELEVATION: HOCHGOLLING 2862M



History

Habitation of Styria dates back to the Stone Age, and findings from the Bronze and Iron Ages are on display in Grossklein (p236). The Celts, then the Romans, followed by the Avars and Slavs, settled in the area, but it wasn't until the 11th century that Styria as a region gained its current name. At the time, Ottakar I, whose base was in the Upper Austrian town of Steyr, acquired the area through succession and stamped his seal *Marchia Styriae* (Styrian Mark) on the province. The name stuck.

When Duke Ottakar IV died without an heir in 1192, Styria passed to the Babenberg duke Leopold V. Control fell to King Ottakar II of Bohemia (see p30) and then finally, in 1276, into the hands of the Habsburgs. In the next century the population grew, but there followed two centuries of local conflicts and invasions by the Turks and Hungarians. The year 1480 was particularly dire; it was known as the year of the 'Plagues of God' – the Turks, the Black Death and locusts. Exactly 200 years later one-quarter of Graz's population was obliterated in another plague epidemic.

In the 16th and 17th centuries Reformation and Counter-Reformation wracked the province, with the Habsburg army running riot and burning anything Protestant it could find. Once religious peace returned, and the Turkish threat was removed after 1683, the region prospered. Then, in 1779, and again in 1805 and 1809, it was the turn of the French to invade. After the Nazi occupation of WWII, the first Allied troops to liberate the area were from the Soviet Union, followed by the British, who occupied Graz until 1955.

Climate

Styria is a tale of two climes; southern Styria enjoys a relatively kind climate, influenced by the Pannonian (west Hungarian) plain to the east, while much of northern Styria is subject to alpine climatic conditions.

Getting There & Away

The A2, from Vienna to Villach in Klagenfurt, 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.

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.

Getting Around

Regional and city transport (☎ 0316-82 06 06; www.verbundlinie.at) is based on a system of zones and time tickets. Tickets can be bought from machines for one to 22 zones, and the price rises from a single trip in one zone (€1.70, valid for one hour), to 24-hour passes for one (€3.70) or multiple zones (€55.80 for 22 zones and all of Styria). Weekly and monthly passes are also available.

In Graz, **Mobilzentral** (Map p224; ☎ 0316-82 06 06; www.mobilzentral.at, in German; Jakominiass 1; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) is a useful store of information on Styrian regional buses. It also sells international train tickets. The website www.busbahnbm.at has timetable and price information.

GRAZ

☎ 0316 / pop 287,700

Austria's second-largest city is possibly Austria's most relaxed, and after Vienna it is also Austria's liveliest for after-hours pursuits. It's an attractive place with bristling green parkland, red rooftops and a small, fast-flowing river gushing through its centre. Architecturally, it complements Renaissance courtyards and provincial baroque palaces with cutting-edge modern designs that fascinate, provoke or arouse curiosity.

The surrounding countryside, a mixture of vineyards, mountains, forested hills and thermal springs, is within easy striking distance, and Graz has a very beautiful bluff connected to the centre by steps, a funicular and a glass lift. Last but not least, a large student population (some 50,000 in four universities) helps propel the nightlife and vibrant arts scene, creating a pleasant, lively and liveable city.

History

Graz is a derivation of the Slav word *gradec*, meaning small fortress, and developed from a Bavarian settlement that was first documented in 1128. By 1189 Graz was a city, and in 1379

it became the seat of the Leopold line of the Habsburgs. Friedrich III, emperor of Austria and the Holy Roman Empire, resided here and left his famous motto, AEIOU (*Austria Est Imperare Orbi Universo*; Austria rules the world) inscribed all over town. In 1564, Graz became the administrative capital of Inner Austria, an area covering present-day Styria and Carinthia, plus the former possessions of Carniola, Gorizia and Istria. In 1784, with the Turks no longer a threat, Graz tore down its city walls.

Early in the 19th century Archduke Johann, benign brother of Franz I, founded the first museum in Austria, the Joanneum, in Graz. In the late 1990s the historic centre of Graz achieved the status of a Unesco World Heritage site.

Orientation

Schlossberg rises over the medieval town centre, the river Mur cuts a north-south path west of this bluff and the **Hauptbahnhof** (main train station) is 1km further west of here.

Trams 3 and 6 run from the **Hauptbahnhof** to Hauptplatz. Radiating from Hauptplatz is Sporgasse, an important shopping street, and Herrengasse, the main pedestrian thoroughfare. At the southern end of Herrengasse is Jakominiplatz, a major transport hub for local buses and trams.

MAPS

Graztourismus has an excellent free map of the central city, and also a great *city & environs* map; Freytag & Berndt's *Graz* (€3.95; scale 1:15,000) city map is also useful.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

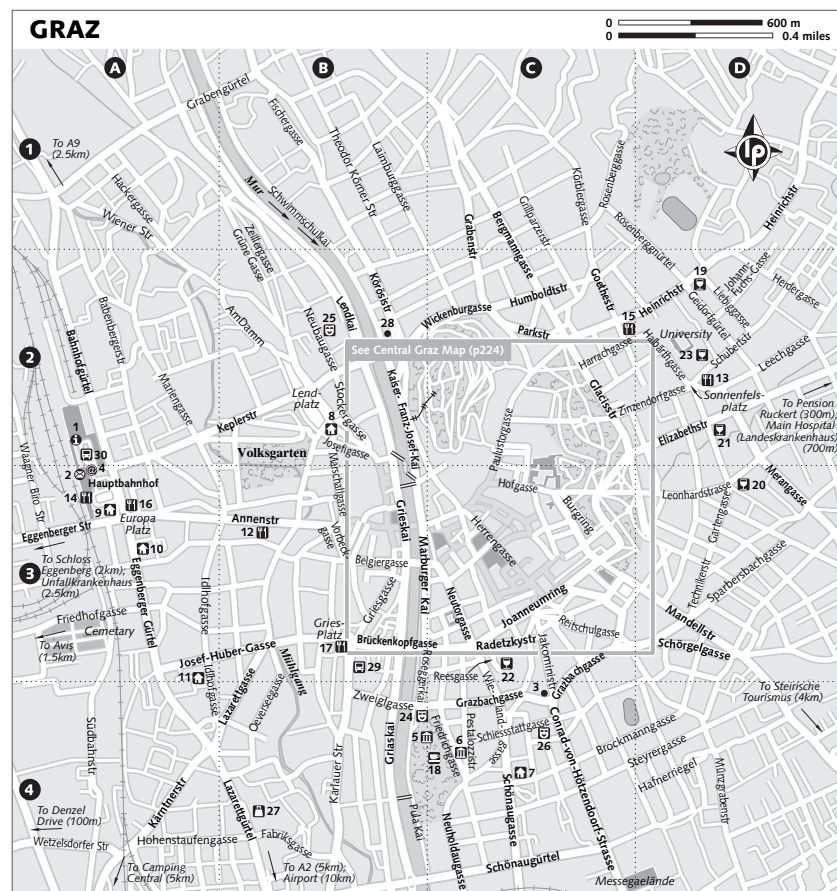
English Bookshop (Map p224; ☎ 82 62 66; Tummelplatz 7; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) Lots of English books, but at a price.

Freytag & Berndt (Map p224; ☎ 81 82 30; Sporgasse 29; ☎ 10am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) The best source of maps and guidebooks.

INTERNET ACCESS

High Speed Internet-Selfstore (Map p224; ☎ 0650-89 16 900; Herrengasse 3; per hr €3; ☎ 7am-10pm) A coin-operated internet space inside the passage.

Speednet Cafe (Map p222; ☎ 228 412; www.speednet-cafe.com, in German; Europaplatz 4; per hr €5.80; ☎ 7am-10.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-10.30pm Sat & Sun) Located in the train station.



INTERNET RESOURCES

www.graz.at Provides a snapshot of most aspects of the city.

www.graztourismus.at The city's excellent tourist information portal.

www.info-graz.at Practical information on life in Graz; in German.

LAUNDRY

Putzerei-Rupp (Map p222; ☎ 82 11 83; Jakoministrasse 34; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri) One useful self-service laundry.

LEFT LUGGAGE

Lockers (small/large €2/3.50 for 24 hours) are inside the train station.

LIBRARIES

Steiermärkische Landesbibliothek (Map p224; ☎ 877 4600; Kalchberggasse 2; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri early Sep-early Jul, to 1pm early Jul-early Sep) The main library of Graz.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Landeskrankenhaus (off Map p222; ☎ 385-0; Auenbruggerplatz 1) The city's largest hospital; provides emergency treatment. It's about 3km from the town centre.
Unfallkrankenhaus (off Map p222; ☎ 505-0; Göstinger strasse 24) Emergency hospital at tram 1 terminus.

MONEY

The **Hauptbahnhof** has two ATMs.
Bankhaus Krentschker (Map p224; ☎ 80 30-0; Am Eisernen Tor 3; ☎ 8.30am-4.15pm Mon-Wed,

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to 5.30pm Thu, to 3pm Fri) American Express representative in Graz.

Steiermärkische Sparkasse (Map p224; ☎ 050100 36 018; Schmiedegasse; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-4pm Mon-Thu, 8.30am-3pm Fri) Full banking services.

POST

Hauptbahnhof post office (Map p222; Bahnhof; ☎ 7am-10pm Mon-Fri, 8am-8pm Sat, 1-8pm Sun) This post office is located inside the station.

Main post office (Map p224; Neutorgasse 46; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat)

TOURIST INFORMATION

Graztourismus (Map p224; ☎ 80 75-0; www.graztourismus.at; Herrengasse 16; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat, Jan-Mar & Nov, to 6pm Mon-Sat, to 4pm Sun Apr-Jun,

Sep, Oct & Dec, to 7pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat & Sun Jul & Aug) Graz's main tourist office, with loads of free information on the city, and helpful and knowledgeable staff. Inside the train station (Map p222) is an information stand and terminal, and a free hotline to the tourist office.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

STA (Map p224; ☎ 82 62 62-0; graz@statravel.at; Raubergasse 20; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri) Nationwide travel agency specialising in student travel.

Sights

Most of Graz's museums are under the tutelage of the Landesmuseum Joanneum. Entry to the Kunsthhaus Graz, Neue Galerie, Schloss Eggenberg or the Landeszeughaus, including their special exhibitions, entitles you to a day

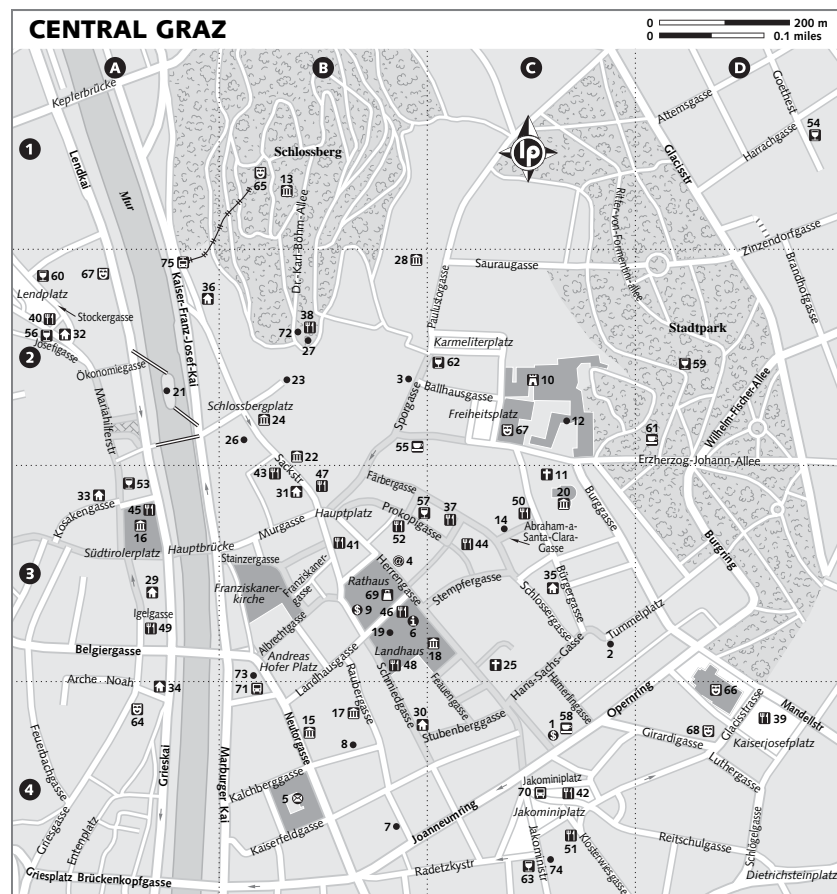
GRAZ IN...

One Day

Begin the morning with a coffee and cake at **Edegger-Tax** (p231) before hitting the slug-like **Kunsthhaus** (p226). Grab a quick midday refreshment on the **Murinsel** (p227) and, if the kids are around, they can run riot in the small playground. Climb **Schlossberg** (p225) and take in the views from the terrace of the **Garrison Museum** (p225) before lunching at **Aiola Upstairs** (p230). Dedicate a leisurely afternoon to **Schloss Eggenberg** (p226), not missing the **Alte Galerie**, and in the early evening have a snack and quaff a wine at the bar of **Iohan** (p231) before drifting over to a table or moving to **Landhauskeller** (p231) for a full meal. After dinner, chill out in a **Bermuda Triangle** bar (p231).

Two Days

After day one, drop by the market at **Lendplatz** (p231) and later catch up on the Habsburgs by visiting the **Mausoleum of Ferdinand II** (p225). Afterwards nip into the **Domkirche** (p225) before retiring to **Promenade** (p231) in the **Stadtspark** (p225) for a light meal. Write some postcards here or stroll through the shady park, and later get a feel for medieval armoury in the **Landeszeughaus** (p224) before depriving your senses in the samadhi bath in the **Museum der Wahrnehmung** (p226). In the evening, catch a performance at the **Opernhaus** (p233) or **Schauspielhaus** (p233).



ticket for any of these. The two-day Joanneum pass (€12) covers most city museums.

HAUPTPLATZ & AROUND

The **Landesmuseum Joanneum** (Map p224; ☎ 8017 9740; www.museum-joanneum.at; Raubergasse 10; adult/child & student/family €5.50/2/11; ☎ 3-6pm Tue-Sat), founded in 1811, is Austria's oldest museum and, with 19 locations, is pretty much the gardener of Graz's rich cultural landscape. Its Raubergasse building is home to collections on geology and palaeontology, minerals and zoology, as well as one on botany (only open to groups). (Note that these restricted hours apply while it's being renovated – until about 2011).

The **Landeszeughaus** (provincial armoury; Map p224; ☎ 80 17 98 10; Herrengasse 16; adult/child & student €7/3,

tour €2.50 extra; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Oct, to 3pm Mon-Sat, to 4pm Sun Nov-Mar) will quite possibly rate as your favourite Austrian museum if you have a passion for armour and weapons. It houses an astounding array of gleaming pieces (more than 30,000 in fact). Most of these date from the 17th century, when the original armoury was built, and some of it is exquisitely engraved; other exhibits are rough and ready and have seen battle. This is heavy metal territory – you'll find equipment here (such as the two-handed swords) that would need a Schwarzenegger to wield it.

The stained glass window of the **Stadtpfarrkirche** (town parish church; Map p224; Herrengasse 23; admission free; ☎ dawn-dusk), southeast of the

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Landeszeughaus, is an interesting anomaly: the fourth panel from the bottom on the right (left of the high altar) clearly shows Hitler and Mussolini looking on as Christ is scourged.

SCHLOSSBERG

Rising to 473m, Schlossberg is the site of the original fortress that gave Graz its name. Its wooded slopes can be reached by a number of paths, with the funicular **Schlossbergbahn** (Castle Hill Railway; Map p224; free with public transport ticket) from Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Kai, or by **Glass Lift** (Map p224; free with public transport ticket) from Schlossbergplatz. Even Napoleon was hard-pressed to raze this fortress, but raze it he did. The whole area was later landscaped and today an **open-air theatre** (Map p224), a great restaurant-bar and a small **Garrison Museum** (Map p224; ☎ 82 73 48; Schlossberg 5a; adult/child €1/free; ☎ 10am-4.30pm Tue-Sun) are the legacy. Perched on the southern edge of Schlossberg is the city's emblem, the **Uhrturm** (Clock Tower; Map p224). In what must have been a good deal for Europe's modernising midget, the townsfolk paid Napoleon a ransom of 2987 florins and 11 farthings to spare the clock tower during the 1809 invasion.

THE BURG & AROUND

Southeast of Schlossberg is the city's 15th-century **Burg** (Map p224; Hofgasse), now housing government offices. At the far end of the courtyard, on the left under the arch, is an ingenious **double staircase** (1499; Map p224) – the steps diverge and converge as they spiral. Farther east is the **Stadtpark** (Map p224), the city's largest green space.

Opposite the Burg is the **Domkirche** (Map p224; ☎ 82 16 83-0; Burggasse 3; admission free; ☎ dawn-dusk), a late-Gothic church dating from the 15th century that became a cathedral in 1786. The interior combines Gothic and baroque elements, with reticulated vaulting on the ceiling, but its highlight is the faded **Gottesplagenbild** fresco on the cathedral's exterior, which dates from 1485. It depicts life in the early 1480s, when Graz was besieged by its triple tragedy of Turks, the plague and locusts.

Next door is the mannerist-baroque **Mausoleum of Ferdinand II** (Map p224; ☎ 82 16 83; Burggasse 2; adult/child €4.50/2; ☎ 10.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-4pm). Construction by Italian architect Pietro de Pomis began in 1614, but the mausoleum was completed after Pomis' death by Pietro Valnegro, while Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach chipped in with the exuberant

stuccowork and frescoes inside. Ferdinand (1578–1637), his wife and his son are interred in the crypt, although the lead roles are played by the red marble sarcophagus of Ferdinand's parents, Karl II (1540–90) and Maria of Bavaria (1551–1608). Only Maria occupies the sarcophagus – Karl II lies in the Benedictine Abbey (p244) in Seckau.

SCHLOSS EGGENBERG

Situated on the western fringes of the city (tram 1), **Schloss Eggenberg** (off Map p222; ☎ 58 32 64-0; Eggenberger Allee 90; adult/child & student €7/3; ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Sun Palm Sunday–Oct) was created for the Eggenberg dynasty in 1625. This splendid baroque palace was constructed by de Pomis at the request of Johann Ulrich (1568–1634), who required a suitable home after becoming governor of Inner Austria in 1625.

The dominating theme of the 24 **Prunkräume** (staterooms) is astronomy and mythology. The Planet Hall, which is a riot of white stuccowork and baroque frescoes, is one highlight; the frescoes portray the seven planets (all that were then discovered), the four elements and the 12 signs of the zodiac. Most rooms are devoted to one theme, including a Chinese room and a games room. Guided tours are conducted in German every hour on the hour, though an English translation is possible (enquire in advance).

The **Alte Galerie** (☎ 58 32 64-9770; adult/child & student €7/3; ☎ 10am–6pm Tue–Sun Apr–Oct, 10am–5pm Tue–Sun Nov–Mar) is the best among the museums housed within the Schloss, with exquisite paintings and sculpture dating from the Romanesque period through to the late baroque. The palace houses three other collections, which can be visited with admission to the Alte Galerie or Schloss itself. In the **Pre- and Early-History Collection** the prize exhibition is the exceptional *Strettweg Chariot* and a bronze mask, both dating from the Hallstatt period (7th century BC). The other collections are the **Coin Collection** from Styria, and a **Collection of Roman Provincial Antiquities** covering Roman finds in the province.

The palace is set in **parkland** (adult/child €1/free; ☎ 8am–7pm Apr–Oct, to 5pm Nov–Mar) where peacock and deer roam among Roman stone reliefs, and has a **Planetengarten** (Planet Garden; ☎ 10am–6pm May–Oct, to 4pm Nov & Apr) on the same Renaissance theme of planets.

For Graz's Kunsthaus, see the Walking Tour (right).

OTHER SIGHTS

Some other intriguing museums are:

Kulturhistorische Sammlung (Map p224; ☎ 80 17 97 80; Neutorgasse 45; in planning) A museum with crafted applied arts from the Middle Ages to present.

Museum der Wahrnehmung (Museum of Perception; Map p222; ☎ 81 15 99; www.muwa.at; in German; Friedrichgasse 41; adult/child/family €3.50/1.80/8, samadhi bath €45; ☎ 2–6.30pm Wed–Mon) Small but unusual collection that explores sensory illusions; the samadhi (meditative) bath is a therapeutic bath that relieves the body of all sensory input.

Volkskundemuseum (Map p224; ☎ 80 17 98 99; Paulustorgasse 11–13a; adult/child/student €3.50/2/2.50, tours extra €1.50; ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Sun) Museum devoted to folk art and lifestyle; highlights include 2000 years of traditional clothing.

Walking Tour

This walk covers about 2.5km of the old town and can be done in 1½ hours without stops.

Start your walk from the tourist office on Herrengasse and enormous **Landhaus (1)**, the home of the provincial parliament. The building is a design of the 16th-century Swiss architect Domenico dell'Allio, based on the style of a Lombard palace. West of this is **Landhaushof (2)**, a stunning Italian Renaissance courtyard, a three-tiered gallery connected by walkways and one of the most celebrated examples of Renaissance architecture in Austria. Back on Herrengasse, continue northwest past the **Bemaltes Haus (3)**; Painted House), a splendidly decorated Renaissance ducal residence, and cross over to **Hauptplatz (4)**, the main square from 1160, which is dominated by another Renaissance gem, the **Rathaus (5)**; Town Hall) from 1550. The fountain in the centre is a monument to Johann, with four women at his feet representing Styria's main rivers – the Mur, Enns, Drau and Sann. From here, follow Franziskanergasse to Franziskanerplatz, dominated by the **Franziskanerkirche (6)**; Franciscan Church). The building dates from 1240 and is based on an earlier Minorite church reworked by the Franciscans, who took it over in the 16th century. Cross the bridge. Sitting splendidly on the bank of the Mur River is the **Kunsthaus (7)**; Map p224; ☎ 8017 9200; www.kunsthausgraz.at; Lendkai 1; adult/child & student/family €7/3/14, tours €2.50; ☎ 10am–6pm Tue–Sun, tours 11am & 4pm). Designed by British architects Peter Cook and Colin Fournier, this world-class contemporary art space is a bold creation

which looks something like a space-age sea slug. Exhibitions change every three to four months, and tours cover not only the exhibitions but also the building. Mariahilferstrasse, immediately behind the Kunsthaus, is a lively street with some good bars set among a raft of dubious nightclubs.

Continue north along the river to Mariahilferplatz, where the two towers of the Mariahilferkirche dominate a large square. A short walk ahead is the **Murinsel (8)**, an artificial island-cum-bridge of metal and plastic in the middle of the Mur. This modern floating landmark contains a café (p232), a kids' playground and a small stage. After crossing the island you reach Schlossbergplatz, where stairs and a lift take you to **Schlossberg (9)**; p225).

From the top, follow Dr-Karl-Böhm-Allee north for the wonderful views from Schlossberg and then backtrack, taking either the lift or stairs again and go left (south) along Sackstrasse, with its art and antique shops. This takes you past the **Stadtmuseum (10)**; Map p224; ☎ 82 73 48; Sackstrasse 18; adult/child €4/2; ☎ 10am–6pm Tue–Sun), portraying the history of Graz and housing temporary exhibitions, and

WALK FACTS

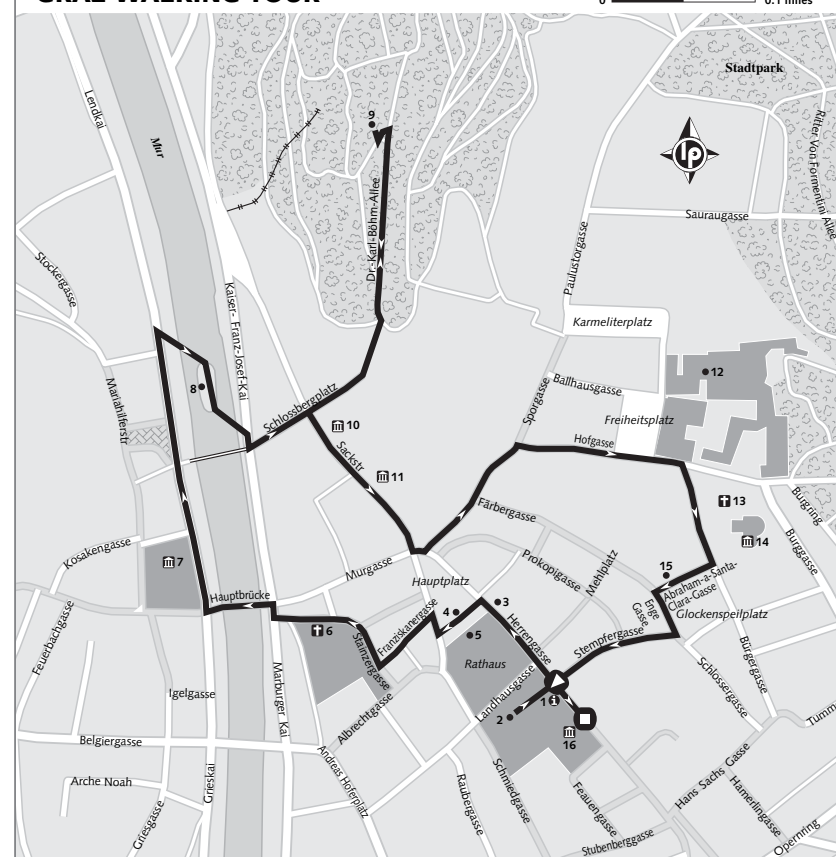
Start Tourist Office

Finish Landeszeughaus

Distance 2.5km

Duration 1½ hours

GRAZ WALKING TOUR



THE TERMINATOR – A ROCKY RELATIONSHIP WITH GRAZ

If you ask an ordinary Graz citizen on the street who they think is Graz's most famous citizen, the chances are they'll say 'Arnold Schwarzenegger'. Maybe it's not surprising. Arni's star-spangled biography is legendary. The son of a Graz cop. The modest childhood growing up just outside the city limits. A talented young bodybuilder who swept up multiple titles of Mr Universe and Mr Olympia. And not forgetting, of course, the fabled *Terminator* films and his meteoric rise to become Governor of California. Topping off the legend, he has recently morphed into California's 'green' crusader.

But his relationship with Graz has been turbulent. When he didn't use his gubernatorial power in 2005 to stop the execution of a condemned man, local political figures felt compelled to change the name of Graz's stadium, at that time known as the Arnold Schwarzenegger Stadion in honour of the town's most famous export.

Many local Graz citizens are quick to jump to Schwarzenegger's defence. When we asked Robert, aged 42, and born in Graz to Croatian parents, he said he admired Schwarzenegger for the way he's done his own thing. 'Schmidtbauer', aged 39, who sells produce at the Lendplatz market, echoed this view (and the sentiments of his colleague selling vegetables a few stalls further on), saying that 'He's a lot smarter than everyone thinks'.

As for the Terminator himself, he wrote a letter pre-empting the stadium name change, and demanded that his name be removed. He also returned his ring of honour to the city. 'In conclusion,' he wrote in 2005 to the city mayor, 'I want to once again expressly stress that I'll stay with all my heart a Grazer, Styrian and Austrian.'

Eva, a 25-year-old woman who grew up in Graz, said she'd seen his films and liked them. She didn't like the episode with the stadium, though. 'Renaming the stadium was idiotic', she said. 'It just wasn't right to do that.'

after that the **Neue Galerie (11)**; Map p224; ☎ 82 91 55; Sackstrasse 16; adult/child & student/family €7/5.50/14; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun), with changing modern art exhibitions. At Sporgasse, turn left, take a right into Hofgasse and walk east along here past Freiheitsplatz and the city's 15th-century **Burg (12)**; Castle). Just east of this is the **Dom (13)** and **Mausoleum (14)**. Turn right into Bürgergasse and take the first right into Abraham-a-Santa-Clara-Gasse, which opens up to Glockenspielplatz and the **Glockenspiel (15)**, where at 11am, 3pm and 6pm daily figures emerge from the clock's upper window and twirl to music. The area here and around Mehlplatz is called the Bermuda Triangle (see p232) and is one of the most popular eating and entertainment districts. Turn left into Enge Gasse and go right along Stempfergasse and you arrive back on Herrengasse. Finally, just south is the **Landeszeughaus (16)** armoury museum.

Graz for Children

With its green spaces, playgrounds and relaxed atmosphere, Graz is made for children. The creation of **FriDa & FreD** (Map p222; ☎ 87 27 700; www.fridaundfred.at; Friedrichgasse 34; adult & child over 6/child under 6/family €4/1.50/11; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon,

Wed & Thu, 9am-7pm Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun), Graz's first museum devoted to children, makes it even better. This small but fun-packed museum is aimed at kids up to the age of 12, and hosts workshops, exhibitions and theatre. Like any good children's museum, it has loads of hands-on tasks and interactive displays.

The **Schlossberg Cave Railway** (Map p224; Schlossbergplatz; admission €3; ☎ 10am-5pm), the longest grotto railway in Europe, is another highlight for the little 'uns. The trip, taking about 20 minutes, winds its way around fairytale scenes through tunnels once used as a safe haven from the allied bombings during WWII.

Tours

The tourist office (Graztourismus; see p223) offers a guided walking tour (adult/child €9.50/3.50) in German and English at 2.30pm daily from April to October and at 2.30pm Saturday from November to March. Also ask about its regular theme tours in town and weekend day trips outside Graz, or pick up its nifty multimedia (and multi-lingual) guide to sights, using a handheld computer (€7.50/8.50 two/four hours).

Festivals & Events

Graz's biggest bash is **Styriarte**, a festival featuring almost continuous classical concerts in June and July. Pick up information from **Styriarte Kartenbüro** (Map p224; ☎ 82 50 00; www.styriarte.com; Sackstrasse 17; €16-110).

Steirischer Herbst, an avant-garde festival of new art held during October, includes performances in music, theatre, film, plus exhibitions and art installations. Contact **Steirischer Herbst Informationsbüro** (Map p224; ☎ 81 60 70; www.steirischerherbst.at, in German; Sackstrasse 17; €6-35) for more. **Jazz Sommer Graz** (www.jazzsommergraz.at, in German), a collection of free jazz concerts (often with an impressive international line-up), takes place in Dom im Berg from early July to late August.

Sleeping BUDGET

The tourist office has an excellent accommodation guide and books hotels without charge.

Camping Central (off Map p222; ☎ 0676-378 51 02; freizeit@netway.at; Martinhofstrasse 3; campsites per adult/child/tent €8/5/17; ☎ Apr-Oct; P ☎) The large swimming pool and children's playground are useful features of this camping ground 6km southwest of the city centre (bus 32 from Jakominiplatz).

Jugendgästehaus (Map p222; ☎ 70 83 50; graz@jfgg.at, lidhofgasse 74; dm/s/d €22/33/52; P ☎) This big, colourful and friendly HI hostel is the cheapest deal in Graz. There's a small playground for kids too.

Hotel Strasser (Map p222; ☎ 71 39 77; office@hotel-strasser.at; Eggenberger Gürtel 11; s/d €35/60; P) Beyond the uninteresting exterior of the Strasser are some fascinating pseudo-neoclassical and Mediterranean touches, with Tuscan gold and ochre blending with mirrors, along with artwork and cast iron balustrades. Rooms are comfortable but ask for one away from the busy street.

Gasthof-Pension zur Steirer-Stub'n (Map p222; ☎ 71 68 55; www.pension-graz.at; Lendplatz 8; s/d €41/74, apt €100-150) This inn combines the best of a traditional atmosphere with a bright and breezy feel, complemented by features like tiled floors in the corridors, a potted plant in each room and patios outside many of the good-sized rooms overlooking Lendplatz.

Pension Rückert (off Map p222; ☎ 32 30 31; Rückertgasse 4; s/d €52/74; P) A big plus with this pension is that it's smack-bang in the student

district. In summer the 1st floor is the best – the 2nd floor is unrenovated and the top floor gets the heat and is better for winter sojourns. Take tram 1 to Tegetthoffplatz, walk 100m in the direction of the tram route then turn right.

MIDRANGE

Hotel Mariahilf (Map p224; ☎ 71 31 63; www.hotel-mariahilf.at; Mariahilferstrasse 9; s/d €51/88) Large rooms, including some with small ante-rooms, and interesting Art Deco touches give the Mariahilf a relaxed atmosphere. The interior wood creates a light ambience, and the location is excellent if you want to be near the Kunsthalle and bars on Mariahilferstrasse.

Hotel Feichtinger Graz (Map p224; ☎ 724 100; www.hotel-feichtinger.at; Lendplatz 1a; s/d/tr €50/94/129; P) This modern seminar and business hotel offers some of the best-value beds in town. Rooms are spacious, and the furnishings are modern and have a light touch, which extends to the very large breakfast room.

our pick Hotel Daniel (Map p224; ☎ 711 080; www.hoteldaniel.com; Europaplatz 1; r €59-79, breakfast €9 per person; P ☎) Perched at the top of Annenstrasse and looking for all the world like a block of 1950s beachside holiday apartments that's lost its beach, the Daniel is an exclusive design hotel with two categories of rooms: 'Smart' and 'Loggia'. The former are smaller, though decent sized, and have queen-sized beds; they're a great deal because the price is per room, not person. The Loggia category is larger and has balconies. All rooms are tastefully furnished in minimalist designs, you can rent a Vespa (€25 per day) and there's a 24-hour espresso bar. The bathroom – but, thankfully, not toilet – wall is transparent.

Grazerhof (Map p224; ☎ 82 43 58; www.grazerhof.at; Stubenberggasse 10; s/d/tr €54/90/120) This hotel offers a central location, but few other real advantages, in a plain building; unfortunately the rooms to the yard have a wall outside the window.

Hotel zum Dom (Map p224; ☎ 82 48 00; www.dom-hotel.at, in German; Bürgergasse 14; s €80-90, d €165, ste €200-322; P ☎) Hotel Zum Dom is a charming, graceful hotel with tasteful and individually furnished rooms. These come either with steam/power showers or whirlpools, and one suite even has a terrace whirlpool. Ceramic art throughout the hotel is crafted by a local artist.

Hotel Weitzer (Map p224; ☎ 7030; www.weitzer.com; Grieskai 12; s €85-140, d €125-180, ste €300; (P) (Q)) This four-star hotel in two buildings is just the trick if you like your pillows well fluffed each evening while you're off enjoying a sauna or romp in the fitness room. The rooftop terrace is disappointing, but everything else is up to standard here.

TOP END

Augarten Hotel (Map p222; ☎ 20 800; www.augartenhotel.at; Schönaugasse 53; s/d €115/140; (P) (Q)) Though not an 'art hotel', art plays an important role in the Augarten. It's decorated with the owner's private collection, which includes a great oil of the German crooning superstar Heino. All rooms are bright and modern, the end rooms have windows on two walls, and corridors run along the exterior of the building.

our pick Hotel Erzherzog Johann (Map p224; ☎ 81 16 16; www.erzherzog-johann.com; Sackstrasse 3-5; s €119-172, d €145-235, ste €350; mains €12-18; (P) (X)) Weekend deals are the thing to watch out for here, but also throw caution to the wind and splurge in one of the ostentatious theme rooms. The Wanda-Sacher-Masoch-Suite is in white and with projections of classical statues in the bathroom, whereas Orientalists will get a kick out of the sensational Moroccan room.

Schlossberg Hotel (Map p224; ☎ 80 70-0; www.schlossberg-hotel.at; Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Kai 30; s €141-181, d €187-230, ste €311-375; (P) (Q) (X)) Central but away from the city tumult, four-star Schlossberg is blessed with a prime location at the foot of Schlossberg. Rooms are well sized and decorated in the style of a country inn, but the fitness room is a tacky number, with exposed air-conditioning pipes. The rooftop terrace with views is perfect for an evening glass of wine.

Grand Hotel Wiesler (Map p224; ☎ 70 66-0; www.weitzer.com; Grieskai 4; s €185-205, d €245-265, ste €300-695; (P) (Q)) This Art Nouveau gem is the only five-star hotel in town. All but two of the elegant rooms have bathtubs, and the Art Nouveau mosaic by Leopold Forstner (1878-1936) in the breakfast room - depicting Venus stepping out of an oyster - evokes admiration even if it's while glancing up from your egg.

Eating

Whether you're after a bite on the run, coffee and cake, a cheap, filling meal, hearty Styrian fare or gourmet cuisine in splendid surroundings, Graz can give it to you.

RESTAURANTS

Stern (Map p224; ☎ 81 84 00; www.sternenclub.at; Sporgasse 3; mains €5-14; ☎ 9am-3am) During the day and early evening Stern is a fine restaurant with a focus on salads, wok and pasta dishes served at outdoor tables on Kameliterplatz; when the sun sets, its cellar-like interior morphs into a bar, featuring DJs every Friday and Saturday, and live acts on Sunday.

Krebsenkeller (Map p224; ☎ 82 93 77; Sackstrasse 12; mains €6-12; ☎ 10am-midnight) Krebsenkeller does inexpensive regional cuisine - which means lots of pumpkin oil - and appeals to locals and tourists alike, not only for its home-style cooking, but also for a lovely inner courtyard and traditional atmosphere.

Tramina (Map p224; ☎ 83 01 67; Klosterwiesgasse 2; mains €6.50-11; ☎ 6pm-2am) In the family for three generations, this is one of two restaurants in Graz - Mangolds is the other - awarded the Styrian 'Green Chef's Hat' for good ecological practice. Everything is organic in this unusual *Beisl*-gone-feral run by two sisters. It specialises in lamb, but you'll also find thin slices of beef served in vinegar and oil and half a dozen vegetarian dishes.

iku (Map p224; ☎ 8017 9292; Lendkai 1; lunch menu €5.50, mains €8-12; ☎ 9am-1am) Inside the surrealistic Kunsthau, this sleek bar and restaurant does one vegetarian and one meat dish for lunch, and has a small evening menu offering the likes of beef medallions in red wine and basil sauce. A DJ takes the floor from 10pm Saturday.

Gamlitzer Weinstube (Map p224; ☎ 82 87 60; Mehlplatz 4; €6-17; ☎ 9am-11pm Mon-Fri) With a menu in 18 different languages, the Gamlitzer aims squarely at the tourist trade. Ingredients for its home-style classic Styrian dishes come from the local farmers; there's outside seating.

Aiola Upstairs (Map p224; ☎ 81 87 97; Schlossberg 2; mains €8-18; ☎ 9am-midnight) Ask any local where to find the best outdoor dining experience in Graz, and they'll probably say Aiola. Whether it's king prawns with pasta or corn-fed chicken, this wonderful restaurant on Schlossberg has great views, delicious international flavours, a superb wine list, spot-on cocktails and very chilled music.

Yamamoto (Map p224; ☎ 852 852; Prokopigasse 4; small/large sushi €11/19; udon €7-8.50; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat) Yamamoto is refreshingly authentic in an age when Chinese restaurants are re-inventing themselves as lucrative sushi bars; it's Japanese owned and run, and gets its sushi

delivered throughout the week, so it's always fresh and, like the noodle dishes, delicious.

Iohan (Map p224; ☎ 82 13 12; www.iohan.at; Landhausgasse 1; mains €10.50-22.50, bar menu €7.50-9.50; ☎ 6pm-1am Tue-Sat) This very stylish restaurant and bar with a Gothic vaulted ceiling is one place where you can find a seasonal salad incorporating tongue of veal and asparagus. But it's also perfect for chilling out at the bar and taking entree-like snacks.

Aiola City (Map p224; ☎ 890 335; Mehlplatz 1; mains €12-20; ☎ 7.30am-late Mon-Sat, 9am-late Sun) In the centre, this Aiola has low vaulting, a cool lounge feel and outdoor seating on Mehlplatz.

Landhauskeller (Map p224; ☎ 83 02 76; Schmiedgasse 9; mains €12.50-21.50; ☎ 11.30am-midnight Mon-Sat) What started as a spit-and-sawdust pub in the 16th century evolved into an atmospheric, high-quality restaurant serving specialties like its four different sorts of *Tafelspitz* (prime broiled beef). Flowers, coats of arms and medieval-style murals pack a historical punch, and in the summer outside tables look onto the stunning Landhaus courtyard.

Other recommended restaurants include: **Altsteirische Schmankerlstubn** (Map p224; ☎ 83 32 11; Sackstrasse 10; mains €8-16; ☎ 10am-midnight) Rustic restaurant serving traditional Styrian cuisine at the foot of the Schlossberg.

Stainzerbauer (Map p224; ☎ 82 11 06; Bürgergasse 4; mains €10-19; ☎ 11am-midnight) Styrian and Austrian specialties in a lovely courtyard garden.

Magnolia (Map p222; ☎ 82 38 35; Schönaugasse 53; 3-5 course menu €39.50-59.50, mains €15-20; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri) Alongside Augarten Hotel, with outdoor seating, this stylish restaurant with a seasonal menu and Austro-international cuisine is highly rated.

QUICK EATS

Aside from the following listings, there are plenty of cheap eateries near **Universität Graz** (Map p222), particularly on Halbarthgasse, Zinzendorfsgasse and Harrachgasse.

Mangolds (Map p224; ☎ 71 80 02; Griesgasse 11; meals €5-10; ☎ 11am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat) Tasty vegetarian patties, rice dishes and over 40 different salads are served at this pay-by-weight vegetarian cafeteria.

Other good quick-eats include:

Feinspitz (Map p224; ☎ 870-0; 2nd fl Kastner & Öhler department store, Sackstrasse 7-11; meals €5-9; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat) Buffet-style restaurant with healthy salads and ready meals; also offers a kids' menu from €4 (which includes a drink and a surprise).

Mensa (Map p222; ☎ 32 33 62; Sonnenfelsplatz 1;

menu €5; ☎ 11am-2.30pm Mon-Fri) One of the university cafeterias.

Zu den 3 Goldenen Kugeln (most mains under €5; ☎ lunch & dinner) Heinrichstrasse/University (Map p222; ☎ 36 16 36; Heinrichstrasse 18); Griesplatz (Map p222; Griesplatz 34); Bahnhofgürtel (Map p222; Bahnhofgürtel 89); Citypark (Map p222; Lazarettgürtel 55) An institution in Graz, the Goldenen Kugeln serves up possibly the cheapest schnitzel around, but still manages to make it tasty. The Heinrichstrasse branch, with its rustic air, is the nicest.

SELF-CATERING

The freshest fruit and vegetables are at the **farmers markets** (☎ 4.30am-1pm Mon-Sat) on Kaiser-Josef-Platz (Map p224) and Lendplatz (Map p222). For **fast-food stands**, head for Hauptplatz (Map p224) and Jakominiplatz (Map p224). Supermarkets are plentiful throughout the city; there's a **Billa** (Map p222; Annenstrasse 23), a **Eurospar** (Map p224; Sackstrasse 7-11) and a **Spar** (Map p222; ☎ daily) is located in the *Hauptbahnhof*.

Drinking

The café and bar scene in Graz is propelled by a healthy student crowd. Some of the cafés we've listed here change into bars as the night wears on, but tend not to stay open as late.

CAFÉS

Edegger-Tax (Map p224; ☎ 83 02 30; Hofgasse 8; coffee & cakes €2-5; ☎ 6.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 6.30am-3pm Sat, also 7am-3pm Apr-Sep) This modern café is perfectly complemented by its 1569 bakery (open 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday, to noon Saturday) next door. Apart from the yummy goodies baked on the premises, its stunning wood-carved façade is reason enough to drop by; note the small doors in the frontage, concealing ingenious hiding places.

Operncafé (Map p224; ☎ 82 04 36; Opernring 22; coffee & cake €2-5; ☎ 7.30am-9pm Mon-Sat, 9am-9pm Sun) Operncafé is a traditional café with good coffee, homemade pastries and pleasant, suited waiters who have found a calling in life.

Auschlössl (Map p222; ☎ 81 33 68; Friedrichgasse 36; coffee about €3; ☎ 10am-midnight Mon-Sat) Auschlössl is another small café on the edge of a park, but this time on the other side of town. It's perfect for an evening drink or a coffee break after an exhausting visit to FriDa & FreD. It often hosts art exhibitions.

Promenade (Map p224; ☎ 81 38 40; Erzherzog Johann Allee 1; snack €7.40; ☎ 8am-midnight) Popular with all walks of life, the delightful Promenade is a Graz institution - styled on a Vienna

coffee house on a tree-lined avenue in the Stadtpark.

Aiola Island (Map p224; ☎ 81 86 69; Murinsel; ☎ noon-8pm Tue-Fri, 10-midnight Sat, 10am-8pm Sun) This café on the Murinsel offers a unique experience – here you can sip a drink as the Mur River splashes below your feet.

BARS

Most bars are concentrated in three areas; around the university, on Mehlplatz and Prokopigasse (dubbed the 'Bermuda Triangle'), and near the Kunsthaus. Lines are often blurred, so don't dismiss a place for a good night out just because it serves food. Classic examples include the two Aiola restaurants, iku and Stern.

Orange (Map p222; ☎ 32 74 29; www.café-bar-orange.at; Elisabethstrasse 30; ☎ 8pm-3am) A young, fashionable student crowd gets down in this modern lounge, which has a patio perfect for warm summer evenings. DJs spin sounds regularly here.

Kulturhauskeller (Map p222; Elisabethstrasse 30; ☎ 9pm-5am Tue-Sat) Next door to Orange, the Kulturhauskeller is a relaxed cellar bar that heaves with raunchy young students on weekends.

Café Harrach (Map p224; ☎ 32 26 71; Harrachgasse 26; ☎ 9am-midnight Mon-Fri, 7pm-midnight Sat & Sun) Harrach is a long-time favourite among the art-scene students and has retained its relaxed feel.

Bierbaron (Map p222; ☎ 32 15 10; Heinrichstrasse 56; ☎ 10am-1am Mon-Sat, 6-11pm Sun) This large, busy bar just north of the university is another well-known student haunt. It has rows of gleaming silver beer pumps, and a relaxing garden.

Goldene Kugel (Map p222; ☎ 32 31 08; Leonhardstrasse 32; ☎ 10am-midnight) The Kugel has been through some tumult of late, but now its doors are wide open again to a student crowd that gathers here to nosh inexpensively and enjoy one or two of the 20 different beers.

Three Monkeys (Map p222; ☎ 31 98 10; www.three-monkeys.at; Elisabethstrasse 31; ☎ 9pm-5am Mon-Sun) Three Monkeys is possibly the most popular student bar near the university; it's loud, lots of fun, and generally known as a pick-up joint.

Parkhouse (Map p224; ☎ 80 80 80; www.parkhouse.at; Stadtpark 2; ☎ 11am-4am) On warm summer days and evenings half of Graz seems to make a beeline to this place. Parkhouse gets a very mixed crowd, but as the day fades to night

it morphs into a buzzing spot for DJs and occasional live music (usually a Tuesday).

M1 (Map p224; ☎ 81 12 330; 3rd fl, Färberplatz; ☎ 9am-2am Mon-Sat) In the heart of the Bermuda Triangle, M1 is a modern three-storey café-bar replete with rooftop terrace attracting a mixed – but often quite young – crowd. Its spiral staircase can cause a few problems after sampling a couple of the bar's 200 or so cocktails.

Stargayte (Map p222; 0664 92 47 29; www.stargayte.at, in German; Keesegasse 3; ☎ 8pm Mon-Thu & Sun, 8pm-open end Fri & Sat) This gay and lesbian cocktail bar and lounge near Jakominiplatz is popular. Thursday nights the dance floor is given over to women, and it has a permanent male-only room with a sling, plus labyrinth with glory holes.

Café Centraal (Map p224; ☎ 0699-172 13 415; Mariahilferstrasse 10; breakfast €3-6, snack €5-7; ☎ 8am-2am) This traditional bar and *Beisl* (small tavern or restaurant) with a dark-wood interior and outside seating has an alternative feel.

Pierre's Café-Bar (Map p224; ☎ 0699-20 21 86 82; Lendplatz 45; ☎ 5pm-2am Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm & 5pm-2am Sat) Pierre's charms appeal mostly to rolling stones who have gathered a coat of moss. Minimalism meets 40-somethings with greying pony tails who watch Led Zeppelin or Shania Twain clips on the large screen; it's perfect if you like classic rock.

Exil (Map p224; ☎ 0676-72 92 190; Josefigasse 1; ☎ 7pm-late Tue-Sat) If you like the Centraal, you'll probably like Exil even more – it's a laid-back alternative bar with outdoor seating and a couple of turntables for Friday and Saturday nights when sounds are spun; it's against the grain – empty when everywhere else is full, and buzzing when quiet elsewhere.

Stockwerk Jazz (Map p224; ☎ 81 76 74; http://stockwerkjazz.mur.at, in German; Jakominiplatz 18; concerts €10-15; ☎ 4pm-1am Mon-Sat, 4pm-midnight Sun) Stockwerk is Graz's premier jazz bar for homegrown artists or international acts on tour. Relax over a beer among creaking wooden fixtures or on the summer rooftop terrace.

Entertainment

To find out what's on and where in the city, pick up a copy of the free monthly *das eventmagazin* (in German), available from tourist offices, or buy *Megaphon* (€2, in German), a monthly magazine that combines entertainment listings with political and social commentary. It's sold on most street corners.

CINEMAS

Augartenkino (Map p222; ☎ 82 11 86; Friedrichgasse 24; ticket €8) Regularly shows films (mostly art-house) in their original language.

Royal English Cinema (Map p222; ☎ 82 61 33; Conrad-von-Hötzendorf-Strasse 10; ticket €8.50) This cinema screens English-language films.

NIGHTCLUBS

Dom im Berg (Map p224; ☎ 8008 333; www.domimberg.at, in German; Schlossbergplatz; admission €5-10; ☎ see website) The tunnels under Schlossberg were once used as air-raid shelters. Today, some of them have been refashioned into a large art-clubbing venue. The sound system and light show are the best in Graz, so it's no surprise the place is often full when it hosts clubbing events.

p.p.c (Map p224; ☎ 81 41 41 11; www.popculture.at, in German; Neubaugasse 6; admission €5-10; ☎ 10pm-4am Wed-Sat) Electronic club nights with top-name DJs from Austria and abroad, as well as regular live music, are popular here.

Arcadium (Map p224; ☎ 0664-59 80 231; www.arcadium-graz.at, in German; Griesgasse 25; admission €4-7; ☎ 10pm-late) Arcadium has Latino nights Wednesdays but its real strengths are club nights and live music – everything from punk to electronic gets a showing here, mainly for a mid-20s crowd.

THEATRE & OPERA

Graz is an important cultural centre, hosting musical events throughout the year. The main venues in town are the **Schauspielhaus** (theatre; Map p224; ☎ 80 00; Hofgasse 11; tickets €3.50-46) and the **Opernhaus** (opera; Map p224; ☎ 80 08-0; Kaiser-Josef-Platz 10; tickets €1-64). Performance details and tickets (no commission) for both venues are available at **Theaterservice Graz** (Map p224; ☎ 8008 1102; www.theater-graz.com, in German; Kaiser-Josef-Platz 10; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat). Both venues close in August and there are discounts for students.

Shopping

Aside from its divine pumpkin-seed oil, Styria is known for painted pottery and printed linen. A good place to pick up quality handicrafts is **Steirisches Heimatwerk** (Map p224; ☎ 82 90 45; Herrergasse 10) or **Kastner & Öhler** (Map p224; ☎ 870-0; Sackstrasse 7-11), a department store north of Hauptplatz. If you're just looking for high-street names, head for **Citypark** (Map p222; ☎ 71 15 80-0; Lazarettgürtel 55), a large shopping centre to the south of the centre.

Getting There & Away

AIR

The **airport** (off Map p222; ☎ 29 02-0; www.flughafen-graz.at) is 10km south of the town centre, just beyond the A2 and connected by train from the *Hauptbahnhof*; see p395. **Austrian Airlines** (☎ 05 17 89) has frequent flights to/from Düsseldorf (Germany), Vienna and Linz, and weekly flights to/from Salzburg, while **Welcome Air** (☎ 0800 210 211) has regular flights to/from Innsbruck, and Göteborg via Stavanger and Hanover. **InterSky** (☎ 0557 448800) connects Graz with Berlin-Tempelhof and Friedrichshafen several times a week. **TUIfly** (☎ 0820 820033) has weekly connections with Hanover and Cologne-Bonn in Germany. **Lufthansa** (☎ 0810 1025 8080) has frequent flights to Frankfurt am Main, Munich and Stuttgart in Germany, and **Ryanair** (☎ 0900 210240) has frequent flights to/from London Stansted. Facilities at the airport include an **information desk** (☎ 29 02-172; departure hall; ☎ 5am-10.30pm), free internet terminals, and a bank with an ATM in arrivals, ground floor.

An infrequent airport bus also runs to the airport from the *Hauptbahnhof* but is less convenient than the train.

BUS

Postbus (Map p222; ☎ 82 06 06; www.verbundlinie.at) services depart from outside the *Hauptbahnhof* (Map p222) and from Andreas Hofer Platz (Map p224) to all parts of Styria. Indirect **GKB buses** (Map p222; ☎ 59 87-0; www.gkb.at) run to Bärnbach (€6.50, 1¼ hours) and Piber (€6.50, one hour) several times each day from Monday to Friday; more frequent services go to Deutschlandsberg (€8, two hours) Monday to Saturday. All leave from Griesplatz (Map p222), though a few begin at the *Hauptbahnhof*.

TRAIN

Trains to Vienna's Südbahnhof depart every two hours (€30, 2½ hours), and to Salzburg every two to three hours (€43, four hours). All trains running north or west go via Bruck an der Mur (€10.90, 45 minutes, every 20 minutes), a main railway junction with more frequent services. Almost all trains to Klagenfurt (€32, 2¼ hours) require a change in Bruck.

International direct trains from Graz include Zagreb (€31, 3½ hours), Ljubljana (€31, 3½ hours), Szentgotthárd (€16, 1½ hours) and Budapest (€43, 5½ hours).

CAR RENTAL

Car rental companies include **Avis** (Map p224; ☎ 81 29 20; Reinighausstrasse 66), **Hertz** (Map p224; ☎ 82 50 07; Andreas-Hofer-Platz 1), which is also at the airport, and **DenzelDrive** (Map p222; ☎ 050105 4130; www.denzeldrive.at; Wetzelsdorfer Strasse 35). See p403 for rates.

Note that much of Graz is a *Kurzparkzone* (short-term parking zone); tickets are available from parking machines on streets (€0.60 per 30 minutes).

Getting Around

Trams 1, 3, 6 and 7 connect Jakominiplatz with the *Hauptbahnhof* (Map p222) every five to 20 minutes from 4.40am to 7pm Monday to Saturday. After that trams 1 and 7 do the run alone until services end just before midnight (€1.70).

Graz has one zone (zone 101). Single tickets (€1.70) for buses and trams are valid for one hour, but you're usually better off buying a 24-hour pass (€3.70). Ten one-zone tickets cost €14.80, and weekly/monthly passes cost €9.60/32.50. Hourly and 24-hour tickets can be purchased from the driver; other passes can be purchased from *Tabak* (tobacconist) shops, pavement ticket machines or the tourist office.

Bicycle rental is available from **Bicyde** (Map p222; ☎ 68 86 45; Körösrstrasse 5; per 24hr €9; ☎ 7am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Fri). To call a taxi, dial ☎ 2801, ☎ 878 or ☎ 889. **Mobilzentral** (see p221) has a few city bicycles it rents for €8 per day or €40 per week.

AROUND GRAZ

All the following sights are within easy distance of Graz and make for a pleasant excursion into the countryside.

ÖSTERREICHISCHEN FREILICHTMUSEUM

Located some 15km northeast of Graz and consisting of about 100 Austrian farmstead buildings, the **Österreichischen Freilichtmuseum** (Austrian Open-Air Museum; ☎ 03124-53 700; www.freilichtmuseum.at; adult/student/child/family €7/5/4/21; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct) in Stübing is ideal for a family outing. All buildings are originals that have been painstakingly relocated to the museum site, arranged geographically as if you were walking through Austria

from east to west. Craft demonstrations are held regularly, and on the last Sunday in September the **Erlebnistag**, a special fair with crafts, music and dancing, takes place here. Pick up a copy of the English-language guidebook (€2.20) at the entrance.

The museum is about a 20-minute walk from the Stübing train station; turn left out of the train station and pass over the tracks, then under them before hitting the entrance. Hourly trains make the journey from Graz (€4.40, 15 minutes).

BUNDESGESTÜT PIBER

Piber is home to the world-famous Lipizzaner stallion stud farm **Bundesgestüt Piber** (Piber Stud Farm; ☎ 03144-33 23; www.piber.com, in German; Piber 1; tour adult/senior/student €11/9/6; ☎ 10am-4pm hourly Apr-Oct, 11am & 3pm Nov-Mar).

Originally the farm was based in Lipica (Slovenia) but when Slovenia was annexed after WWI it moved here. About 40 to 50 foals are born at the farm every year, but of these only about five stallions have the right stuff to be sent for training to the Spanische Hofreitschule (Spanish Riding School) in Vienna. Foals are born grey, brown or black and take between five and 12 years to achieve their distinctive white colouring. Visitors are looked after by the same people who tend the horses.

In summer, you are given an information sheet with German and short English descriptions, plus a map of the complex. You make your way to several stops, where a carer waits to give explanations in German, although explanatory signs at the stations are also in English. In winter, tours are fully guided.

For information, head to the **Tourismusverband Lipizzanerheimat** (☎ 03144-72 777-0; www.lipizzanerheimat.com, in German; An der Quelle 3) in Köflach, 3km south of Piber. The perfect place to overnight is **Gasthof Bardel** (☎ 03144-34 22; gh-bardel.tripod.com, in German; Fesselweg 1; s/d €30/50; ☎), right next to the stud farm. Each of the modern rooms comes with a balcony overlooking one of the parade areas. There's also a restaurant on the premises, but if you would prefer a snack and coffee, there's a café on the stud farm's grounds.

The best eating option, however, is **Restaurant Caballero** (☎ 03144-33 23-170; mains €14-20; ☎ lunch & dinner Wed-Sat, lunch Sun), on the ground floor of Schloss Piber on the farm.

Getting There & Away

To get to Piber from Graz, the most convenient option is to catch the **GKB** (www.gkb.at) morning bus at 8am from Graz Griesplatz, arriving in Piber at 9.15am (you have to change to a connecting bus at Voitsberg Hauptplatz). The last bus leaves Piber at 2.45pm. This only works weekdays. Frequent trains also go to Köflach, from where it's a 3.5km walk from Hauptplatz along Piberstrasse (follow the signs).

BÄRNBACH

☎ 03142 / pop 4900

Otherwise unremarkable, Bärnbach is famous for its St Barbara Kirche, a church designed by Friedensreich Hundertwasser. The town is also a centre for exquisite glass-making, and has an interesting factory tour on the theme.

Tourist information is available from the glass-making centre and **Bärnbach Information** (☎ 615 50; tourismus@baernbach.at; ☎ 8am-noon Mon-Fri & 2-4pm Mon, Tue & Thu) inside the town hall. The church and glass centre are an equal distance west and east respectively from the Hauptplatz.

Sights

Although built after WWII, **St Barbara Kirche** (☎ 625 81; Piberstrasse; admission free, tours adult/child €2/1; ☎ dawn-dusk) needed renovating in the late 1980s. About 80% of the town population voted to commission the maverick Viennese artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser (p53) to undertake the redesign; work began in 1987 and was completed in 1988. This was a bold move: Hundertwasser was known for his unusual design concepts, particularly his designs based on a spiritual ecology. The gamble paid off; the church is a visual treat. Leave a donation and pick up the explanation card in English, which reveals the symbolic meaning behind the architectural design features. Tours are run by appointment only.

The church is surrounded by 12 gates, each representing a different faith, and all connected by an uneven pathway. By the west façade is a powerful mosaic war memorial by Franz Weiss. The distinctive church steeple is topped by a gold onion dome. Features you wouldn't see in any other church include the bowed roof with green splodges along its flanks, the irregular windows, and the grass growing on the side porch roofs.

The interior mostly retains its original features, although Hundertwasser's 'spiral

of life' window (which reflects the afternoon sun onto the font), on the left as you enter, is striking. Also note the glass altar and podium filled with 12 layers of different types of earth representing the 12 tribes of Israel, created by Erwin Talker.

Bärnbach, a glass-making centre for three centuries, is home to the **Stölzle Glas Center** (☎ 629 50; www.stoelzle.com; Hochregisterstrasse 1; adult/child & concession/family €5.50/3/13; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat Mar-Dec), a working glass-blowing factory and museum. Try to get there in the morning, as the entrance fee includes a guided tour (leaving 9am, 10am, 11am and noon Monday to Thursday, 9am, 10am and 11am Friday) of the glass-making facilities and the small museum filled with delicate pieces. In the afternoon the factory is off-limits.

Sleeping & Eating

Bärnbach is an easy day trip from Graz, and not a particularly exciting place at night, so you're better off returning to Graz. If you do stay, the only central hotel is **Gasthof Decelak** (☎ 622 85; Voitsberger Strasse 38; s/d €25/50; ☎). Three kilometres out of town, **Sporthotel Glockenhof** (☎ 623 34; www.glockenhof.at; s €43-53, d €86-106; ☎) has full fitness/wellness amenities, including massages and its own tennis courts, but you need your own wheels to get there. For a bite to eat, there are a couple of cheap eateries near the church, including **Pizzeria Casa Verona** (☎ 61 5 65; Hauptplatz 1; pizzas €5-10; ☎ 10am-midnight).

Getting There & Away

Regular trains run from Graz (€6.60, 50 minutes) but the train station is 2km south of the town centre; a bike is useful here. Cross the railway line, follow the road around until you reach the main highway and then take this right. The train station has a toilet and a coin phone if you need a **taxi** (☎ 0664-3402247) to the centre of town (€5). Bundesgestüt Piber (Piber Stud Farm) is close to Bärnbach (€4 by taxi); from the church, head west on Piberstrasse for 2km and after about 30 minutes you'll reach it.

SOUTHERN STYRIA

Southern Styria is known as *Steirische Toskana* (Styrian Tuscany), and for good reason. Not only is this wine country, but the landscape is reminiscent of Chianti; gentle rolling hills

cultivated with vineyards or patchwork farmland, and capped by clusters of trees. It's also famous for *Kürbiskernöl*, the rich pumpkin-seed oil generously used in Styrian cooking.

Region Süd und West Steiermark (☎ 03462-43152; www.sws.st, in German; Hauptplatz 34, in Deutschlandsberg) handles telephone, email and postal enquiries for western and southern Styria.

STYRIAN WEINSTRASSEN

Picturesque **Weinstrassen** (wine routes; www.steirischerwein.at) crisscross much of southern Styria, and lead into East Styria. The *Steirische Weinführer* booklet, free from the Graz tourist office (p223), is a comprehensive guide to all eight trails, providing a map and a list of *Buschenschänken* (wine taverns) and vineyards along the way. You'll need your own wheels to explore these properly, though.

The most travelled wine route is the **Schilcher-Wienstrasse**, which runs north-south from Ligest to Eibiswald, passing through the Stainz and Deutschlandsberg. The wine of choice here is Schilcher, a light, dry rosé. Other popular wine roads include the **Klöcher Wienstrasse**, stretching from Fehring to Bad Radkersburg (try the *Gewürztraminer*, a dry white wine typical of the region), the **Südsteirische Wienstrasse**, looping its way from Ehrenhausen to Spielfeld near the Slovenian border, and the **Sausalser Weinstrasse**, which runs west from Leibnitz to Gleinstätten.

DEUTSCHLANDSBERG

☎ 03462 / pop 8000

In the heart of the Schilcher wine region, Deutschlandsberg is a bustling little town dominated by a well-restored castle, some 25 minutes' walk uphill from the town centre. Inside the castle is a **museum** (☎ 56 02; www.burgmuseum.at, in German; Burgplatz 2; adult/student/child €9/8/4; ☎ 10am-7pm Mar-mid-Nov) split into four parts: ancient history, the Celts, historical weapons and antique jewellery. The extensive collection, whose highlights include a delicate gold necklace from the 5th century BC, takes about 1½ hours to see. As with any good castle, there's a torture chamber in the underground vaults.

The **tourist office** (☎ 75 20; www.schilcherheimat.at, in German; Hauptplatz 34; ☎ 9am-noon & 3-6pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat Mar-Oct, to 3pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat Nov-Jan) is a good source of information on the town and environs.

For sleeping arrangements, look no further than the **Burg Hotel** (☎ 56 56-0; www.burghotel-dl.at, in German; Burgplatz 1; s €47-75, d €94-150, ste €180-310; mains €10-20; ☎), which is located in the castle. Its crowning glory is the tower suite, with champagne and a fruit basket; rooms are large, quiet and have views of the woods.

If Burg is too pricey then the **Hi Hotel** (☎ 22000; deutschlandsborg@fgh.at; Burg 5; s/d €37/30) is a good option. It's set in a vineyard at the foot of the castle.

Frequent trains connect Graz and Deutschlandsberg (€8.30, one hour).

GROSSKLEIN

Southern Styria was once a stamping ground of the Celts, and this legacy has gradually been unearthed by archaeologists. Some of their finds are housed in the four exhibition rooms of the **Hallstattzeitliches Museum** (Hallstatt Period Museum; ☎ 03456-50 38; www.archaeo-grossklein.com; adult/child & student €4/2; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-5pm Wed-Sun May-Oct) in the small town of Grossklein, 26km southeast of Deutschlandsberg. Most of the exhibits are from the nearby grave mounds and include coins, pottery and tools, and a copy of a bronze mask dating from 600 BC (the original is housed in Schloss Eggenberg in Graz; see p226). The museum has a children's playroom where you can leave the kids. If this fails to get the adrenaline pumping, then a 9km archaeology trail heading northwest from the town towards Kleinklein should – it takes in approximately 700 Celtic grave mounds.

Buses (€3.40, 25 minutes) connect Leibnitz and Grossklein every one to two hours weekdays; a few run on Saturday and virtually none on Sunday. Weekdays, a train-bus connection from Graz via Leibnitz works well (€11.10, 1½ hours).

EHRENHAUSEN

☎ 03453 / pop 1200

The picturesque town of Ehrenhausen, near the A9 that connects Graz with the Slovenian border, makes a fine base for exploring the vineyards of southern Styria.

The town is little more than one street of pastel-coloured houses dominated by the baroque **Pfarrkirche** (Hauptplatz; admission free; ☎ dawn-dusk). Before setting off for the wine country, follow the path (three minutes' walk) on the right of the Rathaus up to the **mausoleum** (admission free) of Ruprecht von Eggenberg (1546-1611), hero of the Battle

HUNDERTWASSER SPA

East Styria is well known throughout Austria for its thermal activity, and in particular the spa centres that have sprung up around its thermal springs. Fans of the architectural style of Friedensreich Hundertwasser won't want to miss the unusual spa **Rogner-Bad Blumau** (☎ 03383-51 00-0; www.blumau.com; s €139-149, d €218-298), near the town of Bad Blumau, 50km east of Graz. The spa has all the characteristics of his art, including uneven floors, grass on the roof, colourful ceramics and golden spires. Overnight accommodation includes entry to the spa.

of Sisak against the Turks. Towering above Hauptplatz, this white and yellow building is guarded by two Roman-like bruisers who seem to be suggesting you don't mess with the baroque. And sure enough, the stucco inside is starkly white, with plenty of baroque embellishments clinging to the central dome, and stucco vines swirling around supporting pillars. The mausoleum is normally locked; get the key from the **manse** (Pfarrhof; ☎ 2633) next to the Pfarrkirche. Schloss Ehrenhausen, a little further up the hill from the mausoleum, is closed to the public.

Sleeping & Eating

If you're in town and looking for a private room, the best thing to do is ask around in the shops. **Zur Goldenen Krone** (☎ 26 40; Hauptplatz 24; s/d €45/58; closed Thu; ☎) is one hotel with doubles that's good value, and **Die Burg zum Goldenen Löwen** (☎ 204 15; Hauptplatz 28; s/d €40/80; mains €7-17; ☎) is just a few doors along and slightly more upmarket. It also has a popular restaurant with courtyard seating. **Klapotetz Weinlokal** (☎ 2977; Hauptstrasse 51; 2-person apt €60, 4-person apt €80) has a couple of apartments you can rent for one or more nights.

Hauptplatz has a bank and shops for provisions. For wine, head to **Erzherzog Johann Vinothek** (☎ 0699-100 64 654; Hauptstrasse 34; ☎ 7.30am-noon & 1.30-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-6pm Sat, 11am-3pm Sun Apr-Dec).

Getting There & Away

Trains run from Graz to Ehrenhausen every couple of hours (€9.30, 45 minutes). The train station is about four minutes' walk east of Hauptplatz.

RIEGERSBURG

☎ 03153 / pop 2560

Located 50km southeast of Graz at Riegersburg and perched on a 200m-high rocky outcrop, **Schloss Riegersburg** (☎ 821 31; rieggersburg.com; adult/child & student/family €9.50/7/25; ☎ 10am-5pm Apr & Oct, 9am-5pm May-Sep) is a hugely impressive 13th-century castle built against invading Hungarians and Turks; today it houses a **Hexenmuseum** on witchcraft and the **Burgmuseum** featuring the history of the Liechtenstein family, who acquired it in 1822. A **war memorial** is a reminder of fierce fighting in 1945, when Germans occupying the castle were attacked by Russian troops.

A cable car on the north side whisks you up in 90 seconds (one-way €2).

For more information on the Schloss or activities, contact the **tourist office** (☎ 86 70; tourismus@rieggersburg.com; Riegersburg 4).

If you have your own transport, consider stopping in at **Schloss Kapfenstein** (☎ 03157-300 30-0; www.schloss-kapfenstein.at; Kapfenstein 1; s €91-113, d €122-196; mains €13-18; ☎), a hotel-restaurant 17km south of Riegersburg. Weekdays rooms cost significantly less and can be booked for one night or more, but on weekends only Friday to Sunday packages are possible. The restaurant serves delightful Styrian cuisine in its outer courtyard overlooking the valley; a four-course meal as half-board costs €30.

Getting There & Away

Frequent trains run from Graz to nearby Feldbach and from there five weekday buses head for Riegersburg (€1.70, 20 minutes).

NORTHERN STYRIA

Heading north from Graz the landscape of Styria begins to change; gentle hills and flat pastures are replaced by jagged mountains, virgin forests, deep valleys and cold, clear mountain streams. This is also the region's industrial heartland, home to the *Steirische Eisenstrasse* (Styrian Iron Road), where for centuries iron mining was the backbone of the economy and in places, such as Eisenerz, left the landscape scarred.

Huddled beneath the soaring peaks are the towns of northern Styria, home to impressive churches; the best are the pilgrimage church of Mariazell and the abbey of Admont.

MARIAZELL

☎ 03882 / pop 1720

Situated on the slopes of the lower reaches of the eastern Alps, the pretty town of Mariazell is one of Austria's icons. It offers opportunities for hiking, mountain biking and skiing, but what makes Mariazell so well known is its status as Austria's most important pilgrimage site. Its basilica, founded in 1157, holds a sacred statue of the Virgin, and busloads of Austrians flock to the site on weekends and on 15 August (Assumption) and 8 September (Mary's 'name day').

Orientation

Hauptplatz and the basilica comprise the centre of Mariazell. The train station is in St Sebastian, 1km north of Hauptplatz.

Information

Mariazell's **tourist office** (☎ 23 66; www.mariazell.at; Hauptplatz 13; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat, to 12.30pm Sun May-Oct, to 5pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr) has a town map-cum-brochure with walking trails marked; it doesn't book rooms but can help with accommodation listings.

The **post office** (Ludwig Leber Strasse; 7am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8.30-10am Sat) is located just west of Hauptplatz next to the bus station. **Hotel Magnus Klaus** (☎ 417 67; Hauptplatz 7) has free internet access if you buy a drink. There are a few ATMs around town.

Sights

Most people come to Mariazell to visit the **Basilika** (☎ 25 95; Kardinal Eugen Tisserant Platz 1; admission free; ☎ 8am-8pm), the town's most important attraction. Originally Romanesque, the basilica underwent a Gothic conversion in the 14th century and then received a massive baroque facelift in the 17th century. The result from the outside is a strange clash of styles, with the original Gothic steeple bursting like a wayward skeletal limb from between two baroque onion domes. The interior works better, with Gothic ribs on the ceiling combining well with baroque frescoes and lavish stuccowork. Both Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach and his son Josef Emmanuel had a hand in the baroque features; the crucifixion group sculpture (1715) on the high altar is by Lorenzo Mattielli.

Unusually, the church is centred on a small but exquisite chapel, known as the **Gnadenkapelle** (Chapel of Grace). This gold and silver edifice houses the Romanesque

statue of the Madonna, whose healing powers reputedly helped King Louis of Hungary defeat the Turks in 1377. In the upper galleries, the **Schatzkammer** (treasury; ☎ 25 95; Kardinal Eugen Tisserant Platz 1; adult/student/child €3/1.50/0.50; ☎ 10am-3pm Tue-Sat, 11am-4pm Sun & holidays May-Oct) contains votive offerings spanning six centuries, mainly naive-style paintings.

Activities

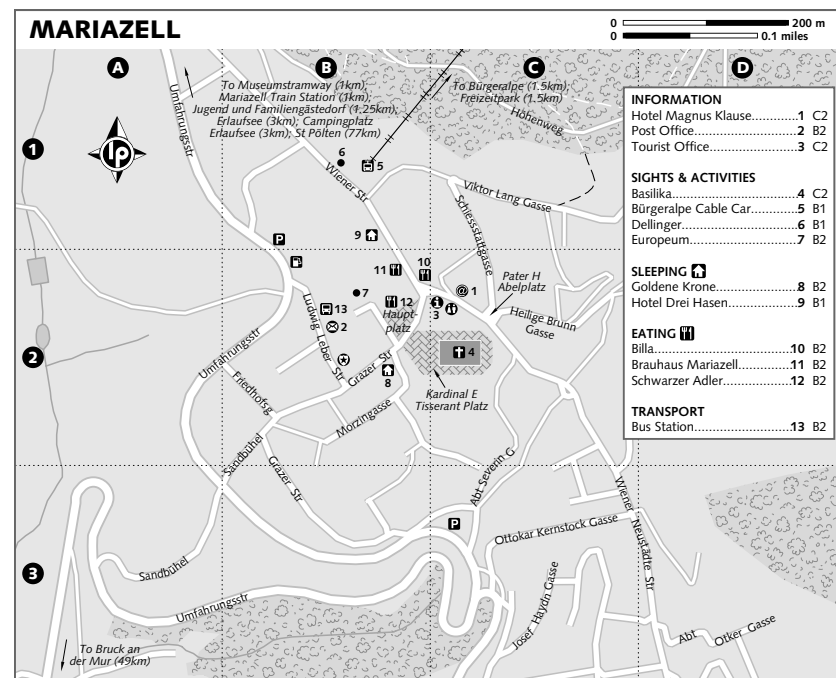
Another aspect to Mariazell is its rolling countryside. **Bürgeralpe** (1270m) is a great starting or finishing point for hiking and mountain biking in the summer months, and also has skiing in winter. The **cable car** (☎ 2508; www.mariazell-buergeralpe.at; adult/child return €10.80/6.80) operates year-round. Another way to get there is by mountain bike along one of the trails. **Dellinger** (☎ 2453; www.sport-dellinger.at; Wiener Strasse 30), alongside the cable car, hires out and services ski equipment in winter, and rents mountain bikes in summer (€15 per day). Pick up the tourist office's good hiking/city map (two major mountain bike trails are marked) and ask Dellinger to point you in the right direction for trail heads leading south or to Bürgeralpe.

Bürgeralpe has an artificial lake that feeds snow canons when snow conditions are poor and is used as a lakeside setting for special events. Also up here are two restaurants and the **Freizeitpark** (Erlebniswelt Holzmechtland; entry & cable car adult/child €13.60/8; ☎ 9am-5pm May-Oct) – a small museum devoted to wood and all its wonderful uses. During winter, adult daily/weekly ski passes cost around €25/123.

The **Erlaufsee**, a small lake a few kilometres to the northwest of the town, reaches about 22 degrees in summer and, apart from swimming, it offers good opportunities for windsurfing and scuba diving; contact addresses for water sports are listed in the booklet *Mariazellerland von A-Z*, available at the tourist office.

An easy four-hour Rundwanderweg (circuit trail; A) runs past the lake and south through forest back into Mariazell; alternatively, you can take a steam **Museumstramway** (one-way/return €5/8), which runs at weekends and holidays between July and September. It leaves from the Museumstramway Bahnhof.

A cultural centre with a wellness complex, known as the **Europeum** and planned to showcase one EU country and its culture each year, is currently being built off Wiener Strasse.



Sleeping

The only problem times for finding a room in Mariazell are around the pilgrim days. Aside from hotels and pensions, there is a smattering of private rooms.

Campingplatz Erlaufsee (☎ 49 37; www.st-sebastian.steiermark.at; campsite per adult/tent €4/3; ☎ May-mid-Sep; P) At the southeastern end of Erlaufsee, this small camping ground has a pretty location and is flanked by pine trees.

Jugend und Familiengästehof (☎ 26 69; stsebastian@jfhg.at; Erlaufseestrasse 49; s/d €26.50/59; P) Located halfway between Mariazell and Erlaufsee, this HI hostel is quite new and has loads of facilities, including a café, sauna, solarium, fitness room and sports areas.

Goldene Krone (☎ 2583; www.mariazell.at/krone, in German; Grazer Strasse 1; s €34-68, d €68-76; mains €8-13) Goldene Krone has a homely feel in its big and bright rooms. The ground floor has an excellent restaurant, with traditional Austrian cuisine, toys for the kids and street-side seating.

Hotel Drei Hasen (☎ 2410; www.dreihasen.at; Wiener Strasse 11; s €67, d €108, ste €160; mains €7-14; closed Mar & Nov; P) When the new Europeum is finished a passage will connect this hotel with

the wellness facilities, adding another plus to what is currently a very good hotel with a first-class restaurant (specialising in seasonal game dishes).

Eating & Drinking

Among the hotel eating options, Hotel Drei Hasen is the most interesting and varied; there are also plenty of places to eat on and around Hauptplatz.

Schwarzer Adler (☎ 28 63-0; Hauptplatz 1; mains €7-15; ☎ 9am-11pm) With an outside terrace that overlooks the basilica, the Schwarzer Adler serves very decent classics at one of the best locations in the town centre.

Brauhaus Mariazell (☎ 25 23-0; Wiener Strasse 5; r from €57 per person, ste €104 per person, mains €8-15; ☎ 10am-11pm Mon-Wed, to midnight Fri & Sat, lunch Sun) This lovely, rustic microbrewery does one light and one dark beer, both unfiltered (with a shelf life of four weeks); the food is also some of the best Styrian cuisine in these parts and there's a garden out back and a few rooms upstairs.

You'll find a Billa supermarket just north of the tourist office.

Getting There & Away

A narrow-gauge train departs from St Pölten, 77km to the north, every two to three hours. It's a slow trip (€14.50, 2½ hours), but the scenery is good for the last hour approaching Mariazell. Bus is the only option for further travel into Styria; four direct buses run from Bruck an der Mur (€9.50, 1½ hours), where trains go to Graz (€20, 2½ hours).

There are also one to two direct buses daily from Vienna (€18, three hours).

BRUCK AN DER MUR

☎ 03862 / pop 13,430

Bruck, at the confluence of the Mur and Mürz rivers, is the Mur valley's first real town and an important railway junction for Styria. Although its attractions are limited, it's quite a pleasant town once you let it work on you, and you may find yourself enjoying an extended stopover here between trains and buses.

Orientation & Information

The train station and a post office are at the eastern end of Bahnhofstrasse; there's a Bankomat in the station. Koloman-Wallisch-

Platz, Bruck's main square, is home to the Rathaus, which in turn houses the town's **tourist office** (☎ 890-121; www.bruckmur-tourismus.at, in German; Koloman-Wallisch-Platz 1; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri). There's another post office on the square.

Sights

Several paths wind up to **Schloss Landskron**, where local nobility ruled the roost until fire ravaged this castle – along with the rest of town – in 1792. The population helped itself to the stone to rebuild their houses, and today all that remains is a clock tower and a couple of canons captured from the French. On the way, drop by Bauernmarkt, where there's a **food and flower market** (☎ Wed & Sat), and the 15th-century Gothic **Pfarrkirche** (Kirchplatz; admission free; ☎ dawn-dusk).

Back on Koloman-Wallisch-Platz, the **Rathaus** has an attractive arcaded courtyard, while the **Kornmesserhaus** (1499) symbolises the wealth of Austrian burghers in the late 15th century. It brings together Gothic and some Renaissance features and was based on the design of a Venetian palace. Other historic highlights on the square include the **Art**

Nouveau façade above the ice cream shop at No 10 and the fine Renaissance-style **wrought-iron well** created by Hans Prasser in 1626.

Sleeping & Eating

Jugend und Familiengästehof (☎ 584 48; www.jfgh.at/bruck.php; Stadtwaldstrasse 1; dm/s/d €27/37/59; ☎ ☎) This family-friendly HI hostel, 10 minutes' walk south of the centre, is in the heart of Weitental, Bruck's woodland playground.

Landskron (☎ 58 458; www.hotel-landskron.at, in German; Am Schiffertor 3; s/d €73/98, ste per person €65; ☎ ☎) Value is best on weekends in this business hotel directly on the Mur River. Here you can loll about in large, tastefully furnished rooms, and in some you can even hear the river gurgling below the window. It has a sauna and good midrange restaurant.

Fleck's Brauhaus (☎ 520 85; Am Grazer Tor; snacks €3-8; 11am-midnight Tue-Sat, to 6pm Sun) This boutique brewery is Bruck's prime spot for a light meal washed down by a local brew. Three house styles are on offer, including a dark wheat beer and a *Rot* (red) with barley.

Gasthof Zur Post Riegler (☎ 549 04; Koloman-Wallisch-Platz 11; mains €7-17; ☎ 9am-midnight Tue-Sun) There's something for everyone among the mixed bag of culinary offerings here, not least a well-prepared classic schnitzel.

Billa (Herzog Ernstgasse 6) is the place to stock up on provisions.

Getting There & Away

Bruck is the region's main rail hub; all fast trains to Graz (€11, 45 minutes, hourly) pass through here. Other direct trains go hourly to Klagenfurt (€25, 2¼ hours) and hourly to Vienna's Südbahnhof (€23, two hours).

By road, the main autobahns intersect southeast of town. If you're planning to cycle in the region, the tourist office has useful maps.

Postbus services arrive and depart next to the train station.

LEOBEN

☎ 03842 / pop 25,800

Leoben is another of those unprepossessing towns that reveal a few surprises once you dig down into its modest urban soul. A revamped museum quarter is one very good reason to prolong a flying visit here between trains. Leoben is also a centre for metallurgical industries and home to Gösser beer, and achieved ultimate fame with the peace treaty

signed here in 1797 by Napoleon and Emperor Franz II.

Stadt Information Leoben (☎ 440 18; www.leoben.at; Hauptplatz 12; ☎ 7am-5pm Mon, 7am-6.30pm Tue-Thu, 7am-1pm & 3-6.30pm Fri, 9am-12.30pm Sat) has a *Gast in Leoben* booklet with useful listings; if you're in town when it's closed, ask at the MuseumsCenter Leoben – they keep a good supply of city material. The city's Leoben map also includes a great environs map with hiking trails.

A second **Tourismusverband Leoben** (☎ 481 48; Peter Tunner-Strasse 2; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) has information and organises tours for Leoben's Stifftkirche, with a 1000-year-old crypt and paintings in its chapel, and the nearby Göss brewery.

Sights & Activities

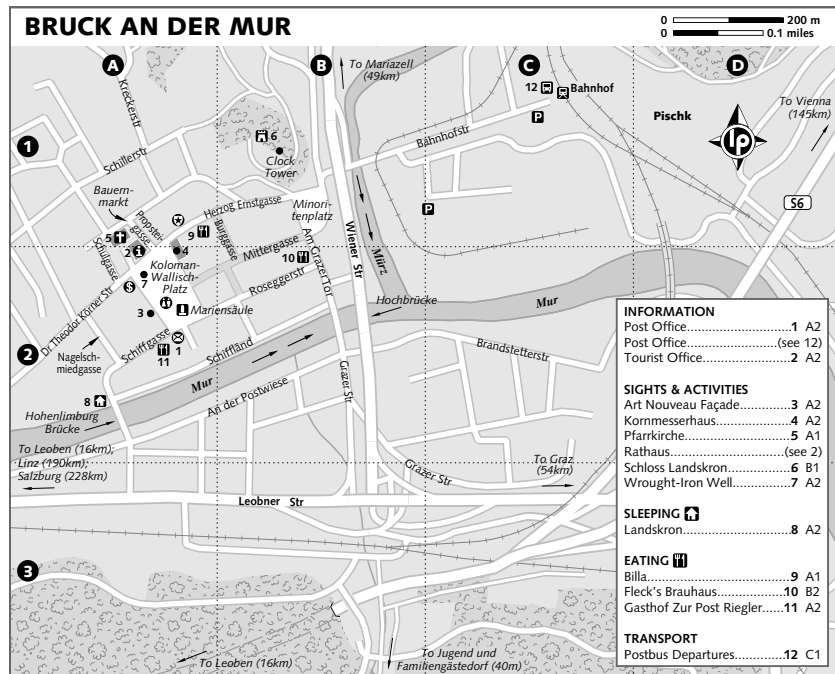
Hauptplatz is lined with elegant 17th-century façades, including the baroque **Hacklhaus** (Hauptplatz 9), while Leoben's connection with the iron industry is seen in the curious town motif displayed on the **Altes Rathaus** (Hauptplatz 1) façade, which shows an ostrich eating horseshoes.

Nearby, the dreary exterior of **Pfarrkirche St Xavier** (☎ 432 36; Kirchplatz 1; ☎ 8am-7pm) belies an interesting interior of white walls and black-and-gold baroque altars. The church's **Museum Sacrum** (☎ 10am-5pm) is linked by a walkway to the **MuseumsCenter Leoben** (☎ 4062-408; Kirchgasse 6; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Fri) which is the cultural heart of Leoben. This new museum complex has an interesting *Schienen der Vergangenheit* (Tracks of the Past) section telling the history of Leoben and its industries, starting with the present and working back in time, and a large section with changing exhibitions. The standard is very high, so check the town's website for information on current exhibitions.

For tours of the **Stifftkirche** and the **brewery**, ask at the Tourismusverband Leoben.

Sleeping & Eating

Among the hotels in the centre, **Pension Jahrbacher** (☎ 436 00; jahrbacher.gmbh@gmx.at; Kirchgasse 14; s/d €43/85) is one pleasant option. If no one answers the door bell, drop into the adjacent **Cafe am Schwammerlturm** (☎ 43 600; Homanngasse 11; ☎ 11am-8pm) and check in there. This tiny café is a visual treat – it has wonderful outdoor seating on top of the circular city tower and breathtaking views over the town and countryside. The stairs are not



for the faint-hearted, but it has a (glass) lift. Spectacular for its arcades, the **Arkadenhof** (☎ 42 074; Hauptplatz; mains €6-17; ☎ 10am-11pm), is a good choice for a full traditional meal.

Getting There & Away

Leoben is 16km west of Bruck (€4.40, 15 minutes) and is on the main rail route from there to Klagenfurt or Linz. The town centre is 10 minutes' walk from Leoben **Hauptbahnhof**; cross the Mur River and bear right.

EISENERZ

☎ 03848 / pop 6430

Eisenerz is one of the important stops along the **Steirische Eisenstrasse** (Styrian Iron Road), and lies at the foot of the extraordinary Erzberg (Iron Mountain), a mine that chomps into the mountains. While the town has certainly seen better days, it's still a fine place to stop by, with narrow, cobblestone streets, solid houses and the gurgle of alpine streams combining to create a relaxed mood.

The **tourist office** (☎ 37 00; www.eisenerz-heute.at, in German; Dr Theodor Körner Platz 1; ☎ 9am-noon & 3-5pm Mon-Fri May-Oct, to noon Sat Jun-Sep, 10am-noon & 3-5pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr) is in the centre of the town.

Sights

The main reason to come to Eisenerz is **Erzberg** (☎ 32 00; info@abenteuer-erzberg.at; Erzberg 1; separate tour adult/child & student €13/6.50, combined tour adult/student/child €22/19/11; ☎ tours 10am-3pm May-Oct, advance booking required), a peak that has been completely denuded by opencast stope mining and now resembles a step pyramid. The outcome is eerie and surprisingly beautiful, with its orange and purple shades contrasting with the lush greenery and grey crags of surrounding mountains. The ironworks can be seen up-close and personal in two ways; with a 90-minute 'Schaubergwerk' tour which burrows into the mountain to the underground mines, abandoned in 1986, or with a 60-minute 'Hauly Abenteuerfahrt' tour, which explores the surface works aboard an enormous truck, with fine views along the way. Both tours are usually in German, with English-language notes available. The departure point is a 10-minute walk from the centre, following the course of the river.

A walk around the sleepy old town reveals some interesting sgraffito murals, especially around Bergmannsplatz. Also interesting is to stroll up to the **Wehrkirche St Oswald** (☎ 22 67;

Kirchenstiege 4; admission free; ☎ 9am-7pm summer, to 5pm winter), more a fortress than a Gothic church, which gained its heavy walls in 1532 as protection against the Turks. The town is surrounded by **hiking trails**. The tourist office has a free *city & environs* map with trails marked, including to the idyllic **Leopoldsteiner See**, only 3km north on the road towards Admont. This small lake has a wall of granite rising to 1649m as a backdrop; you can hire boats in summer – it's a very chilly swim, though.

Sleeping & Eating

There are several good pensions and hotels in the old town, but fewer good eating options.

Jugend & Familiengästehaus (☎ 605 60; eisenerz@jfg.h.at; Ramsau 1; s/d €25.50/51; ☎ P) This lovely HI hostel is 5km south of Eisenerz; it's situated at an altitude of 1000m and has a sauna, and indoor and outdoor climbing walls. Each room has its own bathroom and there's a restaurant on site.

Gästehaus Tegelhofer (☎ 20 86; www.gaestehaus-tegelhofer.at; Lindmoserstrasse 8; s/d €29/48; ☎ P) This modern guesthouse is comfortable and offers great value, with spacious and clean rooms spiced with a free sauna and fitness room; there's also an inexpensive apartment for two to six people.

Gästehaus Weninger (☎ 22 580; www.gaestehaus-weninger.at; Krumpentalerstrasse 8; s €33-38, d €54-62; ☎ P) Another very comfortable guesthouse with fitness room and sauna, Weninger aims at those staying for a few days, but does take guests for one night at very short notice.

Braüstüberl (☎ 23 35; Flutergasse 5; mains €5-12; ☎ P) ☎ Lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun) Braüstüberl has the local classics and a filling grill platter that's best enjoyed in the beer garden. Rooms are available (single/double €24/32).

If the tourist office is closed when you visit, consider a coffee and cake at **Barbarastub'n** (☎ 51 10; Bergmannplatz 2; €1.50-2.60; ☎ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Sat, 2-6pm Sun), which has some brochures and maps of town.

Getting There & Away

Direct buses run from Leoben to Eisenerz (€6.50, one hour) every two to three hours. Several daily connect Eisenerz and Hieflau (€3.40, 25 minutes), where there are train connections to Selzthal (€7.60, 40 minutes) via Admont and Nationalpark Gesäuse (opposite).

Trains no longer operate to Eisenerz, except for the special Vordernberg–Eisenerz **Nostalgie**

(nostalgic train; ☎ 03849-832; www.erzbergbahn.at, in German; adult/child/family €9/4.50/22.50), which runs at 10.30am and 2.30pm Sunday from July to mid-October.

NATIONALPARK GESÄUSE

Only established in 2003, Gesäuse is Austria's newest national park in a pristine region of jagged mountain ridges, rock towers, deep valleys, alpine pastures and dense spruce forests. Unusually for a protected landscape, traditional farming is still allowed on selected meadows.

Dividing the park in two uneven halves is the Enns, a fast-flowing alpine river that eventually spills into the Danube near Mauthausen in Upper Austria. It's a favourite of rafting connoisseurs, and a number of companies offer rafting trips during the summer months. Hiking and mountain climbing, and to a lesser extent mountain biking, also feature among the park's outdoor activities; of the six peaks over 2000m within the park, **Hocktor** (2369m) rises above them all and is the destination of many hikers. The occasional spelunking excursion is also available; around 150 caves burrow under the high limestone mountains, the deepest of which descends 600m below the surface.

More information on activities in the park can be found at the **Nationalpark Gesäuse Information Centre** (☎ 03613-21 000; www.nationalpark.co.at, in German; Weng 2, Weng im Gesäuse; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Fri). The staffed **national park pavilion** (☎ 03611-21101-20; Gstatterboden 25; ☎ 10am-6pm May-Oct) is a useful source of information, and the park itself is best reached with one to six trains daily to Gstatterboden (€6, 30 minutes) and Johnsbach im Nationalpark (€6, 30 minutes).

ADMONT

☎ 03613 / pop 2770

In a country where the sugary grandeur of baroque abbeys reaches queasy heights, Admont's **Benedictine Abbey** (☎ 23 12-601; www.stiftadmont.at; Admont 1; adult/student & child €9/5; ☎ 10am-5pm Apr-Oct, by arrangement Nov-Mar) pips St Florian's Augustinian Abbey at the post for the title of Austria's most elegant. It brings together museums, religious art, contemporary art and baroque architecture in a delightful whole – which is why a few years back it won an award for Austria's best museum.

The centrepiece of the abbey is its **Stiftsbibliothek** (abbey library), the largest abbey library in the world. Survivor of a fire in 1865 that severely damaged the rest of the abbey, it displays about 70,000 volumes of the abbey's 200,000 strong collection, and is decorated with heavenly ceiling frescoes by Bartolomeo Altomonte (1694–1783) and statues (in wood, but painted to look like bronze) by Josef Stammel (1695–1765). The restorers have been busily at work on the library lately and in 2008 will complete the work.

The abbey is also home to the **Kunsthistorisches Museum** (Art History Museum), featuring some unusual and rare pieces, such as its tiny portable altar from 1375, made from amethyst quartz and edged with gilt-silver plates, some Gerhard Mercator globes from 1541 and 1551, and a Festival Monstrance from 1747 set with 2175 gems. An innovative **multimedia show** retells the story of St Benedict and the abbey through video, slides and a spacey mirror room whose effect is similar to Dr Who's Tardis.

Another museum, the **Museum für Gegenwartskunst** (Museum for Contemporary Art) contains works by about 100 mainly Austrian artists, and has a section for the vision-impaired, with works you can explore with your hands. The **Naturhistorisches Museum** (Natural History Museum) began in 1674 with a small collection and today includes rooms devoted to flying bugs (one of the largest collections in the world), butterflies, stuffed animals, wax fruits (bizarrely) and reptiles. From the glass stairway and **Herb Garden** there are views to the Gesäuse National Park.

The **tourist office** (☎ 21 160; www.xeiss.at, in German; Hauptstrasse 35; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun May-Oct, 8am-5pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr) is opposite the Rathaus and near the abbey church. It doubles as a national park office.

The HI hostel **Admont-Jugendgästehaus** (☎ 2432; admont@jfg.h.at; Schulstrasse 446; s €32.50, d €51) is situated on the edge of town, a few minutes' walk from the centre. The stunning **Jugend & Familiengästehaus Schloss Röthelstein** (☎ 26 196; roethelstein@jfg.h.at; Aigen 32; s/d €44/64) is where the monks from the abbey used to stay in summer.

Admont has several central guesthouses, some with restaurants. **Hotel Gasthof Traube** (☎ 24 40; www.hotel-traube.info; Hauptstrasse 3; s €38-42, d €62-68; ☎ P) is a comfortable one with outdoor seating.

Admont is 15km to the east of Selzthal, on the train route to Hieflau; three or more direct trains (€4.40, 15 minutes) run daily.

WEST STYRIA

Like northern Styria, west Styria is a mountainous region divided by jagged ranges and alpine streams which gather speed and volume as they head east. It's an area for enjoying Austria's natural splendour and escaping crowds.

Murau, high up in the Mur valley, is a picturesque town well placed for hikes and cycle trips into the surrounding forests. If you're heading this way from Graz, consider a detour to **Seckau** or **Oberzeiring**. The former is famous for its **Benedictine Abbey** (☎ 03514-5234; Seckau 1; basilica admission free; tours adult/child/family €4.50/free/10; ☎ 10am-8pm May-Oct, tours 10am & 2pm May-Oct), a stunning Romanesque basilica and mausoleum of Karl II, while the latter is known for its old **silver mine** (☎ 03571-2387; www.silbergruben.at; adult/child/family €6/3.50/12; ☎ tours 9.45am, 1.45pm & 3pm May-Oct, 4pm Wed Nov-Apr), now resurrected as a small health resort for sufferers of respiratory diseases.

MURAU

☎ 03532 / pop 2330

Murau, in the western reaches of the Mur valley, is an attractive town filled with pastel-coloured houses and surrounded by forested hills and alpine meadows. Its close proximity to Stolzalpe to the north and Metnitz mountains to the south makes it an excellent base for hiking and cycling during the summer months.

The **tourist office** (☎ 27 20-0; www.stadtmurau.at; Bundesstrasse 13a; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, telephone information service ☎ 8am-9pm) has loads of brochures on the town and its surrounds, including hiking trails and bicycle ways.

The Liechtenstein family once dominated the region and they built **Schloss Obermurau** (☎ 230 258; Schlossberg 1; tours adult/child €3/2; ☎ 3pm Wed & Fri mid-Jun-mid-Sep) in 1250. Given a Renaissance makeover by the Schwarzenberg family in the 17th century, today it's often used as a film location.

Just below the castle is the restored **Stadtpfarrkirche St Matthäus** (St Matthew's Church; ☎ 24 89, Schlossberg 8; ☎ dawn-dusk), a Gothic church remodelled in baroque style. Both elements work surprisingly well together, especially in the combination of the Gothic crucifixion group (1500) and the baroque high altar (1655). The beautiful frescoes date from the 14th to 16th centuries.

Murau is also famous for its **Brauerei Murau**, which has a **brewery museum** (☎ 3266; Raffaltplatz 19-23; adult/child €3/free; ☎ 3-5pm Fri May, Jun & Oct, 3-5.30pm Wed & Fri Jul-Sep). Entry includes a glass of the local brew. The brewery won a pan-European environmental management award in 2005 for its environmental practices.

Bike rental is available from **Intersport Pintar** (☎ 23 97; Bundesstrasse 7a; per day €10), near the tourist office.

Sleeping & Eating

Jugend & Familiengästehaus (☎ 23 95; murau@jfg.at; St Leonhard Platz 4; dm €17.80, s €22.10, d €44.20) This HI hostel is situated in four historic buildings near the train station and has bike hire, a sauna and a peaceful inner courtyard.

The lovely **Gasthof Ferner** (☎ 23 18; www.hotel-ferner.at; Rosseggerstr 9; s/d €42/76, mains €8-18, ☎ lunch & dinner; ☎ ☎), on the northern fringe of town, has a restaurant offering trout in summer; the four-star **Hotel Lercher** (☎ 24 31; www.lercher.com; Schwarzenbergstrasse 10; s €61-85, d €92-140; gourmet mains €20-30, Wirsthaus mains €12-16; ☎ gourmet dinner Tue-Sat, Wirsthaus lunch & dinner; ☎ ☎) has two restaurants: the small and highly rated Panorama (book ahead), and the Wirsthaus for simpler cuisine.

Getting There & Away

If you're coming from Salzburgerland, the most pleasant mode of transport is the **Murtalbahn** (☎ 22 31; www.stlb.at, in German; return €16.80), a steam train that chugs its way between Tamsweg and Murau once every Tuesday and Wednesday in July and August, on a private narrow-gauge line.

Fairly frequent direct ÖBB trains connect Murau with Tamsweg (€6.60, one hour) going west. Regular trains to Leoben (€17, 1½ hours) require a change in Unzmarkt.

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The Salzkammergut



Sometimes called the ‘cradle of Austrian culture’, the Salzkammergut is a spectacular region of alpine and sub-alpine lakes, picturesque valleys, rolling hills and rugged, steep mountain ranges. The highest mountains climb to almost 3000m. Not least because of the Salzkammergut’s startling beauty, parts of this region – especially those lakes easily reached from Salzburg – can at times be swamped with visitors. But don’t despair – much of the region is remote wilderness, and even in those heavily visited parts such as the Wolfgangsee and Mondsee, you’ll always find isolated sections where peaceful, glassy waters provide limitless opportunities for boating, swimming, fishing or just sitting on the shore and chucking stones into the water. The popular Hallstätter See is no exception. When the pretty streets in Hallstatt township are full of summer visitors, across the lake a sleepy, swampy Obertraun retains a village atmosphere. Strike out deeper into the region, and you will be rewarded with isolated splendour.

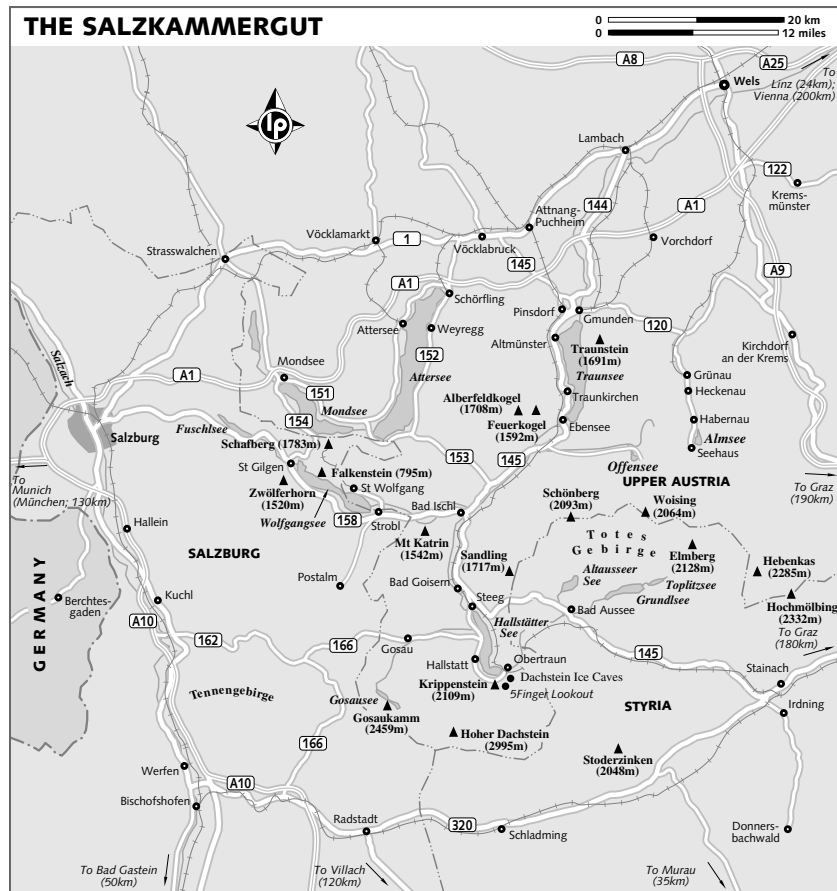
Salt is the ‘white gold’ of the Salzkammergut, and the mines that made it famous now make for an interesting journey back in time to the settlers of the Iron Age Hallstatt culture, and to the Celts and Romans – all of whom sullied their hands in the mines. Along the western side of the Hallstätter See is a pipeline reputed to be the oldest in the world, used to transport brine. Today, the narrow swathe cut out to build and service the pipeline is a lush hiking trail.

Whatever your reason for coming to the Salzkammergut – swimming, boating, hiking, climbing or exploring cultures – this region rewards the curious and adventurous.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Reeling from views at the surreal **5Fingers platform** (p253) in the Dachstein Mountains
- Hiking around the **Hallstätter See** (p249) from Obertraun to Hallstatt and cooling off in the crystal waters between trails
- Exploring the Wolfgangsee and the remarkable pilgrimage church in **St Wolfgang** (p260), filled with priceless works of art
- Strolling through the **Kaiservilla** (p247), Franz Josef’s summer residence, now a handsome museum set in parkland
- Plunging into the chilling depths to masterfully illuminated towers of ice in the **Dachstein Caves** (p252)
- Finding the toilet in Gmunden’s **Museum für Historische Sanitäröbekte** (p257) – a museum dedicated to loos? They must be potty...





Orientation & Information

The Salzkammergut falls within three provinces: Upper Austria, which takes the lion's share; Styria, comprising the small area around Bad Aussee; and Salzburg province. For general information, check out www.salzkammergut.at.

History

Mining has been the principal activity in the Salzkammergut since Celtic times, when tunnels were hacked into the rock and water sloshed down them to release the salt. After the demise of the Celts, the prince-archbishops of Salzburg took over the shafts and used the profits from the dark, dank mines to build their elaborate palaces and pleasure gardens.

Ironically, considering its later popularity as a tourist area, the whole of the Salzkammergut region was banned to visitors until the early 19th century because the Salzburg government, which held a monopoly on salt mining here, wanted to prevent salt from being smuggled out. Later, Emperor Franz Josef's patronage brought central European aristocracy to the region in their droves. They came to promenade around the parks of the elegant spa towns like Bad Ischl, or to tramp through the snowy mountain forests in search of unwary deer.

Climate

Summers down by the Salzkammergut region's lakes tend to be quite warm, with an av-

erage temperature of 15°C to 25°C. In spring and autumn especially, beware of the so-called 'string rain' – a soft, yet drenching rain that can soak you through before you've even noticed it. During winter (mid-November to February) the average lies at around -4°C.

Getting There & Away

To reach the Salzkammergut from Salzburg by car or motorcycle, take the A1 to reach the north of the region, or Hwy 158 to Bad Ischl. Travelling north-south, the main road is Hwy 145 (the Salzkammergut Bundesstrasse) which follows the rail line for most of its length. By train, the main rail routes into the province are from Salzburg or Linz, with a change at Attnang-Puchheim onto the regional north-south railway line.

Getting Around

The Salzkammergut is crossed by regional trains on a north-south route, passing through Attnang-Puchheim on the Salzburg-Linz line and Stainach-Irdning on the Bischofshofen-Graz line. The rail line linking these two access points is 108km long, and hourly trains take 2½ hours to complete the journey. Smaller stations on this route are *unbesetzter Bahnhof* (unattended train station); at these you'll have to use a platform ticket machine or pay on the train. Attersee is also accessible by rail.

Regular bus services connect all towns and villages in the area, though less frequently or not at all on weekends. For bus times and prices from Salzburg to the various towns in the region, see p281.

Passenger boats ply the waters of the Attersee, Traunsee, Mondsee, Hallstätter See and Wolfgangsee.

The non-transferable Salzkammergut Erlebnis Card, available from tourist offices and hotels, costs €4.90 and offers significant discounts for 21 days between 1 May and 31 October.

BAD ISCHL

☎ 06132 / pop 14,070

This spa town's reputation snowballed after the Habsburg Princess Sophie took a treatment here to cure her infertility in 1828. Within two years she had given birth to Emperor Franz Josef I; two other sons fol-

lowed and were nicknamed the Salzprinzen (Salt Princes).

Rather in the manner of a salmon returning to its place of birth, Franz Josef made an annual pilgrimage to Bad Ischl, making it his summer home for the next 60 years and hauling much of the European aristocracy in his wake. The fateful letter he signed declaring war on Serbia and sparking off WWI bore a Bad Ischl postmark.

Today's Bad Ischl is a handsome town that makes a handy base for visiting the region's five main lakes.

Orientation & Information

Bad Ischl's town centre is compactly contained within a bend of the Traun River. There are moneychanging facilities at the post office and train station.

Post office (Bahnhofstrasse; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat)

Salzkammergut Info-Center (☎ 240 00-0; www.salzkammergut.co.at; Gürtzstrasse 12; ☎ 9am-8pm) A helpful private regional agency with bike rental (per 24hr €13) and internet (per 10 min €1.10).

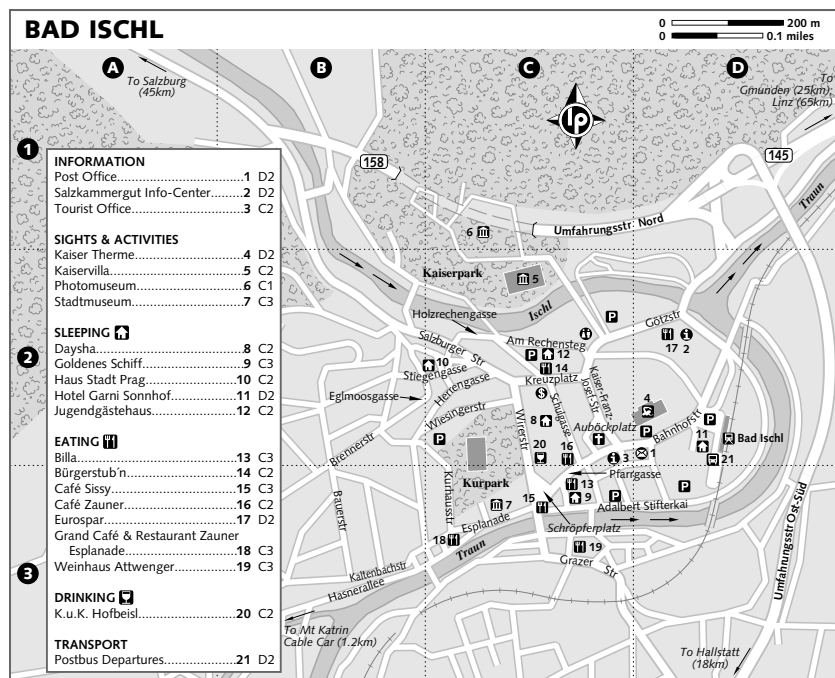
Tourist office (☎ 277 57-0; www.badischl.at; Auböckplatz; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat, 10am-1pm Sun) A telephone service (8am to 8pm) for rooms and information complements this office.

Sights & Activities

KAISERVILLA

Franz Josef's summer residence was the **Kaiservilla** (☎ 232 41; Jainzen 38; www.kaiservilla.com; adult/student/child €9.80/6.50/4.50, grounds only adult/student/child €3.50/2.50; ☎ 9.30am-4.45pm May-mid-Oct), an Italianate building that was bought by his mother, the Princess Sophie, as an engagement present for her son and Princess Elisabeth of Bavaria. Elisabeth, who loathed the villa and her husband in equal measure, spent little time there, but the emperor came to love it and it became his permanent summer residence for over 60 years. His mistress, Katharina Schratt, lived nearby in a house chosen for her by the empress.

The interior of the villa can only be seen by guided tours (which leave every half-hour in summer), with English information sheets. You'll learn of the emperor's habit of rising at 3.30am each morning to take a bath before beginning his day's work punctually at 4am, and that the only recreation he allowed himself was hunting. The walls of the villa are liberally studded with the fruits of



his labours, including the stuffed corpse of the 2000th chamois he shot. There are various other exhibits, including a bust of the Empress Elisabeth, made when she was in her mid-40s (a grandmother and still an internationally famous beauty), and a death mask made after she was killed by a knife-wielding madman at the age of 60. The natural-style parkland surrounding the villa contains a small **Photomuseum** (☎ 244 22; adult/child/family €1.50/0.70/3.50; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Apr-Oct).

OTHER SIGHTS

The **Stadtmuseum** (city museum; ☎ 254 76; Esplanade 10; adult/child & student €4.50/2.20; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue & Thu-Sun, 2-7pm Wed Apr-Oct, also Mon Jul & Aug, 10am-5pm Fri-Sun Dec-Mar, closed Nov) is the building where Franz Josef and Elisabeth were engaged (the day after they met at a ball). Today it showcases the history of Bad Ischl and stages changing exhibitions.

The local peak here is **Mt Katrin** (1542m), with walking trails and limited skiing in winter. A **cable car** (☎ 237 88; www.katrinseilbahn.com; return ticket adult/child €13.50/12; ☎ mid-May-Oct, mid-Dec-Mar) glides up there. If you'd like to fol-

low in Princess Sophie's footprints, check out spa treatments at the **Kaiser Therme** (☎ 204-0; www.kaisertherme.co.at; Bahnhofstrasse 1; adult/child €11.50/6.90; ☎ 9am-10pm).

Festivals & Events

Daily free **Kurkonzerte** (spa concerts) take place in an open-air pavilion in the Kurpark or inside the nearby Congresshaus. Bad Ischl was the home of operetta composer Franz Lehár, and the **Lehár Festival** (www.leharfestival.at) takes place every year in July and August, with stagings of his own and other composers' works.

Sleeping

Staff at both the tourist offices can help find rooms.

Jugendgästehaus (☎ 265 77; jgh.badischl@oejhv.or.at; Am Rechensteg 5; dm/s/d €15/29.50/44) The characterless but clean HI guesthouse is in the town centre behind Kreuzplatz.

Haus Stadt Prag (☎ 236 16; stadt-prag@aon.at; Egelmoosgasse 9; s/d €33/66; ☎ closed Nov; P) Rooms are large and comfortable and this private pension has a peaceful, old-world atmosphere, situated just outside the town centre.

Hotel Garni Sonnhof (☎ 230 78; www.sonnhof.at; Bahnhofstrasse 4; s €65, d €90-120; P) Nestled in a leafy glade of maple trees next to the station, this lovely hotel has cosy, traditional décor, a beautiful garden (complete with a pond), a sunny conservatory and large bedrooms with interesting old furniture, rag rugs and wooden floors. There's a billiard room, sauna and a steam bath on site.

Goldenes Schiff (☎ 242 41; www.goldenes-schiff.at; Adalbert Stifterkai 3; s €85-95, d €115-162, apt €162; P) ☎; mains €10-18) Most doubles in this four-star hotel have bath tubs, and the best rooms (junior suites) have large windows and overlook the river. Some rooms can be very plain, though. There's also a wellness centre with solarium and sauna, and a good restaurant serving classic Austrian cuisine.

Daysha (☎ 289 84; www.dayshahotel.com; Schulgasse 9; s/d/ste €95/177/280; P) ☎ The latest addition to Bad Ischl's hotel landscape is a stylish and well-thought-out business hotel with pine floors, a refreshingly low-key colour scheme, a rooftop swimming pool and free wireless internet for guests.

Eating & Drinking

Café Sissy (☎ 241 73; Pfarrgasse 2; mains €6-16; ☎ 8am-midnight) Sissy was the nickname of the Kaiserin Elisabeth, unhappy wife of Emperor Franz Josef, and her pictures hang on the walls of this popular riverside bar/café. You can breakfast here, lunch or dine on a Wiener schnitzel and other simple fare, or simply nighthawk at the front-room bar till the midnight hour.

Grand Café & Restaurant Zauner Esplanade (☎ 237 22; Hasner Allee 2; pastries €7-14.50 ☎ 10am-9pm May-Oct, 10am-8pm Wed-Sun Dec-mid-Apr) This offshoot of Café Zauner, the famous pastry shop at Pfarrgasse 7, serves quite decent Austrian staples, some using organic local meats, in a pleasant location beside the river. The Pfarrgasse pastry shop (open 8.30am to 6pm) takes you back in time: founded in 1832, this was where Franz Josef's mistress ordered pastries for their breakfast every morning when the emperor was in residence.

Bürgerstub'n (☎ 235 68; Kreuzplatz 7; 2-course menu €9; ☎ lunch Thu-Tue, dinner Thu & Fri) Back from the street in a courtyard, this cheap and cheerful place has lots of plants studding its outside terrace and serves filling classics.

Weinhaus Attwenger (☎ 233 27; Lehárkai 12; mains €10.50-21.50; ☎ lunch & dinner, closed Mon) This quaint chalet with a garden next to the river

serves prime-quality Austrian cuisine from a seasonal menu, with wines to match. It also has a couple of set menus (three/four courses €26/€30).

K.u.K. Hofbeisl (☎ 272 71; Wirerstrasse 4; ☎ 8am-4am; food €5-20) This *Beisl* is the scene of some of the liveliest late-night partying in Bad Ischl, but it also does a delicious plate of food. It has two separate drinking areas to choose from, DJs get the floors writhing regularly during events, and the drinks list would do a Russian novelist proud – about 150 cocktails in all.

Supermarkets include Billa on Pfarrgasse and Eurospar on Götzstrasse.

Getting There & Away

Postbus services depart from outside the train station, with hourly buses to Salzburg (€8.70, 1½ hours) via St Gilgen (€4.60, 35 minutes). To St Wolfgang (€6.40, 40 minutes), you often have to change at Strobl (the bus will be waiting and the same ticket is valid).

Hourly trains to Hallstatt (€4.40, 25 minutes) go via Steeg/Hallstätter See, at the northern end of the lake, and continue on the eastern side via Hallstatt station to Obertraun (€6, 30 minutes). A boat from Hallstatt station (€2) takes you to the township. There are also frequent trains to Gmunden (€7.60, 45 minutes), as well as to Salzburg (€19, two hours) via Attnang-Puchheim.

Most major roads in the Salzkammergut go to or near Bad Ischl; Hwy 158 from Salzburg and the north-south Hwy 145 intersect just north of the town centre.

SOUTHERN SALZKAMMERGUT

The Dachstein mountain range provides a stunning 3000m backdrop to the lakes in the south. Transport routes go round rather than over these jagged peaks.

HALLSTÄTTER SEE

The Hallstätter See, set among sharply rising mountains at an altitude of 508m in the Southern Salzkammergut, is one of the prettiest and most accessible lakes in the region. It offers some of the best hiking and

WATER, WILD MOUNTAINS, WONDERFUL VIEWS & 5FINGERS

- Rock swimming & kayaking** With its crystal clear waters, the Hallstätter See makes for good summer splashing. Rent a kayak or boat for the day from Hallstatt (opposite), paddle over to Obertraun and moor offshore north of the settlement for some swimming off the rocks. The FKK (naturist) beach in Steeg has a lovely, reedy swim as an alternative.
- Walking above the waters** The eastern shore of the lake is a breeze: flat in most places, and large stretches are even possible for cyclists. The western shore trail, though, is where the walking gets spectacular. Stunning views of the lake open up between lush deciduous forest, and a gruelling climb up steps beyond the waterfall may prompt cries for last-minute mercy.
- A cool drink and a view** Mercy comes in the form of one of the nicest places to eat or drink outdoors in the Salzkammergut. The restaurant at Rudolfsturm (opposite) – inside a former fortress – does a fine dish, but the killer-bee experience is sitting outdoors and enjoying the cool, mountain breeze on your face, sipping a beer or glass of wine, and watching the boats ripple the lake almost 800m below.
- When the water washes down** A late afternoon or early evening shower is common in the Salzkammergut, and one of the more enjoyable places to seek refuge indoors in Obertraun is at Restaurant-Pizzeria Simmer (p253). This friendly, family owned and run respite does delicious pizza; and if the rain sets in, two Kegelbahnen (bowling alleys) out the back help kill time. Once the shower passes, you can move back onto the cosy terrace.
- 5Fingers for the sure-footed** In a region where panoramas are plentiful, the 5Fingers viewing platform (p253) offers one of the most interesting. It's at Krippenstein, above the ice caves, and consists of five steely 'fingers' extending from a sheer 400m precipice. Each finger has a different character. One has a symbolic springboard, and the fifth has a transparent floor. The view from the platform over the lake is dazzling.

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BLUELIST.

swimming in summer, good skiing in winter, and a fascinating insight into the cultural history of the region any time of year. Just 5km round the lake lies Obertraun, the closest resort to the Dachstein ice caves; the whole Hallstatt-Dachstein region became a Unesco World Heritage site in 1997.

As well as excursions, **Hemetsberger** (☎ 6134-8228; Am Hof 126; 90min excursions €9; Jul–mid-Sep, weather depending) does a scheduled run between Obertraun and Hallstatt-Markt (€4.50, 25 minutes, three or four times daily from June to September) and the all-important year-round service between Hallstatt-Markt and Hallstatt train station (€2, 10 minutes, five to 12 times daily). This connects with trains in both directions on the main railway line here (see their pamphlet). If you're staying in Obertraun or Bad Aussee, your last boat leaves Hallstatt-Markt at 6.15pm. Going to Bad Ischl, 5.50pm is your last boat-train connection.

HALLSTATT

☎ 06134 / pop 950

With pastel-coloured houses casting shimmering reflections onto the glassy waters of the lake and towering mountains on all sides, Hallstatt's beauty alone would be enough to guarantee it fame. Boats chug tranquilly across the lake from the train station to the village, situated precariously on a narrow slate of land between mountain and shore. So small is the patch of land occupied by the village that its annual Corpus Christi procession takes place largely in small boats on the lake.

Salt in the hills above the town made it a centre of salt mining. The Hallstatt Period (800 to 400 BC) refers to the early Iron Age in Europe, named after the village and the Iron Age settlers and Celts who worked the salt mines here. Today the sheer volume of visitors can not only get annoying at times, but make finding a hotel room difficult in mid-summer.

Consider staying in Obertraun, which retains its village feel.

Orientation & Information

The train station is across the lake from Hallstatt – to get into town you have to take the ferry. Seestrasse is the main street in Hallstatt; some other streets are mere pedestrian paths.

Internet access (Seestrasse 145; ☎ 9.30am–10pm; per 15 min €1; ☎ May–mid-Oct) A small 'umbrella bar'.

Post office (☎ 8am–noon & 2.30–5.30pm) Near the tourist office.

Sparkasse Bad Ischl (Marktplatz 58; ☎ 8am–noon & 2–5pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri, 8am–noon Wed) Bank with ATM.

Tourist office (☎ 8208; www.hallstatt.at; Seestrasse 169; ☎ 9am–noon & 2–5pm Mon–Fri Sep–Jun, 9am–5pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat Jul & Aug) Turn left from the ferry to reach the office. It has a free *Hiking Friends* brochure with walks in the region.

Sights & Activities

BEINHAUS

Make sure you don't miss the macabre yet beautiful **Beinhaus** (Bone House; ☎ 8279; Kirchenweg 40; admission €1; ☎ 10am–6pm 1 May–27 Oct) behind the church. This small charnel house contains rows of neatly stacked skulls, painted with flowery designs and the names of their former owners. Bones have been exhumed from the overcrowded graveyard since 1600 and the last skull in the collection was added in 1995. The Beinhaus stands in the grounds of the 15th-century Catholic **Pfarrkirche** (parish church; ☎ 8279; Kirchenweg 40) and has Gothic frescoes and three winged altars; arguably the best one, on the right, dates from 1510 and shows saints Barbara and Katharina, with Mary in the middle.

STADTMUSEUM

The revamped, high-tech **Stadtmuseum** (city museum; ☎ 8206; www.museum-hallstatt.at; Seestrasse 56; adult/child/family €7.50/4/19; ☎ 10am–6pm May–Sep, 11am–3pm Wed–Sun Jan–Mar, Nov & Dec, 10am–4pm Apr & Oct) covers the region's history of Iron Age/Celtic occupation and salt mining. All explanations are in German, but pick up the *Museum Hallstatt* booklet (€2; in English) which explains the exhibits. Not to be missed is the room re-enacting the fatal rockslides that may have led to the area being abandoned.

Celtic and Roman excavations can be seen downstairs in **Dachsteinsport Janu** (☎ 8298; Seestrasse 50; admission free; ☎ 8am–6pm), a shop oppo-

site the tourist office, or near the Salzbergwerk (below), where excavation continues.

SALZBERGWERK

Situated high above Hallstatt on Salzberg (Salt Mountain) is another major cultural attraction, the fascinating **Salzbergwerk** (Salt Mine; ☎ 06132-200 24 00; adult/child & concession/family €21/12.60/44.10; ☎ 9.30am–4.30pm May–mid-Sep, to 3.30pm mid-Sep–30 Sep, to 3pm 1 Oct–mid-Oct, closed mid–Oct–Apr). In 1734 the fully preserved body of a prehistoric miner was found and today he is known as the 'Man in Salt'. The standard tour revolves around his fate, with visitors travelling down an underground railway and miner's slides (a photo is taken of you while sliding) to an illuminated subterranean salt lake. Closing times given are admission for the last tour.

There are several ways of getting there – all of them enjoyable. The easiest is with a **funicular railway** (one-way adult/child/family €5.10/3.10/10.80) to the mountain station, from where the mine is 15 minutes' walk past Hallstatt's best lookout restaurant, **Rudolfsturm** (Rudolf's Tower; p102), and an archaeological dig. Alternatively, a switchback trail (about 40 minutes up) starts from the foot of the funicular. If you are feeling fit (and the weather is dry), you might climb the stairs behind the Beinhaus: take the trail until it joins the picturesque **Soleleitungsweg**, go left and follow the very steep trail past the **waterfall** and up steps. It's a tough climb, and not really for children. Last but certainly not least, masochists can walk 18km anticlockwise around the lake (see p99). Leave very early so you reach your sticky end in time for the last tour.

You can hire **boats and kayaks** (per hr from €9) on the lake, or scuba dive in it with the **Dachstein Tauchclub** (☎ 8286; see p100 for nice swimming spots).

Sleeping

Rooms fill quickly in summer, so book ahead or arrive early. If you haven't already booked, go straight for the tourist office and they'll help you find something, either in Hallstatt or Lahn (the southern part of the village). All of the following places provide free parking for guests within the town limits.

Campingplatz Klausner-Höll (☎ 8322; www.camping.hallstatt.net; Lahnstrasse 7; campsites per adult/child/tent/car €6.50/3.50/3.70/2.90; ☎ 15 Apr–15 Oct; P) This campsite is conveniently located south of the centre.

Gasthaus Mühle (☎ 8318; toeroe@magnet.at; Kirchenweg 36; dm €13; ☹ closed Tue & Nov) This youth hostel is part of the restaurant of the same name. It's handily situated on the way up to the church, and the dorms are quite decent.

Jugendherberge (☎ 8212; biene1005@aon.at; Lahn 50; dm €16; ☹ May-Sep) Only dorms are available here, and some can be cramped. Phone if reception is unattended. It's usually full with groups in July and August, and opening can change according to the weather.

Pension Hallberg (☎ 8709; www.pension-hallberg.at; Seestrasse 113; s €60-80, d €70-130; ☐) Book early in summer for Hallberg. Interesting artefacts rescued from the lake line the staircase leading up to the rooms, the best of which are light and airy, furnished with pale wood and have superb views over the lake.

Gasthof Zauner (☎ 8246; www.zauner.hallstatt.net; Marktplatz 51; s/d €48/96; ☹ closed mid-Nov–mid-Dec; ☐) Gasthof Zauner is a quaint, ivy-covered guesthouse on the nearest square to the ferry terminal. It has very tasteful, pine-embellished rooms, some with a balcony and a view of the lake. The restaurant (mains €13 to €18) has some of the best food (especially fish) and wines in town.

our pick **Seehotel Grüner Baum** (☎ 8263; Marktplatz 104; r per person €65-100; ☐) Officially, the Grüner Baum is three-star, but the quality of rooms and service is much more than its rating suggests. These are tastefully furnished without going overboard on décor to impress; three suites have enormous patios to the lake, and doubles have smaller balconies large enough for seating. A complimentary bottle of mineral water arrives each day, and staff will deliver breakfast to your bedside replete with those sweeping views of the lake, making this the ideal place for romantic lakeside sojourns.

Eating

Gasthaus Zur Mühle (☎ 8318; Kirchenweg 36; mains €6.70-8.80; ☹ lunch & dinner Wed–Mon May–Sep, 4–11pm Oct & Dec–Apr, closed Nov) In the same building as the hostel, this restaurant is a nice place to hang out and chomp on salad, pizza or an inexpensive meat dish.

Restaurant zum Salzbaron (☎ 8263; Marktplatz 104; mains €10-22; ☹ lunch & dinner, closed Nov) By a long shot the classiest gourmet act in town, the Salzbaron is perched delicately alongside the lake inside the Seehotel Grüner Baum and serves from a seasonal menu; local trout

features strongly in summer on a menu with a pan-European angle.

Bräugasthof Restaurant (☎ 8221; Seestrasse 120; mains €14-19; ☹ lunch & dinner May–Oct) Beef fillet in port is one excellent choice here, but you can also enjoy a few salads, trout, and other local specialties in this restaurant with a lovely lakeside terrace.

To stock up on provisions for a hike, you'll find a **Konsum** (Kernmagazinplatz 23) between Hallstatt and Lahn.

Getting There & Away

About five buses a day connect Hallstatt town with Obertraun (€1.70, 10 minutes) and Bad Ischl (€4, 50 minutes) until the late afternoon. Get off the Postbus at the Parkterrasse stop for the centre and the tourist office, or at Lahn (at the southern end of the road tunnel) for the Jugendherberge.

Hallstatt train station is across the lake. The boat service from there to the village coincides with train arrivals. The last ferry connection leaves Hallstatt train station at 6.29pm (€1.70, 10 to 45 minutes). Car access into the village is restricted from early May to late October: electronic gates are activated during the day. Staying overnight in town gives free parking and a pass to open the gates.

OBERTRAUN

☎ 06131 / pop 776

Quieter, more low-key than Hallstatt, this village offers access to the caves and is a good starting point for hikes around the lake or more strenuous ones up to the caves themselves.

Orientation & Information

The cable-car station for the ice caves is a 20-minute walk uphill through the woods from the village – turn right along the main road and follow the signposts. The trail (No 16) to the caves is a stiff 2½-hour hike from the valley station.

Tourist office (☎ 351; www.inneres-salzkammergut.at; ☹ 8am–noon & 2–5pm Mon–Fri Oct–Jun, 8am–noon & 2–6pm Mon–Fri, 9am–noon Sat Jul–Sep) On the way to the Dachstein cable car from the train station (ATM next door).

Sights & Activities

Climb to the Dachstein caves and you'll find yourself in a strange world of ice and subterranean hollows extending 80km in places. The

ice in the Giant Ice Cave is no more than 500 years old, forming an 'ice mountain' 8m high – twice as high now as it was when the caves were first explored in 1910.

Both **caves** (☎ 5310; www.dachsteinwelterbe.at; cable car return plus one cave adult/child €23.70/13.80, cable car plus both caves adult/child €28.60/16.30; caves only adult/child €9.30/5.50) are 15 minutes' steep walking from the first stage of the Dachstein cable car at 1350m, and each cave tour lasts an hour. To make sure you see both caves, take the cable car up by 1pm and do the Mammoth Cave first, allowing 30 to 45 minutes to reach the Giant Ice Cave from the Mammoth Cave.

The best of the caves is the **Rieseneishöhle** (Giant Ice Cave; ☹ core tour 9.20am–4pm May–mid-Sep). The enormous ice formations here are illuminated with coloured light and the shapes they take are eerie and surreal. The cave can only be seen on a guided tour, and if you let the tour guide know, they will do the tour with English as well as German commentaries.

The **Mammuthöhle** (Mammoth Cave; ☹ core tour 10.15am–2.30pm mid-May–mid-Sep) is among the 30 or so deepest and longest caves in the world and is without ice formations. Tours give insight into the formation of the cave, which like the Rieseneishöhle, has installations and works of art based on light and shadow to heighten the experience.

The **Koppenbrüllerhöhlen** (guided tour adult/child €7.70/4.50; ☹ May–Oct) are water-filled caves and part of the same Dachstein cave system. They're down the valley towards Bad Aussee.

The **cable car** runs about every 15 minutes. After the middle station **Schönbergalm** (return adult/child €14.40/8.30; ☹ May–mid-Sep), it continues to the highest point (2109m) of **Krippenstein** (return adult/child €20.60/12.80; ☹ late-Jul–mid-Sep), with an eerie **5Fingers viewing platform** dangling over the precipice and walking trails, and beyond that to the Gjaidalm station. In winter Krippenstein is also a ski and snowboard free-riding area (€29.20 for a day pass).

Obertraun has a grassy **beach area** (admission free) with changing huts, a small waterslide, a children's play area and boat rental.

Sleeping & Eating

Obertraun has many private rooms (from €19) and holiday apartments, plus several hotels.

Campingplatz Hinterer (☎ 265; camping.am.see@chello.at; Winkl 77; campsite per adult/child/tent/car €8.40/4.80/5.20/2.80; ☹ May–Oct) This informal,

grassy campsite is by the lake south of the river.

Jugendherberge (☎ 360; www.jutel.at/obertraun, in German; Winkl 26; dm €20, s/d €20/40; ☹ check-in 5–7pm) This HI hostel is 15 minutes' walk from the train station: cross the river and take the first street on the left. Doors are locked during the day.

Gasthof/Pension Dachsteinhof (☎ 393; dachsteinhof@inode.at; Winkl 22; s/d €35/70; ☐) This simple, traditional pension has an idyllic setting by the river on the way to the ice caves. The good-sized rooms are clean and functional, with the sound of rushing water to lull you to sleep at night. There's also a midrange restaurant here serving classics like schnitzel and steak, but also local trout.

Hotel Haus am See (☎ 26777; www.hotel-hausamsee.at; Obertraun 169; s/d €42/86; mains €8.50-19; ☐) Situated conveniently alongside the boat station and swimming area, this comfortable hotel has rooms with views over the lake. While they lack frills, these are very clean and comfortable, and you can throw open the balcony door at night and sleep with a lakeside breeze.

Seehotel Wenk (☎ 462; www.wenk.at; Seestrasse 152; s/d €50/88; ☐) This large hotel is another comfortable option near the lake, especially to escape Hallstatt crowds. Its large garden area out front and around the pool makes it ideal for families.

Restaurant-Pizzeria Simmer (☎ 335; Seestrasse 178; mains €7-11, pizza €4.80-6.50; 10am–midnight Tue–Sun Nov–Apr & Jun–Sep, closed Oct & closed lunch Tue & Thu May) One time we had the good fortune to get caught in this gem during a tremendous hailstorm fresh from a lake hike. The staff is friendly, the pizza is great, and we found it a cosy respite while the heavens opened up. There's ten-pin bowling out back.

The **Konsum** supermarket near the tourist office is convenient for hiking supplies.

Getting There & Away

See opposite for transport connections.

Obertraun-Dachsteinhöhlen is the train station for Obertraun village. Obertraun-Koppenbrüllerhöhle is the station for the water caves (€1.70, four minutes); trains only stop here in summer when the caves are open. There are frequent trains to Bad Ischl (€6, 30 minutes) via Hallstatt (€2.90, three minutes).

For taxis to the ice caves, call ☎ 542.

GOSAUSEE

☎ 06136 / elevation 923m

This small lake is flanked by the impressively precipitous peaks of the **Gosaukamm range** (2459m). The view is good from the shores, and it takes a little over an hour to walk around the entire lake. The Gosaukambahn cable car goes up to 1475m (return adult/child €10.70/6.70), where there are spectacular views and walking trails. Before reaching the lake you pass through the village of **Gosau**, which has its own **tourist office** (☎ 8295; www.oberoesterreich.at/gosau; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri Sep-Apr, 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat May-Aug), with an accommodation board situated outside.

Getting There & Away

Gosau is at the junction of the only road to the lake and can be reached by Hwy 166 from Hallstätter See. One- to two-hourly Postbus services run to the lake from Bad Ischl (€5.70, one hour) via Steeg.

BAD AUSSEE

☎ 03622 / pop 5080

Quiet, staid Bad Aussee is the largest Styrian town in the southern Salzkammergut. It is close to two lakes and convenient by rail and a walking trail to a third – the Hallstätter See. If it's nightlife you're after, look further – such as Bad Ischl – this is not a high-kicking sort of place, and a stroll in the pretty Kurpark must suffice.

Orientation & Information

The train station is 1.5km south of the town centre. After getting off the train, dash to the bus stop out front to raise your chances of jaggling one of the one- to two-hourly buses. The taxi trip is €6 (see p256).

Harreiter Online und Datenverarbeitung (☎ 53250; Bahnhofstrasse 115; per 30 min €1.50; ☎ 4-11pm Mon-Sat)

Post office (Ischlerstrasse 94; ☎ 8am-noon & 2-5.30pm Mon-Fri) Doubles as a bus stop with timetable information.

Tourist office (☎ 523 23; www.ausseeerland.at, in German; Bahnhofstrasse 132; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat Apr-Oct, 9am-noon & 1-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat Nov-Mar) The entrance is on Pratergasse, the geographical centre of Austria. Pick up the town map, with hiking trails marked for the region.

Sights & Activities

The **Altaussee Salzbergwerk** (☎ 6132 200 2490; tours adult/concession €11.50/6.90; ☎ tours hourly 10am-4pm)

is still a working salt mine and was the secret hiding place of art treasures stolen by the Nazis during WWII. Tours include the treasure chambers, an underground lake and a chapel made of blocks of salt and dedicated to St Barbara, the patron saint of miners. Guided tours in English are available.

Kammerhof Museum (☎ 525 11-20; www.badaussee.at/kammerhofmuseum; Chlumeckplatz 1; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 4-6pm Tue & Sat, 10am-noon Fri & Sun Apr-mid-Jun & Oct, 10am-noon & 3-6pm mid-Jun-Sep), housed in a beautiful 17th-century building, covers local history and salt production. There are also some portraits of Anna Plöchl, the local postmaster's daughter who scandalously married a Habsburg prince. All explanations are in German but there's an English sheet available.

There are great views across the town and the mountains beyond it from **Aussee Lebkuchen** (Gingerbread Bakery; ☎ 52 943; www.lebkuchen.at, in German; Pötschenstrasse 146; admission free; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-6pm Tue-Sat, 1-6pm Sun), a working gingerbread bakery that offers tours. Buy some gingerbread to take home, or eat it on the spot in the pleasant **café** (☎ 9am-10pm Wed-Mon).

Five kilometres northeast of Bad Aussee, **Grundlsee** is a longer, thinner lake, with a good viewpoint at its western end as well as walking trails and water sports (including a sailing school). Extending from the eastern tip of the lake are two smaller lakes, **Toplitzsee** (see boxed text, p256) and **Kammersee**. Between May and October, **boat tours** (☎ 03622 8613; www.3-seen-tour.at, in German; full tour adult/child €15/7.50) are available.

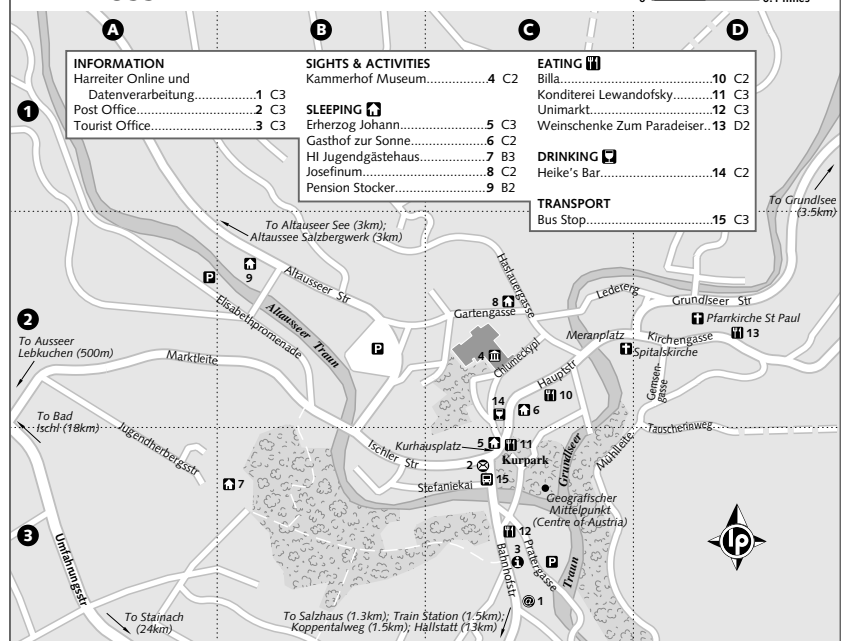
A scenic road, the **Panoramastrasse**, climbs most of the way up **Losner** (1838m), the main peak overlooking the Altaussee. The toll for the return trip is €15, regardless of how many passengers there are. You'll need snow chains in winter.

A new 10-km hiking trail, the **Koppentalweg**, runs west through the lush Traun River valley, connecting with the Ostuferrwanderweg running along the Hallstätter See (see p99). The trail begins at the train station.

Sleeping

The staff at the tourist office is very helpful and knowledgeable; there's a 24-hour information touch screen and free phone to hotels outside the office. Pick up the Bad Aussee brochure available from the tourist office for listings.

BAD AUSSEE



HI Jugendgästehaus (☎ 522 38; www.jfgh.at/bad-aussee.php; Jugendherbergsstrasse 148; dm €20-23; P) This modern building is on the town's hill. It's 15 minutes' walk by road, but there are shorter (unlit) footpaths.

Pension Stocker (☎ 524 84; www.zimmer-ausseeerland.at/stocker; Altaussee Strasse 245; s/d €25/50; P) Located 500m northwest of Kurhausplatz, this is a very pretty pension with wooden balconies and flower-filled window boxes. It has clean rooms and a large garden that overlooks tennis courts.

Josefinum (☎ 521 24; www.tiscovet.at/josefinum; Gartengasse 13; s/d €27/54; P) This peaceful retreat has lovely bright rooms with good views of the mountains. It's run by nuns so be on your best behaviour. Telephone ahead for evening arrival.

Gasthof zur Sonne (☎ 522 06; www.gasthofsonne.at; Hauptstrasse 150; s/d €42/84) Although this guesthouse is simple and short on frills, you'll find the rooms comfortable, and the hotel itself is very centrally located.

Erzherzog Johann (☎ 525 07; www.erzherzogjohann.at; Kurhausplatz 62; s €86-118, d €142-208; P) Bad Aussee's four-star hotel has rooms

with comforts, but the facilities are what really catapult you into seventh heaven: a wonderfully large inhouse sauna and wellness area, a 30m saltwater swimming pool (public, with direct access for guests) and excellent bikes free for guests; they even lend out a GPS so you can get back in time for dinner. The restaurant (mains €16 to €20) is quite good, though quality can be uneven. Steak can be a bit average, but a chicken with herbs washed down with wine does the trick admirably.

Eating & Drinking

Bad Aussee is no great shakes when it comes to eating and drinking, so you're better off splurging elsewhere. The restaurant of Erzherzog Johann (left), however, has a very strong wine list, some good dishes and service with character.

Konditorei Lewandofsky (☎ 532 05; Kurhausplatz 144; Haustorte (house cake) per slice €2.30; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8pm Sun, till 10pm Jul & Aug) The favoured place in town for coffee and cake or a post-work tippie on an outside terrace alongside the Kurpark.

DIVING FOR TREASURE – AND DEAR LIFE

The picturesque Toplitzsee is off-limits to divers. But that hasn't stopped them trying – and dying in the attempt – to explore its oxygen-free depths. Why does this lake, whose fragile ecosystem was all but destroyed during WWII when it was used in experiments with explosives, still attract rogue divers? Bernhard Schragl from Österreichische Bundesforste (Austrian National Forests), explains.

Herr Schragl, why is everyone so interested in the Toplitzsee? It's because of history and the various stories and rumours – above all, about treasure supposedly dumped in it by fleeing Nazis at the end of WWII.

When did these rumours first surface? Right after WWII. They're proving persistent, although a lot of treasure hunters have dived down there.

Have they found anything? Printing presses for producing counterfeit English pound notes. The notes were printed and circulated to destabilize the currency. Counterfeits were also found, but only printed on one side.

Who owns whatever is found in the lake? If an owner can be established, 90% belongs to the owner. The finder gets 10%. If ownership is open, the finder keeps half and the Republic of Austria holds onto the other half.

Are there any signs of treasure down there? Nothing concrete, just a lot of rumours about gold and Swiss bank accounts. These are without any basis whatsoever.

A few years ago Austrian National Forests began a cooperation with treasure hunter Norman Scott and his company Global Explorations. Bundesforste signed an agreement, but for personal reasons on the part of Mr Scott no diving was conducted. If we do sign a new agreement, a fixed component of this will again be that the whole lake is measured and mapped. We'll make these measurements and maps available to the public.

What does Austrian National Forests hope to get out of any agreement? We want to bring an end to all this talk about secrets, and an end to the disturbance this is causing the lake. A lot of illegal divers try their luck at finding treasure. This threatens the lake's ecology because they don't care about the fish and they leave a trail of pollution. We want the whole lake to be measured, mapped and researched so it can be left in peace at last and there are no secrets anymore.

Weinschenke Zum Paradieser (☎ 2135 038; Kirchengasse 28; mains €5.50-12; ☎ 5pm-late Mon-Sat) This cosy and appealing *Heuriger* (wine tavern) with a red-brick floor and calico draped on the ceiling specialises in smoked trout.

Heike's Bar (☎ 548 02; Hauptstrasse 54a; ☎ 8pm-late) The most popular watering hole in the centre.

Salzhaus (☎ 536 53; www.salzhaus.com; Siess-reithstrasse 165; disco €2; ☎ 5pm-late Wed-Sat) Always worth a shot on a good night – there's a pizzeria and lounge to complement its disco events, a stone's throw from the train station.

There's a Unimarkt supermarket on Bahnhofstrasse, by the tourist office, and a Billa on Hauptstrasse.

Getting There & Around

Bad Aussee is on the rail route between Bad Ischl (€6.60, 35 minutes) and Stainach-Irdning (€6, 35 minutes), with trains running hourly in both directions.

Buses run every one to two hours from the train station to both lakes (€1.70, 15 minutes). **Taxis** (☎ 540 08, 521 75) can be useful here.

NORTHERN SALZKAMMERGUT

The two most popular of the northern lakes are Traunsee – with the three resorts of Gmunden, Traunkirchen and Ebensee

on its shores – and Wolfgangsee, home to the villages of St Wolfgang and St Gilgen (the latter provides access to Schafberg mountain; 1783m).

TRAUNSEE

Traunsee is the deepest lake in Austria, going down a cool 192m. The eastern flank is dominated by rocky crags, the tallest of which is the imposing **Traunstein** (1691m). The resorts are strung along the western shore and are connected by rail.

Hourly trains run between Gmunden, Traunkirchen (€2.90, 10 minutes) and Ebensee (€4.40, 20 minutes), continuing to Bad Ischl (€7.60, 40 minutes). Boats operated by **Traunsee Schifffahrt** (☎ 07612-667 00; www.traunsee-schifffahrt.at; Rathausplatz, Gmunden) tour the shoreline from Gmunden to Ebensee between late April and mid-October. The one-way trip between Gmunden and Ebensee costs €7.50/6 per adult/child. The paddle steamer *Gisela* takes to the waves on weekends and holidays in July and August (a €2.50 surcharge applies).

GMUNDEN

☎ 07612 / pop 15,075

With its yacht marina, lakeside square and promenades, Gmunden exudes a breezy, Riviera feel. It was formerly known for its castles and ceramics, and it also doubled as an administration centre for both the Habsburgs and the salt trade. Today it makes for an attractive stopover in the lakes region.

Orientation & Information

The town centre is on the western bank of the Traun River, with Rathausplatz at its heart.

Bürgeresspresso + Internetcafé (☎ 777 44; Am Graben 2a; per hr €3.60; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat) Self-service internet café.

Gästezentrum Ferienregion Traunsee (☎ 643 05; www.traunsee.at; Toscanapark 1; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun May-Jun & Sep-Oct, 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat & Sun Jul & Aug, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat Nov-Apr) Regional tourist office for the lake, with accommodation booking service.

Post office (☎ 0577 677-4810; Johann-Evangelist-Habert-Strasse 1; ☎ 8am-noon & 2-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 8am-5.30pm Fri) Up the hill 200m.

Tourist office (☎ 657 520; gmunden@traunsee.at; Rathausplatz 1; ☎ 9am-3pm Mon-Fri May, Jun, Sep & Oct, 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat Jul & Aug, 9am-3pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr) The city tourist office for Gmunden,

with information and maps of town and the lake. Helps with accommodation bookings.

Sights & Activities

Once a famous centre for ceramics, Gmunden is now blessed with one of Austria's most unusual museums. The **Museum für Historische Sanitäröbekte** (Klo & So Museum, Museum for Historical Sanitary Objects; ☎ 794 293; Kammerhofgasse 8; adult/child €4.20/1; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-5pm Tue-Sat, 10am-noon Sun May-Oct) is basically a monumental collection of toilets. Here you can discover the difference between 'wash-down' and 'wash-out' models, and if you thought the latter with its flat poop deck and horizontal splash is just an anally obsessive Central European quirk, this museum vividly explodes the myth. The British were perching on these in the 19th century. About 80 toilets are on display, including one used by the royal *Po* (bottom) of Kaiser Franz Josef in his hunting lodge near Ebensee.

By May 2008 the Museum for Historical Sanitary Objects will be housed in the same building as the **Stadtmuseum Gmunden** (☎ 794-420; www.museum.gmunden.at; Kammerhofgasse 8); the museum is closed for renovation until then. Once it opens you can expect displays on the history of Gmunden and the salt trade, as well as a gallery. North of the Rathausplatz is the 12th-century **Pfarrkirche** (parish church; ☎ 642 17; Kirchplatz), a Gothic building later remodelled as baroque and sporting an altar (dating from 1678) by the baroque sculptor Thomas Schwanthaler (1634–1707).

Flanking the lake on the eastern side, the Renaissance castle **Schloss Weyer** (☎ 650 18; Freygasse 27; admission €7.50; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-5.30pm Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat May-Sep) has a sizeable collection of porcelain, silver and jewellery. Also out here is the **Grünberg lookout** (984m). A **cable car** (adult/child return €11.50/6.80) takes you up, but it's also easy to walk.

On the western shore, a pretty nature reserve known as **Toscana Park** forms a backdrop to **Seeschloss Ort**. This castle on the lake is believed to have been built on the ruins of a Roman fortress. It dates from 909 or earlier (rebuilt in the 17th century after a fire) and has a picturesque courtyard, a late-Gothic external staircase and sgraffito from 1578.

Sleeping & Eating

Private rooms are the best deal for budget travellers – ask the tourist office to help you find one.

Haus Reiser (☎ 724 25; pension.reiser@aon.at; Freygasse 20; s/d €29/58) This good-value, private pension has a TV room and garden. There are seven bright, fresh rooms with radios, and all but two have their own bathroom.

Hotel-Gasthof Steinmaurer (☎ 704 88; www.steinmaurer.at; Traunsteinstrasse 23; s €53, d €84-92; P) This hotel is by the Grünberg cable car and across the road from a public beach. Rooms are modern, clean and – for the most part – large, and many doubles have a balcony or terrace. The busy restaurant (mains €7 to €15, open breakfast, lunch and dinner) serves the likes of vegetable cakes with tomato ragout, and smoked-trout-and-prawn salad at outdoor tables overlooking the yacht marina.

Keramikhof Goldener Brunnen (☎ 644 310; www.goldenerbrunnen.at; Traungasse 10; s/d €58/90; P) This excellent boutique hotel in the centre has recently been renovated and upgraded with sauna and wellness facilities. Rooms are very tastefully appointed with modern fittings, ceramic art adds a decorative touch, and a plus is its midrange restaurant (lunch menu €6.80, open lunch and dinner) with Austrian dishes such as Styrian chicken and some international favourites.

Seehotel Schwan (☎ 633 91; www.seehotel-schwan.at; Rathausplatz 8; s €70, d €110-130; P) This up-market hotel is right in the middle of town and has lake views from all rooms. These are large, with modern furniture and balcony, but the corridors are a bit gloomy. There's a

smart restaurant (mains €14.50 to €24, open lunch and dinner) downstairs, serving fresh lake fish on a daily changing menu.

Café Brandl (☎ 641 85; Rathausplatz 1; lunch €2-5; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) This smart café/bar has bright yellow walls, black leather sofas and cubist artworks spiking its interior. It serves breakfast, cakes and light meals during the day and turns into a drinking venue (with snacks) at night.

A Spar supermarket awaits self-caterers at Kursaalgasse 5.

Getting There & Away

The Gmunden **Hauptbahnhof** on the Salzkammergut Attnang-Puchheim to Stainach-Irdning line is the main train station for the town. The Bad Ischl–Gmunden train fare (€7.60, 45 minutes, hourly) also includes the connecting tram to the centre. The Seebahnhof, near the marina, services the slow, private train line from Vorchdorf–Eggenburg.

Getting Around

The **Hauptbahnhof** is 2km northwest of the town centre: tram G (€1.60) departs from outside it to Franz Josef Platz after every train arrival. Bus rides in town cost €1.60. The Bummelzug (an electric train on wheels) takes you to Seeschloss Ort from the Rathausplatz for €2.50/1.50 per adult/child every 30 minutes from 9am to 7pm.

TRAUNKIRCHEN

☎ 07617 / pop 1775

The attractive hamlet of Traunkirchen sits on a spit of land about halfway along the western shore of the Traunsee. It's chiefly famous for the wooden **Fischerkanzel** (Fisherman's Pulpit; ☎ 2214; Klosterplatz 1; ☎ 8am-5pm or 6pm) in the Pfarrkirche. This was carved in 1753 and depicts the miracle of the fishes, with the apostles standing in a tub-shaped boat and hauling in fish-laden nets. The composition, colours (mostly silver and gold) and detail (even down to wriggling, bug-eyed fish) create a vivid impression.

For information on accommodation, contact the **tourist office** (☎ 2234; www.traunsee.at; Ortsplatz 1; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon & 2-5pm Sat Jul & Aug, 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri Sep-Jun).

Hourly trains from Gmunden go to Traunkirchen (€2.90, 10 minutes, hourly).

EBENSEE

☎ 06133 / pop 8700

In 2006 Ebensee achieved renown as the setting for the Salzkammergut's unusual teenage splatter film, *In 3 Tagen bist du Tod* (In Three Days You're Dead). It lies on the southern shore of the Traunsee and a favoured past-time here is to take the cable car (adult/child €16/€9.30 hourly) up to **Feuerkogel** (1592m), where you can find walking trails leading across a flattish plateau. Within an hour's walk is **Alberfeldkogel** (1708m), with an excellent view over the two Langbath lakes. Feuerkogel also provides access to winter **skiing** (day pass €30) with easy to medium slopes.

In early January every year, the men of Ebensee don giant illuminated head-dresses made of tissue paper in a bizarre ritual known as the Glöcklerlauf.

For details on accommodation and especially for activities like hiking and mountain-bike hire and trails, the local **tourist office** (☎ 8016; www.ebensee.com; Hauptstrasse 34; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon & 2-6pm Sat Jul & Aug, 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri Sep-Oct & May-Jun, 8am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr) by the Landungsplatz train station is very knowledgeable.

The train station for the centre and the boat landing stage is Ebensee-Landungsplatz, rather than the larger Ebensee station.

GRÜNAU

☎ 07616 / pop 2100

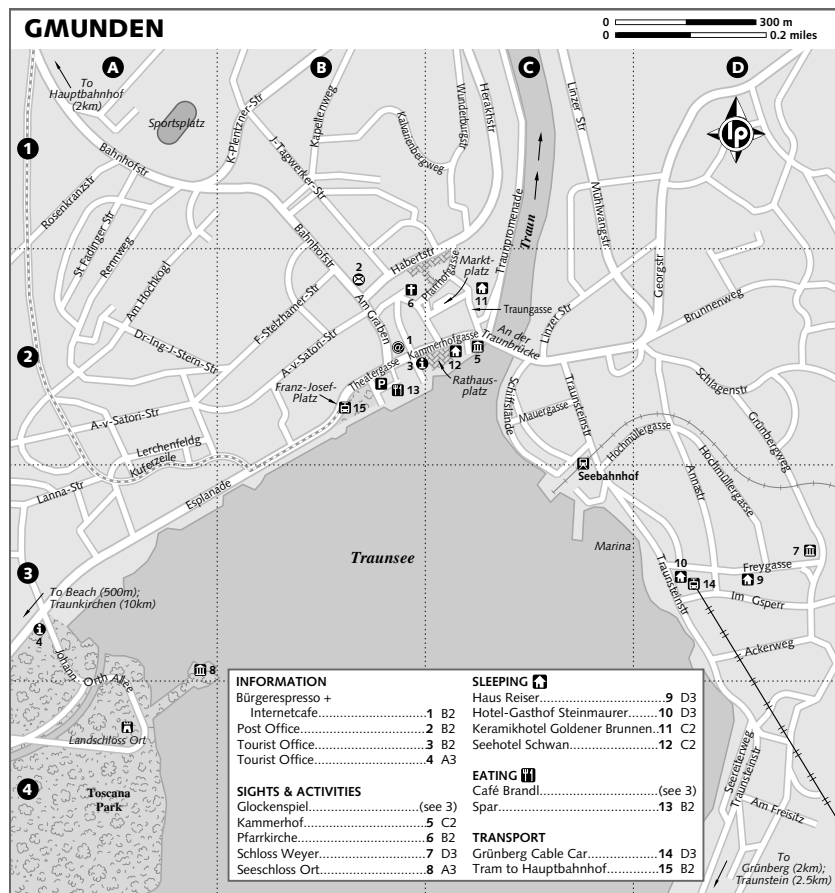
If you want to get off the beaten track, consider going to Grünau, east of Traunsee. Frequent trains run there from Wels (€9.30, one hour) and frequent buses run from Gmunden (€4, one hour).

The small, friendly **Tree House Backpacker Hotel** (☎ 8499; www.treehousehotel.net; Schindlbach 16; dm/d/tr €19/24/69) offers bike hire, horse riding, canyoning, rafting, skiing and snowboarding, among many other activities. Meals are available, there are bars for partying, and if you call ahead from Grünau station they'll pick you up.

ATTERSEE

☎ 07666 / pop 1500

The largest lake in the Salzkammergut is flanked mostly by hills, with mountains in the south. It's one of the less scenic and less visited of the Salzkammergut's lakes, but a few resorts cling to the shoreline, offering the usual water-leisure activities. The main



resort is **Attersee**, which has a museum and a couple of churches. Its **tourist office** (☎ 7719; www.attersee.at; Nussdorferstrasse 15; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat, 9-11am Sun Jul & Aug, 9am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat May, Jun & Sep, 9am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr) can help with accommodation.

Attersee-Schiffahrt (☎ 7806; www.atterseeschiffahrt.at) does mostly alternating boat circuits of the north (€7.50, 1¼ hours) and south (€13, 2¼ hours) regions of the lake several times most days from early May to late September, and a daily full circuit (€16, 3¼ hours) in July and August.

Getting There & Away

Two lakeside towns, Attersee and Schörfling, are connected to the rail network, each by a line branching from the main Linz-Salzburg route (though only regional trains stop): for Kammer-Schörfling change at Vöcklabruck, and for Attersee town change at Vöcklamarkt.

WOLFGANGSEE

Named after a local saint, this lake has two very popular resorts, St Wolfgang and St Gilgen, of which St Wolfgang is the most appealing. The third town on the lake, **Strobl** (population 2750), is a less remarkable but pleasant place at the start of a scenic toll road (€3 per car and per person) to Postalm (1400m).

A **ferry service** (☎ 06138 22 32-0; www.wolfgangseeschiffahrt.at) operates May to October from Strobl to St Gilgen (€6.40, 75 minutes), stopping at points en route. Services are most frequent from June to early September. Boats run from St Wolfgang to St Gilgen almost hourly during the day (€5.40, 35 minutes); the free *Eintauchen & Aufsteigen* timetable from local tourist offices gives exact times that will help with planning day trips and connecting with buses or the Schafbergbahn.

Schafberg

The Wolfgangsee is dominated by the 1783m **Schafberg** mountain on its northern shore. At the summit you'll find a hotel, a restaurant and phenomenal views over mountains and lakes (especially Mondsee, Attersee and, of course, Wolfgangsee). If you don't fancy the three- to four-hour walk from St Wolfgang (early tourists were carried up in sedan chairs), ride the **Schafbergbahn** (cogwheel railway; ☎ 06138 22 32-0; one-way/return €14/24; 40 min), which runs from May to October. Departures are approximately

hourly between 8.25am and 6pm, but the trip is so popular that you probably won't be able to get on the next train. Queue early, purchase a ticket for a specific train and then go for a wander along the lake or around St Wolfgang until your time comes to depart.

ST WOLFGANG

☎ 06138 / pop 3000

St Wolfgang is a charming town situated on the steep banks of the Wolfgangsee. Although its streets can get clogged with visitors during the day, things usually settle down early evening, which is the best time for a tranquil stroll along the forested lakeshore past the gently creaking wooden boathouses.

The village's main fame came as a place of pilgrimage (see the boxed text, p101) and today's visitors still come to see the 14th-century pilgrimage church, packed with art treasures.

Orientation & Information

The main streets of Pilgerstrasse and Michael Pacher Strasse join at the pilgrimage church. A road tunnel bypasses the town centre, and there are car parks at either end of it.

Tourist office (☎ 8003; www.wolfgangsee.at; Au 140; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat May, 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon & 2-6pm Sat Jun & Sep, 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon & 2-6pm Sat, 2-6pm Sun Jul & Aug, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat Oct-Apr) At the eastern tunnel entrance.

Pilgerstrasse branch (Michael-Pacher-Haus, Pilgerstrasse; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Fri Jun-Sep) At the other end of town, near the road tunnel.

Sights & Activities

St Wolfgang's impressive **Wallfahrtskirche** (☎ 2321; donation €0.80; ☎ 9am-6pm) was built in the 14th and 15th centuries and is virtually a spectacular gallery of religious art, with several altars (from Gothic to baroque), an extravagant pulpit, a fine organ and countless statues and paintings. The most impressive piece is the winged high altar, created by celebrated religious artist Michael Pacher between 1471 and 1481 – it's a perfect example of the German Gothic style, enhanced with the technical achievements of Renaissance Italy. The luminous colours of the paintings on the wings are as fascinating as the gilded figures in the centre, and the detail is startling, right down to the notes of music played by the hovering angels. So important was the

altar that the wings were traditionally kept closed except for important festivals. Now they are always open, except for the eight weeks before Easter.

Another altar, made 200 years later, stands over the spot where St Wolfgang's axe is supposed to have landed (see the boxed text, p101).

A tourist-office booklet details the many **water sports** on offer. A few minutes' walk anti-clockwise round the lake is the start of the Schafberg railway.

Sleeping

St Wolfgang has some good private rooms in village homes or in farmhouses in the surrounding hills. Lists are available from the tourist office, which will phone places on your behalf.

Camping Appesbach (☎ 2206; Au 99; campsite per adult/child/tent €6.10/3.55/9; ☎ Easter-Sep) This campsite is on the lakeside 1km from St Wolfgang in the direction of Strobl.

Haus am See (☎ 2224; Michael Pacher Strasse 98; s/d without bathroom €20/50; ☎ P) This is a remarkable pension with features ripe for a Wolfgangsee mystery novel: it's run by a retired professor and his wife, evokes earlier decades, and the owner-couple also rent out four rooms in their boatshed down on the water (same price). Guests get free use of a boat and bike. It's conveniently opposite the Au bus stop.

Gästehaus Raudaschl (☎ 2561; www.haus-raudaschl.at; Au 41; s/d €23/46) Set back from the lake but with fine views over the rooftops to it, this pension run by a lovely old couple has a very homely feel and the advantage of being away from the tourist excesses in town.

Hotel Peter (☎ 2304; www.tiscover.at/hotel-peter; s €56-58, d €112-116; ☎ P) The generous-sized rooms at this four-star hotel have balconies looking onto the lake, large bathrooms and tasteful décor. The restaurant (mains €8.80 to €31.90, most under €15) also has a terrace overlooking the lake, with pasta and a good fish platter filled with poached, fried and baked local fish.

Im Weissen Rössl (☎ 2306-0; www.weissesroessler.at; Im Stöckl 74; s €124-140, d €170-248, ste per person €170; ☎ P) St Wolfgang's most famous hotel was the setting for Ralph Benatzky's operetta *The White Horse*, and a bed from the operetta today takes pride of place on one floor. Rooms are individually styled and somewhat idiosyncratic, but the more expensive ones

have a balcony and view over the lake. There's a large wellness area, and two pools – one pool literally floats on the lake (heated to 30°C), and another is indoors. It also has several good junior suites.

Eating & Drinking

There are dozens of hotels and cafés in St Wolfgang's compact town centre; stroll around and make your choice.

Kraftstoff-Bar (☎ 2491; Markt 128; mains €8-19; ☎ lunch & dinner) Decked out like a petrol station, this chilled-out bar and restaurant is an unusual place to curl your fingers around a drink, accompanied by wings and potato wedges, pasta, salads or grills; check out the charming balcony.

Im Weissen Rössl (☎ 2306-0; Im Stöckl 74; mains €12.50-32; ☎ lunch & dinner) There are two restaurants and a lovely wine cellar in this highly respected hotel. The Seerestaurant (kitchen open all day) tempts with regional and international dishes like organic local lamb in a liquorish-root sauce with sage polenta.

There's a Konsum supermarket 200m from the Schafbergbahn.

Getting There & Away

The only road to St Wolfgang approaches from Strobl in the east. For ferries, see opposite. A Postbus service from St Wolfgang via Strobl to St Gilgen (€5.20, 35 to 50 minutes) is frequent out of season, but tails off somewhat in summer when the ships run. For Salzburg (€7.90, 1¼ hours) you need to connect in St Gilgen or Strobl (€1.90, 11 minutes). Wolfgangsee ferries stop at the village centre (Markt stop) and at the Schafberg railway.

ST GILGEN

☎ 06227 / pop 3700

The ease of access to St Gilgen, 29km from Salzburg, is one reason why this town is so popular. It has boomed in the last decade or so, not least because of its very scenic setting. This, along with quieter Strobl, is quite a good base for lake water sports, and it is not quite as crowded as St Wolfgang.

Information

Café Dallman (☎ 2208; Mozartplatz 2a; per min €0.20; ☎ 11am-7pm Jun-Sep) Slow internet access, near the Rathaus.

Tourist office (☎ 2348; www.wolfgangsee.at; Mondsee Bundesstrasse 1a; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri,

9am-noon Sat May, Jun & Sep, 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 10am-5pm Sun Jul & Aug, 9am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat Oct, 9am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr) Helps find rooms. Brochures are also inside the Rathaus on Mozartplatz.

Sights & Activities

The cosy little **Muzikinstrumente-Museum der Völker** (Folk Music Instrument Museum; ☎ 8235; Aberseestrasse 11; admission €4; ☎ 9-11am & 3-7pm Tue-Sun Jun-mid-Oct, 9-11am & 2-5pm Mon-Fri mid-Oct-Jan, 9-11am & 2-5pm Mon-Thu, 9-11am Fri, 3-6pm Sun Jan-May) is home to 1500 musical instruments from all over the world, all of them collected by one family of music teachers. The son of the family, Askold zum Eck, can play them all and will happily demonstrate for hours. Visitors are welcome to have a go at anything from an African drum to an Indian sitar. There are some truly beautiful objects here and the family's enthusiasm is infectious.

The **Heimatkundliches Museum** (☎ 2642; Pichlerplatz 6; adult/child €3.50/2; ☎ 10am-noon & 3-6pm Tue-Sun Jun-Sep) won an award a few years back for its eclectic collection ranging from embroidery (originally manufactured in the building) to 4700 animals and religious objects.

Water sports such as windsurfing, waterskiing and sailing are popular here. There's a town swimming pool and a small, free beach with a grassy area beyond the yacht marina.

The mountain rising over the resort is **Zwölferhorn** (1520m); a cable car (€18 return) will whisk you to the top where there are good views and two trails (2 to 2½ hours) leading back to St Gilgen. Skiers ascend in winter.

Sleeping & Eating

Jugendgästehaus Schafbergblick (☎ 2365; jgh.stgilgen@oejhv.or.at; Mondseer Strasse 7; dm €17.50-19.50, s €19.50-29.50, d €35-44; ☎ reception 8am-1pm & 5-7pm Mon-Fri, 5-7pm Sat & Sun; ☎) This upmarket youth hostel has a good location near the town beach. Night keys are available.

Gasthof Rosam (☎ 2591; www.tiscover.at/rosam; Frontfestgasse 2-4; s €34, d €50-70; ☎ Easter-mid-Oct; ☎) Situated down near the lake, this family-run pension is well managed and refreshing, with clean rooms that are very good value for the location.

Pension Falkensteiner (☎ 2395; www.pension-falkensteiner.at; Salzburgerstrasse 13; s/d €40/56; ☎) Some of the rooms have balconies and all are large in this no-frills but spotless pension with helpful management.

Gasthof Zur Post (☎ 2157; www.gasthofzurpost.at; Mozartplatz 8; s €82, d €116-148; ☎) The 'Post-Geschichten' rooms at this old inn are beautifully designed in a cosily rustic style with shades of minimalism. There are heavy wooden beds, interesting colour schemes and wooden floors. The restaurant (mains €8 to €19, open lunch and dinner) serves national and regional specialities in a low-ceilinged, whitewashed dining room or outside on the elegant terrace. Try the game ragout.

San Giorgio (☎ 2605; Ischler Strasse 18; pizza €6-9; ☎ lunch & dinner Wed-Sun Feb-Apr, Nov & Dec, lunch & dinner Wed-Mon May-Oct, closed most of Jan) This Italian restaurant by the lake has eat-in (inside or in the garden) and take-away food. There's a bar/disco downstairs, the Zwölfer Alm Bar (open from 9pm), claiming to be the oldest nightclub in Austria (it was founded in 1930).

Fischer-Wirt Restaurant (☎ 2304; Ischlerstrasse 21; mains €7-17.50; ☎ lunch & dinner Jul & Aug, lunch & dinner Tue-Sun Sep-early Jan & Apr-Jun, lunch & dinner Thu-Sun Mar, closed early Jan & Feb) Situated on the water's edge, this popular seafood restaurant does a fish platter for two people for €35; some meat dishes also feature on the menu.

Restaurant Timbale (☎ 7587; Salzburger Strasse 2; mains €20-24, 6-course menu €62; ☎ lunch & dinner Sat-Wed, dinner Fri Sep-Jul, lunch & dinner Aug) Reserve ahead for a table in what is considered to be one of the finest restaurants on the Wolfgangsee. The atmosphere is informal and it specialises in seasonal regional dishes.

Getting There & Away

St Gilgen is 50 minutes from Salzburg by Postbus (€5.40), with hourly departures until early evening; some buses continue on to Stobl and Bad Ischl (€4.40, 34 minutes). The bus station is near the base station of the cable car. Highway 154 provides a scenic route north to Mondsee. For details on the ferry service to/from St Wolfgang, see p260.

MONDSEE

☎ 06232 / pop 3200

The town of Mondsee extends along the northern tip of this crescent-shaped lake noted for its warm water; coupled with its closeness to Salzburg (30km away), this makes it a highly developed, popular lake for weekend Salzburgers.

The **tourist office** (☎ 2270; www.mondsee.at; Dr Franz Müller Strasse 3; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri Apr & May, 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat Jun & Sep, 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-

7pm Sat & Sun Jul & Aug, 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-Mar) is between the church and the lake.

Sights & Activities

If you're allergic to the film *The Sound of Music*, there's just one piece of advice: blow town. Even the lemon-yellow baroque façade (added in 1740, incidentally) of the 15th-century **parish church** (☎ 8am-7pm) achieved notoriety by featuring in those highly emotional Von Trapp wedding scenes in the film.

After that, make a beeline for the **Museum Mondseeland und Pfahlbaumuseum** (Wrede Platz; adult/child & student €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Sep) next door, with displays on Stone Age finds and the monastic culture of the region (Mondsee is a very old monastery site).

The **Segelschule Mondsee** (☎ 3548-200; www.segelschule-mondsee.at; in German; Robert Baum Promenade 3) is the largest sailing school in Austria and offers sailing (five days €214) and windsurfing (two days €99) courses.

Sleeping

For lists of hotels and restaurants, ask at the tourist office.

Jugendgästehaus (☎ 2418; jgh.mondsee@oejhv.or.at; Krankenhausstrasse 9; dm/s/d €19.50/29.50/44; ☎) This HI hostel is a few minutes' walk from the centre of town.

Gasthof Grüner Baum (☎ 2314; www.gruenerbaum.mondsee.at; Herzog Odilo Strasse 39; s/d with breakfast €47/76) Rooms in this small and no-frills pen-

sion have been renovated recently, but ask for one away from the busy street.

Leitnerbräu (☎ 6500; www.leitnerbraeu.at; Steinerbachstrasse 6; s €76-115, d €126-159; ☎) This four-star hotel faces the Marktplatz. Some of the light and airy rooms have a view of the square and the church – ask when booking. There's a sauna, steam bath and small gym on site.

Eating

Gasthof Blaue Traube (☎ 2237; Marktplatz 1; mains €8-15; ☎ lunch & dinner Thu-Tue) The 'Blue Grape', opposite the church, serves a good schnitzel and other classics for eating in or usefully as take away; check out its ice cream.

Mayrhofer's (☎ 36607; Marktplatz 4; mains €9-12.50; ☎ 9am-midnight Wed-Mon) If you feel like a light salad with prawns, Mayrhofer's is where it's done well. This restaurant and bar also stays open long after the tour buses have left town.

Restorante da Michele (Marktplatz 9; mains €10.50-15.50; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun). The homemade pasta and bread is especially popular at this delightful Italian restaurant in the centre of town.

For self-caterers, there's a Spar supermarket at Rainerstrasse 5.

Getting There & Away

Hourly Postbus services connect Mondsee with Salzburg (€5.40, 50 minutes), but only three direct buses a day go to St Gilgen (€3.70, 20 minutes). Expect to pay €24 for a ride to St Gilgen by **taxi** (☎ 0664-22000 22).

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Salzburg & Salzburger Land



Close your eyes, picture Austria and nine times out of 10 it will be the Salzburger Land of childhood that pops to mind. Before most people have set eyes on Salzburg, their heads spin with the sound of Maria belting her heart out as she skips down the Alps, or Mozart's enchanting *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*. Little wonder, then, that this chocolate-box land of edelweiss-clad slopes, towering peaks and medieval fortresses comes back to spark the imagination years later – inviting exploration.

Let's start at the very beginning. Salzburg, to the north of the province, is a mere snowball throw from Germany. Built high on the riches of salt, today its Unesco World Heritage centre blends glorious baroque architecture with modern art galleries and musical prowess. Scratch beneath the surface and you'll discover the city's youthful streak: retro cafés with not a strudel in sight and riverside bars oozing urban cool offer a taste of a 21st-century city in the making.

Trace the Salzach River south and the vista shifts from gently undulating alpine pastures to brooding limestone turrets. The chiselled pinnacles of the Tennengebirge are the place to work up a sweat hiking – cliffhanger-style – before shivering in subzero temperatures within the world's biggest accessible ice caves in Werfen. Most travellers don't venture further, but dig a little deeper and you'll unearth offbeat treasures: from the yawning Liechtensteinklamm (Liechtenstein Gorge) to the high moors surrounding Mauterndorf, where the music is the sound of silent hills.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Roaming the clifftop ramparts of **Festung Hohensalzburg** (p271) to see Salzburg spread out beneath you
- Getting drenched by the trick fountains at **Schloss Hellbrunn** (p283), a palace fit for mischievous bishops
- Donning a boiler suit to venture to the bowels of the earth at Hallein's salt mine, **Salzwelten** (p284)
- Gawping at the sheer scale of the 300m-high chasm, **Liechtensteinklamm** (p286)
- Standing in awe of sparkling ice sculptures in the teeth-chattering confines of **Eisriesenwelt** (p285) ice caves in Werfen



■ POPULATION: 529,000 ■ AREA: 7154 SQ KM ■ HIGHEST ELEVATION: GROSSVENEDIGER 3674M

History

Salzburg has had a tight grip on the region as far back as Roman times, when the town Juvavum stood on the site of the present-day city. This Roman stronghold came under constant attack from warlike Celtic tribes and was ultimately destroyed by them or abandoned due to disease.

St Rupert established the first Christian kingdom in this part of Austria in about 696. As centuries passed, the successive archbishops of Salzburg gradually increased their power and eventually were given the grandiose titles of princes of the Holy Roman Empire.

Wolf Dietrich von Raitenau (1587–1612), one of Salzburg's most influential archbishops, instigated the baroque reconstruction

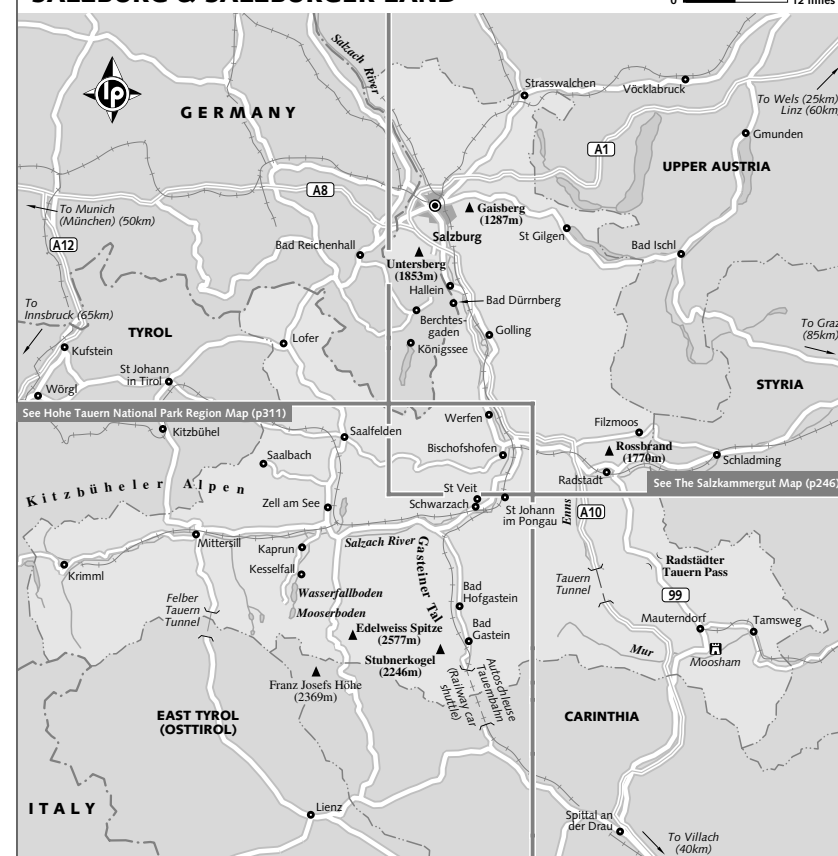
of the city, commissioning many of its most beautiful buildings. He fell from power after losing a dispute over salt with the powerful rulers of Bavaria and died a prisoner.

Another of the city's archbishops, Paris Lodron (1619–53), managed to keep the principality out of the Europe-wide 'Thirty Years' War. Salzburg also remained neutral during the War of the Austrian Succession a century later, but bit by bit the province's power gradually waned; during the Napoleonic Wars Salzburg came under the thumb of France and Bavaria. It became part of Austria in 1816.

Climate

Average temperatures in Salzburg range from 23°C in July and August to -1°C in January. In

SALZBURG & SALZBURGER LAND



the mountains winter brings heavy snowfalls and much lower temperatures, with cooler but sunny days in summer. Spring is the wettest time, with an average of 13 rainy days per month.

National Parks

A large part of the high-altitude Hohe Tauern National Park lies within Salzburg province. This area is covered separately (p310).

Getting There & Away

Salzburg is well connected to the rest of Austria by public transport, with excellent rail and road connections to neighbouring Salzkammergut and down into Hohe Tauern National Park. Salzburg's *Hauptbahnhof* (main train station) has good connections to Germany, Italy and the Czech Republic.

By road, the main routes into the region are the A8 from Munich and the A1 from Linz. To enter Salzburg Province from Carinthia and the south, you can use the A10 from Spittal an der Drau or the Autoschleuse Tauernbahn south of Bad Gastein.

Both scheduled and no-frills flights from Europe and the USA serve Salzburg airport (p395), a half-hour bus ride from the city.

Getting Around

Salzburg's efficient bus and train network makes it easy to reach even the province's smaller villages. Salzburg itself is compact enough to negotiate on foot but also has a network of city buses and trains (see p282). Tourist offices in the province sell the **Salzburgerland Card** (www.salzburgerlandcard.com), which provides discounts on attractions in the province (six-day card adult/child €39/19.50).

SALZBURG

☎ 0662 / pop 145,800

A shrine to Mozart's melodies? A *Sound of Music* stage? A Disneyfied city with scrumptious cakes, sugar-coated mountains and one helluva fortress? Yep, Salzburg is undeniably touristy and theatrical, yet still it's a composition that takes some beating: from Festung Hohensalzburg atop Mönchsberg to the baroque splendour of Residenzplatz and the slender spires that crowd the skyline.

This is a city where kitsch and class walk hand in hand. If Maria is just itching to get out, take her on a warble-as-you-pedal tour of

the sights; if Wolfgang is more your cup of tea, join the well-heeled crowd at Schloss Mirabell to hear the maestro's symphonies. Whether it's to be a shopping spree on Getreidegasse to find lederhosen that fit, or a horse-drawn carriage ride through the cobbled centre, in Salzburg embracing the clichés is positively encouraged. And why not? It's fun.

When the overload of Mozart and Miss Andrews gets too much to handle, Salzburg's lesser-known corners offer blissful respite. The contemporary contours of Museum der Moderne, the chilled bars lining the right bank and the solitude of Kapuzinerberg are the perfect remedy for an overkill of the obvious. Sitting on the banks of the fast-flowing Salzach as the sun sinks over the city, it becomes clear that this place still rocks. Even without Amadeus.

Orientation

Salzburg is split in two by the Salzach River. The compact, pedestrianised *Altstadt* (old town) is on the left bank. Rising above the city, Festung Hohensalzburg clings to cliffs of Mönchsberg. Stepping over the river, the right bank is home to Schloss Mirabell, Kapuzinerberg, and numerous entertainment venues, hotels and restaurants. About 10 minutes' walk further north is the *Hauptbahnhof* and bus station.

MAPS

The tourist office and most hotels hand out free maps of the city centre. Many bookshops and souvenir kiosks also sell city maps.

Information BOOKSHOPS

Motzko (Map p269; ☎ 88 33 11; Elisabethstrasse 1)

Stocks English-language books.

Motzko Reise (Map p269; ☎ 88 33 11-55; Rainerstrasse 24) Across the road from Motzko; sells maps and guidebooks.

News & Books (Map p269; *Hauptbahnhof* platform 2a) International newspapers and magazines.

EMERGENCY

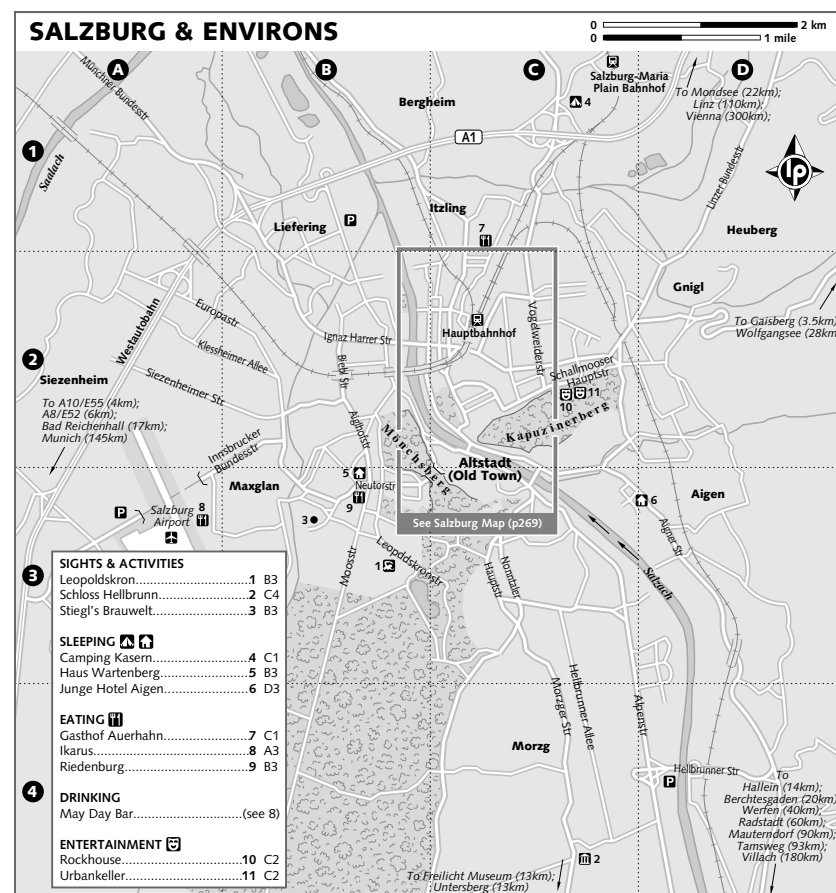
Ambulance (☎ 144)

Hospital (Landeskrankenhaus; Map p267; ☎ 44 82; Müllner Hauptstrasse 48) Just north of the Mönchsberg.

Police headquarters (Map p269; ☎ 63 83; Alpenstrasse 90)

INTERNET ACCESS

Internet cafés are scattered all over Salzburg; those near the train station are much cheaper than those in the *Altstadt*.



International Telephone Discount (Map p269; ☎ 88 31 99; Kaiserschützenstrasse 8; per hr €2; ☎ 8.30am-10pm Mon-Sat) Also has cheap international telephone calls.

Salzburg Internet Café (Map p270; ☎ 84 20 63-0; Gstättengasse 3; per hr €2; ☎ 10am-10pm) Skype and discount international calls available.

LAUNDRY

Norge Exquisit (Map p270; ☎ 87 63 81; Paris-Lodron-Strasse 16; self-service wash €10; ☎ 7.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat).

MONEY

Bankomaten (ATMs) are all over the place. **Amex** (Map p270; ☎ 84 38 400; Mozartplatz 5; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat & Sun) Next to the tourist office. Amex travellers cheques are cashed free of charge.

Western Union (Map p269; ☎ 93 00 03-162; ☎ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-4.30pm Sat) Changes money at its branch in the *Hauptbahnhof*. Exchange booths are open all day every day at the airport. There are also plenty of exchange offices downtown, but beware of high commission rates.

POST

Main post office (Map p270; Residenzplatz 9; ☎ 7am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 8-10am Sat)

Station post office (Map p269; Südtiroler Platz 1; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri)

TOURIST INFORMATION

The main **tourist office** (Map p270; ☎ 889 87-330; www.salzburg.info; Mozartplatz 5; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat Jan-Apr & mid-Oct-Nov, 9am-7pm May-mid-Oct & Dec)

has plenty of information about the city and its immediate surrounds. There's a ticket booking agency in the same building. For information on the rest of the province, contact **Salzburgerland Tourismus** (☎ 66 88-0; www.salzburg-erl.com).

Salzburg Information (☎ 88 98 70; www.salzburginfo.at) is the head tourism office for the region. Advance **hotel reservations** (☎ 88 98 73 14) placed through this office are free. The office also deals with marketing inquiries and sends out tourist brochures; however, for in-person inquiries go to the Mozartplatz office.

It's worth investing in the **Salzburg Card** (low/high season 24hr-card €21/23, 48hr €29/31, 72hr €34/36) for free entry to all major sights and reduced entry to a further 24 attractions, plus free public transport for the duration. The free **Salzburg Card** booklet details opening hours and entry fees for important sights.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

STA Travel (Map p269; ☎ 45 87 33-0; www.statravel.at; Rainerstrasse 2) Student and budget travel agency.

Sights

Salzburg's star attractions cluster around the **Altstadt**, a Unesco World Heritage site dominated by the hilltop Festung Hohensalzburg on Mönchsberg. Many sights extend their opening hours during the Salzburger Festspiele (p274) in August. The hours given here are for non-festival times.

SALZBURG MUSEUM

Salzburg's new flagship attraction is **Salzburg Museum** (Map p270; ☎ 62 08 08-700; Mozartplatz 1; www.smca.at; adult/student/child €7/6/3; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun, to 8pm Thu). Housed in the sublime Neue Residenz palace, the museum sheds light on Salzburg's rich heritage with its hands-on exhibits. A visit starts beneath the cobbled courtyard in the impressively illuminated **Kunsthalle**, which presents rotating exhibitions of contemporary art. On the 1st floor, **Salzburg Persönlich** offers fascinating insight into the characters that have shaped the city's history, including the alchemist Paracelsus and performer Richard Mayr; kids love to watch the birdie-style camera that takes nostalgic portrait shots you can send home by email. Upstairs, prince-archbishops glower down from the walls at **Mythos Salzburg**, which celebrates the city as a source of artistic and poetic inspiration over the ages. Be sure to glimpse Carl Spitzweg's re-

nowned **Sonntagsspaziergang** (Sunday Stroll) painting and the home-videos of Asian tourists giving their unique take on Salzburg.

RESIDENZ STATE ROOMS & GALLERY

The **Residenz** (Map p270; ☎ 80 42-26 90; Residenzplatz 1; adult/child €8.20/2.60; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) was the not-so-humble dwelling of the archbishops until the 19th century. An audio guide tour takes in the unashamedly opulent state rooms, festooned with tapestries and frescoes by Johann Michael Rottmayr (p52), and the Konferenz Saal, where Mozart gave his first public performance (Violin Concerto No 5 in A Major) at the ripe old age of six.

The admission covers the **Residenz Galerie** (☎ 84 04 51; www.residenzgalerie.at; Residenzplatz 1; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun), which features a superb collection of Dutch and Flemish works, including a clutch of masterpieces from the likes of Rembrandt and Rubens.

MOZART'S HOUSES

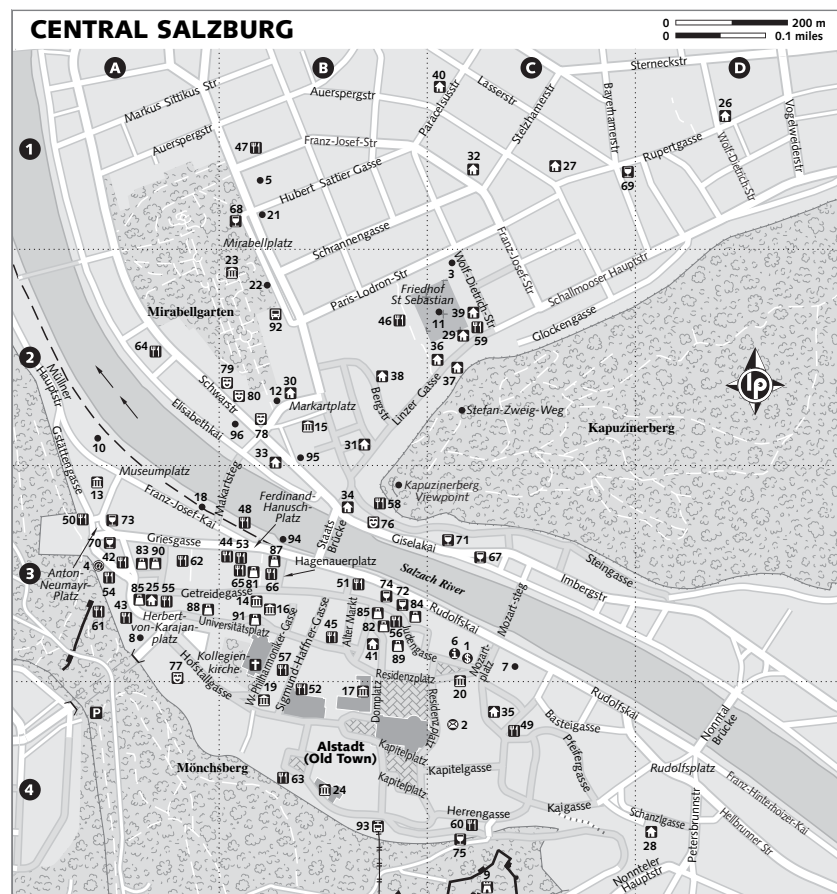
Mozart fans won't want to miss out on the two museums dedicated to the great man. Both cover similar ground, displaying musical instruments, sheet music and memorabilia.

Mozarts Geburtshaus (Mozart's Birthplace; Map p270; ☎ 84 43 13; www.mozarteum.at; Getreidegasse 9; adult/

ROCK ME AMADEUS

- Aged two, Mozart identified a pig's squeal as G sharp. He gave his first public recital aged five.
- Aged 23, Mozart fell in love with the soprano Aloysia Weber. When she rebuffed him, he promptly married her sister.
- When not composing, Mozart enjoyed billiards, heavy drinking sessions and teaching his pet starling to sing operettas.
- A boy once asked Mozart how to write a symphony. He replied that a symphony was too difficult at such a young age. 'You wrote symphonies at my age!' exclaimed the boy. 'But I didn't have to ask how,' replied Mozart.
- Modern psychologists believe that Mozart suffered from Tourette's Syndrome, a disorder leading to uncontrolled outbursts of swearing and obscene behaviour.





child €6/1.50; ☎ 9am-7pm Jul & Aug, 9am-6pm Sep-Jun) is where Mozart spent the first 17 years of his life. In the first room, the holy Wolfgang is shown as a babe beneath a fluorescent blue halo. Other curiosities include the mini-violin that Amadeus played as a toddler, plus a lock of his hair and buttons from his jacket.

The **Mozart-Wohnhaus** (Mozart's Residence; Map p270; ☎ 87 42 27-40; www.mozarteum.at; Makartplatz 8; adult/child €6/2; ☎ 9am-7pm Jul & Aug, 9am-6pm Sep-Jun) takes a more hi-tech approach, with an audio guide giving the low-down on the Mozart family and serenading you with opera excerpts. Under the same roof is the **Mozart Ton- und Filmmuseum** (Map p270), a film and music archive of interest to the ultra-enthusiast.

RUPERTINUM

The sister gallery of the Museum der Moderne (p272), the **Rupertinum** (Map p270; ☎ 84 22 20-451; Wiener-Philharmoniker-Gasse 9; adult/child €6/4; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, 10am-9pm Wed) is devoted to rotating exhibitions of modern art, with a strong emphasis on graphic works and photography. See www.museumdermoderne.at for up-to-date listings of exhibitions.

SCHLOSS MIRABELL

The 17th-century **Schloss Mirabel** (Map p270) was built by Prince-Archbishop Wolf Dietrich for his mistress Salome Alt, who bore the archbishop at least 10 children (sources disagree on the exact number – poor Wolf was presumably too distracted by

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spiritual matters to keep count himself). The best way to experience the Mirabell magic is to attend a lunchtime or evening concert (see p279) in the palace's magnificent Marble Hall, which boasts chandeliers and wall reliefs.

If you fancy skipping through gardens von Trapp-style, there's no better place to act out those fantasies than the manicured **Mirabellgarten**, where the young scallywags practised singing *Do-Re-Mi* around the Pegasus statue. The neat lawns, rose gardens and tree-fringed avenues are less overrun first thing in the morning and early evening. The Tanzerin sculpture is a great spot to photograph the gardens with the fortress as a backdrop.

FESTUNG HOHENSALZBURG

Rising like a vision above Salzburg, this mighty 900-year-old **fortress** (Map p270; ☎ 84 24 30-11; Mönchsberg; adult/child €10/5.70; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Jan-Apr & Oct-Dec, 9am-6pm May-Jun & Sep, 9am-7pm Jul-

Aug) is one of the biggest and best-preserved in Europe. It's easy to spend a half a day up here, roaming the ramparts for far-reaching views over the city's spires, the Salzach and surrounding Alps. The fortress is a steep 15-minute jaunt from the centre, or a speedy ride in the glass **Festungsbahn funicular** (included in the ticket price).

The imposing fortress bears witness to the power of the prince-archbishops. As you stroll around, keep your eyes peeled for **turnips** (there are 58 in total). Rumour has it that Leonard von Keutschach, archbishop of Salzburg from 1495 to 1519, used to squander money, so his uncle flung a turnip at his head to (literally) knock some sense into him. Ironically, the turnip became a symbol for Leonard's new-found wisdom. Other highlights include the **Golden Hall** with its gold-studded ceiling imitating a starry night sky; the **Eiserner Wehrmann** soldier encrusted with 328,000 iron nails (a creative means of raising money for war victims); and the spine-tingling **torture chamber**.

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

The crowds on Getreidegasse and the zillionth souvenir shop selling Mozart paraphernalia are part and parcel of Salzburg. Yet this city has plenty of lesser-known, quiet nooks off the well-trodden tourist track. Here is a rundown of peaceful retreats to help you keep your cool:

- The narrow, cobblestoned **Steingasse** was first a Roman road, then home to tanners and potters during the Middle Ages. It's particularly beautiful in the late morning sun when diffused light casts soft shadows across its medieval façades.
- Take a breather by kicking back with a picnic or beer on the banks of the meandering **Salzach River**. Grab a spot to admire the city's skyline from a different angle on tree-lined promenades such as Elisabethkai and Josef-Mayburger-Kai.
- Festung Hohensalzburg is not the only highlight on **Mönchsberg**; wander a little further at the top to find crumbling, overgrown fortifications and snatch glimpses of Salzburg's rooftops through the trees.
- A few paces from the hubbub of Linzer Gasse, the cloisters of **Friedhof St Sebastian** (Map p270) are an oasis of calm. Amid the sea of iron and stone crosses, pick out the graves of Mozart's wife (Constanze) and father (Leopold). At the centre of the cemetery stands Gabrielskapelle, Archbishop Wolf Dietrich von Raitenau's elaborate mausoleum.
- Stefan-Zweig-Weg climbs up towards the peace of **Kapuzinerberg**, passing through shady beech forest and emerging at a viewpoint with wide-screen views of Salzburg. It's a great vantage point to take photos of the dramatic fortress, Hohensalzburg.

MUSEUM DER MODERNE

Perched atop Mönchsberg, this white-marble, oblong-shaped **museum** (Map p270; ☎ 84 22 20-403; adult/child €8/6; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, 10am-9pm Wed) stands in stark contrast to the fortress. The futuristic glass-and-concrete reels in art aficionados with its rotating exhibitions of 20th- and 21st-century works. While you're up here, enjoy an espresso and fabulous views on the panoramic terrace of **M32** (☎ 9am-1am Tue-Sat, 9am-6pm Sun), or nip into James Turrell's cylindrical **Sky Space** to while away the hours gazing up at the sky.

STIEGL'S BRAUWELT

Beer lovers should check out Austria's largest est private **brewery** (Map p267; ☎ 83 87-14 92; Bräuhäusstrasse 9; adult/child €9/4; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Sun Jun-Sep), where a tour runs through the different stages of the brewing process and includes a peek at the world's tallest beer tower. For those who would rather quaff brews than learn about them, a free Stiegl beer and pretzel are thrown in for the price of a ticket. Take bus 1 or 2 to Bräuhäusstrasse.

Activities

The old town is squeezed between Kapuzinerberg and Mönchsberg, both of which are crisscrossed with excellent **walking** trails. There is a

viewpoint (Map p270) at the western end of the Kapuzinerberg, with ramparts built during the Thirty Years' War; the climb up from Linzer Gasse takes 10 minutes. On Mönchsberg, the stroll from Festung Hohensalzburg to Augustiner Bräustübl (p279) is scenic. There is also a great network of **cycling routes**; bikes are available for hire in various places in Salzburg (see p282).

The incredibly popular **River Cruises** (Map p270; ☎ 82 58 58; www.salzburgschiffahrt.at; adult/child €12/7, to Schloss Hellbrunn €15/10; ☎ Apr-Oct) are a leisurely way to see the sights. Cruises depart from Makart bridge and take about an hour, with some of them chugging on to Schloss Hellbrunn (p283; the ticket price does not cover entry to the palace).

Walking Tour

Start this leisurely two- to three-hour walk by absorbing the bustle of **Domplatz** (1) and the adjoining **Kapitelplatz** (2) and **Residenzplatz** (3). The hubbub from the market stalls lining these broad squares competes with the clip-clop of horses' hooves and the backbeat of buskers. On Residenzplatz, listen out for the chime of the **Glockenspiel** (4) at 7am, 11am and 6pm.

Soaring skywards, the 15th-century **Dom** (5; cathedral; Domplatz) features three bronze doors symbolising – left to right as you face them –

faith, hope and charity. Its striking cupola was rebuilt after being destroyed by a bomb in 1944. Step inside to see the dome and the Romanesque font where Mozart was baptised. The adjacent **Dommuseum** (☎ 84 41 89; adult/child €5/1.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 11am-6pm Sun) is a treasure-trove of baroque art, lavish goldwork and tapestries.

Turning left at the first courtyard off Franziskanergasse brings you to the marvelously ornate **Stiftskirche St Peter** (6; St Peter Bezirk). Beneath a green stuccoed ceiling lit by chandeliers, the walls are smothered with religious art and baroque swirls. Look out for the dramatic statue of the archangel Michael shoving a crucifix through the throat of a goaty demon. The graveyard is home to the so-called **catacombs** (7; Katakomben; ☎ 84 45 78-0; adult/child €1/0.60; ☎ 10.30am-5pm daily May-Sep, 10.30am-3.30pm Wed & Thu, 10.30am-4pm Fri-Sun Oct-Apr), cave-like chapels and crypts hewn out of the cliff face.

Back on Franziskanergasse, your gaze is drawn to the slender spires of the **Franziskanerkirche** (8; ☎ 84 36 29-0; Franziskanergasse 5; ☎ daylight), housing a baroque altar surrounded by five pillars.

WALK FACTS

Start Domplatz

Finish Residenzplatz

Distance 1.5km

Duration Two to three hours, including stops



The western end of Franziskanergasse opens into Max-Reinhardt-Platz, where you'll see the back of Fischer von Erlach's baroque **Kollegienkirche** (9; Universitätsplatz; ☎ daylight).

Stroll left to reach Herbert-von-Karajan-Platz and the **Pferdeschwemme** (10; horse trough), a rather elaborate drinking spot for the archbishops' mounts. Created in 1700, this is a horse-lover's delight, with rearing equine pin-ups surrounding Michael Bernhard Mandl's statue of a horse tamer.

Head right around the corner and you'll join the bustling crowds beneath the wrought-iron shop signs along **Getreidegasse** (11). Turning right down Alter Markt brings you back to Residenzplatz.

Salzburg for Children

With marionettes galore, sticky chocolate balls and a big fairytale-like fortress, Salzburg is truly a kid-oriented city. If the crowds prove unbearable with tots in tow, take them to let off steam at the city's adventure **playgrounds** (there are 80 to pick from); a great choice is the one on Franz-Josef-Kai (Map p270). In summer, little 'uns love to splash in shallow pools and whiz down the slides at Austria's largest outdoor pool, **Leopoldskron** (Map p267; ☎ 82 92 65; Leopoldskronstrasse 50; adult/child €3.80/1.80; ☎ 7am-7pm May-Sep), just south of the centre.

Salzburg's sights are usually half-price for children and many are free for under-six-year-olds. Plenty of galleries, museums and theatres also have dedicated programmes for kids and families. These include the **Museum der Moderne** (opposite), which has Saturday art workshops for over-fives and guided tours for over-10s (€2), and the matinee performances at the enchanting **Salzburger Marionettentheater** (p280). The **Salzburg Museum** (p268) has plenty of hands-on displays, from coin rubbings and puzzles to a practice bar for budding ballerinas.

Aside from the above, the **Haus der Natur** (Map p270; ☎ 84 26 53; www.hausdernatur.at; Museumsplatz 5; adult/child €5/3; ☎ 9am-5pm) has a massive aquarium with Nemo-style clown-fish and coral reefs, and a reptile enclosure teeming with snakes and crocs. Shark feeding time is 10.30am on Mondays. Near Untersberg, the open-air **Freilicht Museum** (Map p267; ☎ 85 00 11; Hasenweg; adult/child €7/3.50; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun Mar-Nov) steps back in time and back to nature. There are 60 traditional Austrian farmhouses to explore, tractors to clamber over, goats to feed and a huge adventure playground to run around in.

Tours

The following companies offer broadly the same *Sound of Music* tour; all last from three to four hours and cost around €40. They take in major landmarks featured in the film and include a visit out into the Salzkammergut countryside for more movie locations. You'll see the Nonnberg Abbey, the church in Mondsee used for the wedding scenes, and Liesl's gazebo, now relocated to the gardens of Schloss Hellbrunn (p283). The soundtrack to the film is played in the buses as they bowl merrily along. It can be a real scream if you're with a lively crowd who are prepared to get into the whole thing by singing along and acting out scenes from the film.

Bob's Special Tours (Map p270; ☎ 84 95 11; www.bobstours.com; Rudolfskai 38) Also offers a *Sound of Music* tour in a light aircraft.

Salzburg Panorama Tours (Map p270; ☎ 87 40 29; www.panoramatours.com; Mirabellplatz) Boasts the 'original *Sound of Music* Tour' with letters from Maria von Trapp to prove it. Tours booked through YOHO youth hostel are 10% cheaper.

Salzburg Sightseeing Tours (Map p270; ☎ 88 16 16; www.salzburg-sightseeingtours.at; Mirabellplatz 2) This company claims one of their buses was used in the film.

If you'd rather pedal around town warbling songs from the film, opt for **Fräulein Maria's Cycling Tours** (Map p270; ☎ 342 62 97; incl bike hire €22; ☎ 9.30am May-Sep). These freewheeling tours last a leisurely three hours and take in the main film locations along the route. No advance booking is necessary, so you can just turn up at the meeting point at the entrance to Mirabellgarten.

Festivals & Events

The **Salzburger Festspiele** (Salzburg Festival) is the annual summer bash, which brings world-class opera, classical music and drama to stages across the city from late July to August. This is the zenith of Salzburg's cultural calendar, a time when the city takes on a new vitality, and a few thousand extra tourists, too.

Prices stretch from €5 to €250; the cheapest prices are for standing-room tickets. Under-26 year olds are eligible for reduced-price deals for two or more events (€15 to €22). Most tickets sell out months in advance but try checking for cancellations – inquire at the **ticket office** (Map p270; ☎ 80 45-500; info@salzburgfestival.at; Herbert-von-Karajan-Platz 11; ☎ 9am-start of last performance of the day). You can see the programme as early as the pre-

vious November on the festival's website, www.salzburg.festival.at.

Held in late January, the **Mozartwoche** (Mozart Week; www.mozarteum.at) is a nod to Salzburg's most famous son, while Easter is yet another excuse for a mammoth music festival, the **Osterfestspiele** (www.osterfestspiele-salzburg.at). Salzburg leaps back into the 21st century at the **Sommerszene** (www.sommerszene.at), hosting cutting-edge dance, theatre and music performances from mid-June to mid-July. In the city where *Silent Night* was composed, it's little wonder that Advent is a big deal; the **Christmas Market** on Domplatz is a festive highlight, with carol singers and the obligatory stalls offering gingerbread and mulled wine.

Sleeping

Salzburg has long been known for its pricey accommodation, but that's starting to change. Spearheading the city's style revolution, sleeping spots are revamping the old and ringing in the new: from boutique hotels with baroque finery to funky backpacker digs. If you're on a budget, the right bank is probably your best bet. Prices skyrocket during the Festspiele, when you'll need to book well ahead. For a list of private rooms, check www.salzburg.info or inquire at the tourist office.

BUDGET

Camping Kasern (Map p267; ☎ 45 05 76; www.camping-kasern-salzburg.com; Carl-Zuckmayer-Strasse 26; campsites per adult/child/tent €6/3.50/3; (P) (Q)) Just north of the A1 Nord exit, this tree-shaded campsite offers internet access, a laundry and minimarket. Hop on bus 21 from Paris-Lodron-Strasse to Jagerwirt.

YOHO Salzburg (Map p269; ☎ 87 96 49; www.yoho.at; Paracelsusstrasse 9; 8-/6-bed dm €17/18, per person s/d/tr/q €29/22/20/19; ☎ reception 24hr; (Q)) If you just wanna have fun, this hip hostel is the place to meet like-minded backpackers. There's a daily happy hour at the bar and *The Sound of Music* is blasted out at 10.30am (bring your earplugs or join in the singsong). Other perks include free wi-fi and lockers, plus a 10% discount on Panorama tours. You can book adventure sports here such as rafting (€40) and canyoning (€49).

Junge Hotel Aigen (Map p267; ☎ 62 32 48; www.lbsh-aigen.at; Aignerstrasse 34; per person dm/s/d/q €15/31/23/19; (P)) Set in parkland, this HI hostel south of Kapuzinerberg in Aigen offers excellent facilities including a common room, table tennis

and dining hall. Family rooms are also available. It's 15 minutes' walk from the old town or take bus 49.

Jugendgästehaus Salzburg (Map p269; ☎ 84 26 70; www.jgh.at; Josef-Preis-Allee 18; per person dm/q/d €15.50/20/37.50; (P) (Q)) Head to this popular hostel for prime views of the fortress, bike rental and discounts on Salzburg Sightseeing Tours. Half and full board are also available.

Institut St Sebastian (Map p270; ☎ 87 13 86; Linzer Gasse 41; www.st-sebastian-salzburg.at; dm/s/d €19/38/62) Tucked behind Sebastianskirche, this peaceful hostel oozes monastic charm with its high vaults, polished stone floors and roof terrace. The dorms are clean and well kept. Ring the bell if reception is unstaffed.

Sandwirt (Map p269; ☎ 87 43 51; Lastenstrasse 6a; s/d/tr €23/44/57; (P)) Facing the train tracks, the location of this guesthouse is hardly picturesque, but it's handy if you need to be near the station and like gnomes – the garden is full of 'em! Rooms are crying out for a lick of paint, but still offer good value. The chirpy landlady will let you use her washing machine and kitchen.

Junger Fuchs (Map p270; ☎ 87 54 96; Linzer Gasse 54; s/d/tr without bathroom €28/44/55) Despite being above a kebab shop (handy for late-night munchies), the wood-floored rooms in this conveniently located pension on the right bank are clean and spacious.

Hinterbrühl (Map p270; ☎ 84 67 98; hinterbruehl@aon.at; Schanzlgasse 12; s/d without bathroom €42/54) Part of the original city walls, this 14th-century guesthouse is a bargain given its old-town location. The '70s-style rooms are basic but clean. Try to get room 14 – it's the biggest and has a balcony, private bathroom and lounge area.

MIDRANGE

Trumer Stube (Map p270; ☎ 87 47 76; www.trumer-stube.at; Bergstrasse 6; s €56-89, d €89-103; (Q)) Silvia and Giovanni will make you feel at home at this pretty little pension. Its rooms have an old-world feel – think pastel shades, squishy beds and flowy fabrics.

Bergland Hotel (Map p269; ☎ 87 23 18; www.berglandhotel.at; Rupertgasse 15; s/d/ste €63/93/135; (P) (Q)) This peach-fronted hotel attracts creative souls who appreciate Mr Kuhn's brushwork – his fabulous paintings are hung all over the walls. The homy rooms in warm hues display – you guessed it – more art, while the suite is festooned with Austrian straw bonnets. Other

pluses include free parking and wi-fi. Bike hire costs €6 per day.

Lasserhof (Map p269; ☎ 87 33 88; www.lasserhof.com; Lasserstrasse 47; s/d €69/109; (P)) Smack between Mirabellgarten and the station, this family-run hotel is not a bad deal, but choose your room wisely. The nicer ones have Venetian chandeliers and ceramic stoves, but others are plain and on the poky side.

Hotel Hohenstauffen (Map p269; ☎ 87 21 93; www.hotel-hohenstauffen.at; Elisabethstrasse 19; s/d €80/109; (P) (Q)) It may not be in the swishest part of town, but this friendly hotel near the station is well set up for cyclists with a garage for repairing punctures – ring the bicycle bell at reception for service. The rooms are a tad dated, but comfy and quiet.

Hotel Wolf (Map p270; ☎ 84 34 53-0; www.hotelwolf.com; Kaigasse 9; s/d €80/110; (Q)) Pass through a Hobbit-like door into this lovingly converted town house in a quiet corner of the old town. The 15th-century hotel exudes an historic feel with its uneven stone staircases and antique furnishings. The light, parquet-floored rooms range from modern to rustic.

Hotel Mozart (Map p269; ☎ 87 22 74; www.hotel-mozart.at; Franz-Josef-Strasse 27; s/d €90/110; (P) (Q)) Just like Amadeus, this central hotel rocks. The antique-filled lobby gives way to tidy rooms with mod cons such as wi-fi, gleaming bathrooms, and plump beds that will have you creating a snoring symphony. If you want breakfast, though, you'll have to shell out an extra €10.

ourpick Haus Wartenberg (Map p267; ☎ 84 84 00; www.hauswartenberg.com; Riedenburgerstrasse 2; s/d €55/128; (P) (Q)) Hemmed in by trees, this gorgeous 400-year-old country cottage just minutes from the old town is a real find. Bedecked with geranium-filled flowerboxes and family heirlooms, the green-shuttered cottage borders a shady garden. Smooth stone steps lead up to light-flooded rooms, which are befitting of this rustic hideaway with their chunky pinewood furniture, floral curtains and stripy bedspreads.

Zur Goldenen Ente (Map p270; ☎ 84 56 22; www.ente.at; Goldgasse 10; s €75-82, d €125-150) Bang in the heart of the *Altstadt*, this 700-year-old town house has oodles of charm – some rooms have four-poster beds, while Emperor Franz Josef guards over others. The sunny terrace overlooks the rooftops of the old town.

Wolf Dietrich (Map p270; ☎ 87 12 75; www.salzburg-hotel.at; Wolf-Dietrich-Strasse 7; s/d €81/129; (Q) (Q)) Central and friendly, this hotel's fabulous

facilities include a pool, sauna and solarium. The swanky rooms are heavy on the floral fabrics and chandeliers and the breakfast buffet is 100% organic. There's also a fabulously over-the-top suite based on Mozart's *Magic Flute*, featuring a star-studded ceiling and freestanding bathtub.

Hotel Amadeus (Map p270; ☎ 87 14 01; www.hotelamadeus.at; Linzer Gasse 43-45; s/d €88/170; ☑) Situated on the right bank, this three-star hotel has a boutique feel, with personal touches such as free afternoon tea. The airy rooms are decorated in vibrant colours; some are kitted out with wrought-iron four-poster beds and chandeliers.

TOP END

Arthotel Blaue Gans (Map p270; ☎ 84 24 91-50; www.blauegans.at; Getreidegasse 43; s €99-119, d €135-185; ☑) An extreme face-lift has propelled this 650-year-old hotel into the 21st century. The revamped inn now brims with abstract artworks and modernist furnishings. Clean lines, wooden floors and flat-screen TVs spruce up the whiter-than-white rooms. The centuries-old vaults harbour the excellent Blaue Gans Restaurant (p278).

Hotel Stein (Map p270; ☎ 87 43 46-0; www.hotelstein.at; Giselakai 3-5; s €99-125, d €140-165, ste €200-275; ☑) This funky design hotel on the banks of the Salzach is no wallflower. The rooms are jazzed up with splashes of purple or ruby red, black leather chairs and zebra-print bedspreads; many also feature marble bathrooms.

Das Auersperg (Map p269; ☎ 88 94 40; www.auersperg.at; Auerspergstrasse 61; s €95-105, d €145-185, ste 205; ☑) This charismatic villa fuses late-19th-century elegance with contemporary design. The modern rooms have free wi-fi and guests can kick back in the serene garden, centred on a lily pond, or in the rooftop sauna. Free bike hire is an added bonus.

Hotel Gablerbräu (Map p270; ☎ 889 65; www.gablerbrau.com; Linzer Gasse 9; s/d €102/148; ☑) This swish hotel has been around since 1429. Expect contemporary, high-ceilinged rooms with parquet floors, comfy beds and spotless bathrooms. The vaulted restaurant (mains €8 to €15) has a seasonal menu with vegetarian options.

Hotel Sacher (Map p270; ☎ 88 97 70; www.sacher.com; Schwarzstrasse 5-7; s €149-265, d €220-390; ☑) Down by the river, this turn-of-the-century hotel is pure class with its glittering chandeliers and posh piano bar. The opulent rooms feature antiques, oil paintings and shiny mar-

ble bathrooms. Tom Hanks, the Dalai Lama and Maria herself (Julie Andrews) have all snoozed here.

Goldener Hirsch (Map p270; ☎ 80 84-0; Getreidegasse 37; s €204-376, d €274-538; ☑) A skylight illuminates the arcaded inner courtyard of this 600-year-old hotel in the Altstadt. The rustic, low-ceilinged rooms are pretty plush with lots of polished wood and sparkly pink-marble bathrooms. Queen Elizabeth and Pavarotti top the list of famous guests. Downstairs are two award-winning restaurants: S'Herzl (opposite) and Restaurant Goldener Hirsch (p278).

Hotel Bristol (Map p270; ☎ 87 35 57; www.bristol-salzburg.at; Makartplatz 4; s/d/ste €289/340/581; ☑) Emperor Franz Josef and Sigmund Freud felt at home in this elegant hotel on the square, just around the corner from Mirabellgarten. The plush pad has palatial rooms with five-star luxuries that come with their hefty price tag.

Schloss Mönchstein (Map p269; ☎ 84 85 55-0; www.monchstein.at; Mönchsberg Park 26; d €335-445, ste €475-1195; ☑) Nestled in acres of grounds, this gabled medieval castle on Mönchsberg is fairy-tale stuff. The sumptuous rooms have all the trimmings: Persian rugs, antiques, oil paintings and Calcutta-marble bathrooms are standard. If you have money to burn, you can even rent the whole castle.

Eating

Schnitzel with noodles and crisp apple strudel may have been Maria's favourites, but there's a whole lot more to Salzburg's gastro scene, ranging from African restaurants with attitude to nice-and-spicy vegetarian places. If you're seeking classics – and let's face it, they taste pretty good – the wall-to-wall *Gasthöfe* (inns) in the old town won't disappoint.

RESTAURANTS

Budget

Mensa Toscana (Map p270; ☎ 80 44 69 09; Sigmund-Haffner-Gasse 11; lunch €4-4.70; ☑) With its old town location, sunny terrace and (surprisingly) good food, the Toscana is no cookie-cutter *Mensa* (university restaurant).

Fisch-Krieg (Map p270; ☎ 84 37 32; Ferdinand-Hanusch-Platz 4; mains €4-7; ☑) 8.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-1pm Sat The fish that lands on your plate at this cheap-and-cheerful place is as fresh as it comes. Take a seat on the riverside terrace to chomp on fish kebabs, octopus and paella.

Il Sole (Map p270; ☎ 84 32 84; Gstättengasse 15; mains €5.50-8.50; ☑) lunch & dinner The wood-fired pizza

at this authentic trattoria is delicious. The smiley Italian owner starred on the German TV series *Das Traumschiff* (Love Boat), and the evidence is plastered all over the walls in the entrance.

SKS Spicy Spices (Map p270; ☎ 87 07 12; Wolf-Dietrich-Strasse 1; mains €6; ☑) lunch & dinner 'Healthy heart, lovely soul' is the philosophy of this Indian vegetarian restaurant with an ethnic atmosphere and cheerful staff. A few euro buys you a slap-up samosa feast or fiery curry. The organic juices and lassis pack a vitamin punch.

Wilder Mann (Map p270; ☎ 84 17 87; Getreidegasse 20; mains €6.50-8.50; ☑) lunch & dinner Mon-Sat Creaking with age, this cosy Austrian tavern in the Altstadt dishes up dumplings, fried sausages and other light and airy fare at rock-bottom prices.

Stadtalm (Map p270; ☎ 84 17 29; Mönchsberg 19; mains €7-12.50; ☑) lunch & dinner mid-May–mid-Sep Affording sweeping views over Salzburg, the cosy Stadtalm on Mönchsberg has a hearty menu with lashings of goulash and *Tafelspitz* (boiled beef with apple and horseradish sauce).

St Paul's Stub'n (Map p270; ☎ 84 32 20; Herrengasse 16; mains €7-14; ☑) 5pm-1am Mon-Sat Set in a quiet corner of town, this small, wood-panelled restaurant has a good-value menu stretching from *risotto nero* (risotto made with cuttlefish ink) to roast suckling pig. There's a lovely garden for warm evenings.

Shrimps Bar (Map p270; ☎ 87 44 84; Steingasse 5; mains €7-18; ☑) dinner Luminous butterflies, tangerine walls and modern art give this bar a funky twist. The shrimps baguette slathered in cocktail sauce is a lip-smacking speciality (both hands required), but you can also sink your jaws into a shark steak.

Sternbräu (Map p270; ☎ 84 21 40; Griesgasse 23; mains €8-16, set menu €16.50-18.50; ☑) lunch & dinner The tree-shaded courtyard is the big draw at this rustic restaurant. House specials such as venison stew and trout are accompanied by copious amounts of Sternbräu beer. *The Sound of Music* dinner show takes place here (see p279).

Saran Essbar (Map p270; ☎ 84 66 28; Judengasse 10; mains €9-13; ☑) lunch & dinner Superfriendly Mr Saran uses the freshest ingredients in his tasty Indian dishes. Savour a Bengali fish curry or wok-fried vegetables beneath medieval vaults or on the pavement terrace. If you've room, finish off with a slice of Zaga's homemade strudel.

Midrange

Nagano (Map p270; ☎ 84 94 88; Griesgasse 19; mains €10-18; ☑) lunch & dinner Hidden in the cobbled Artis Hof courtyard, this unassuming Japanese restaurant pushes the right buttons with fresh sushi, tempura and sashimi.

Our pick Afro Café (Map p270; ☎ 84 48 88; Bürgerspitalplatz 5; mains €10-20; ☑) 9am-midnight Mon-Sat This eye-catching African café ventures into Salzburg's wackier waters. The retro design is pure genius: a blend of hot-pink walls, butterfly-shaped chairs, plastic palms and artworks sculpted from junk gathered on the beach. The menu takes some beating too – try the sticky ostrich kebabs or coconutty Zanzibar salad with Algiers ginger punch.

Alt Salzburg (Map p270; ☎ 84 14 76; Bürgerspitalgasse 2; mains €10.20-25.80; ☑) lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, dinner Mon Tucked into a cobblestone courtyard at the base of the Mönchsberg, this cosy restaurant has prim-and-proper service and a meaty menu featuring specials such as venison and veal knuckle.

S'Herzl (Map p270; ☎ 80 84-0; Getreidegasse 37; mains €11-19; ☑) lunch & dinner Dark wood beams, arched windows and low lighting create a cosy feel in this tavern, housed in the Goldener Hirsch (opposite). It's a fine place to snuggle up in winter over calorie-rich treats such as sausages and sauerkraut or scrumptious puddings.

Stiftskeller St Peter (Map p270; ☎ 84 12 68-0; St Peter's Bezirk 1-4; mains €11-21.50; ☑) lunch & dinner Set around a vine-clad courtyard by Stiftskirche St Peter, this restaurant comprises a string of wood-panelled rooms that roll out Austrian fare such as wild boar and roast pork with sauerkraut. It's well known for its Mozart dinner concerts (see p279).

Zum Eulenspiegel (Map p270; ☎ 84 31 80; Hagenauerplatz 2; mains €11-23; ☑) lunch & dinner There's a gingerbread feel about this restaurant, with its fairy lights, wonky walls and low beams. Stone steps twist up to intimate cubbyholes (some just big enough for four people), where you can savour 650 years of history, prime views of the square and flavours such as stroganoff and sander fillet.

Gasthof Auerhahn (Map p267; ☎ 45 10 52; Bahnhofstrasse 15; mains €13-22; ☑) lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun It's off the beaten track, but that doesn't stop foodies from making the pilgrimage to Auerhahn. This award-winning restaurant serves specialities such as clams in lime froth and fluffy *Topfenknödel* (sweet

dumplings). The chestnut-tree-shaded garden is popular when the sun's out.

Pan e Vin (Map p270; ☎ 844 666; Gstättingasse 1; mains €15-30; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, trattoria closed Mon) This cheery place comprises a smart trattoria and Mediterranean restaurant. As well as antipasti and pasta just like *mamma* used to make, the chef excels in the art of preparing shellfish.

Blaue Gans Restaurant (Map p270; ☎ 84 13 17-54; www.blauegans.at; Getreidegasse 43; mains €16-20; ☎ lunch & dinner Wed-Mon) In the historic vaults of Arthotel Blaue Gans (p276), this smart restaurant is prized for fresh, locally sourced fare like tender Pinzgauer lamb. Dwarfed by the cliffs of Mönchsberg, the palm-shaded terrace is wonderful when the sun's out.

Top End

Schloss Restaurant (Map p269; ☎ 84 85 55-0; Mönchsberg Park 26; mains €20-30; ☎ lunch & dinner) This grand restaurant in Schloss Mönchstein dishes up a right royal feast, from tender loin of lamb to herb-crusted sole. Service is (as befits a castle) impeccable.

Restaurant Goldener Hirsch (Map p270; ☎ 80 84-0; Getreidegasse 37; mains €21-27; ☎ lunch & dinner, closed Sun in winter) Vaulting and polished wood set the scene for gourmet flavours at this well-heeled restaurant in the Goldener Hirsch (p276). The chef has won awards for signature dishes such as venison saddle with cabbage and dumplings.

Riedenburg (Map p267; ☎ 83 08 15; www.riedenburg.at; Neutorstrasse 31; lunch €18, mains €26-35; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat) Pop art adds a splash of colour to this sleek Michelin-starred restaurant. The chef presents delicacies such as crayfish on Riesling risotto, with a razor-sharp eye for detail. The pavilion in the garden is a romantic hideaway in summer.

Hangar-7, the spacey complex at Salzburg airport, shelters the exclusive **Ikarus** (Map p267; ☎ 21 97-77; www.hangar-7.com; set menu €85-110; ☎ lunch & dinner) restaurant, where each month different celebrity chefs are invited to put their creative stamp on the menu. Be sure to head for some after-dinner drinks in the Hangar-7's hi-tech May Day Bar (opposite).

QUICK EATS

Icezeit (Map p270; ☎ 84 33 73; www.icezeit.at; Chiemeesgasse 1; scoop €1-1.30; ☎ 11am-9pm) The snaking queue speaks for the quality of the homemade ice cream at this hole-in-the-wall

gelateria. Refresh with zingy varieties such as choco-chilli, ginger and lemon-pepper.

Indigo (Map p269; ☎ 87 08 62; Auerspergstrasse 10; light meals €2.50-6; ☎ 10am-10pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat) Salads by the scoopful, sushi and vegetarian curries feature on the healthy menu at this gallery-style café, decked out with wicker chairs and vibrant art.

Capp&ccino (Map p270; ☎ 87 55 45; Linzer Gasse 39; snacks €3-9, lunch €6.90; ☎ 8am-11pm) Capp&ccino is the right bank's coolest café with its high ceilings, laid-back terrace and lounge music. The moreish *tramezzini* (small Italian tea sandwiches) and free wi-fi access add to its popularity.

Coffee Shop (Map p269; ☎ 89 07 73; Franz-Josef-Strasse 3; bagels €3; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Based on Ayurvedic principles, this Zen-like café is a temple of calm and healthy living. The all-vegetarian menu includes a superb selection of bagels, salads and freshly squeezed juices.

Café Tomaselli (Map p270; ☎ 84 44 88; Alter Markt 9; pastries €4; ☎ breakfast & lunch) If you like your service with a dollop of Viennese grumpiness and strudel with a dollop of cream, this grand, wood-panelled coffee house in the centre is just the ticket.

Scio's Specereyen (Map p270; ☎ 84 16 38; Sigmund-Haffner-Gasse 16; mains €5.50-11, snacks €2.20-4.90; ☎ 10am-8pm) Breathe in as you enter this pint-sized bistro, which bursts at the seams at weekends. No wonder, with a menu starring tasty morsels such as blinis with trout caviar. Don't leave without the divine chestnut-and-nougat *Venusbrüstchen* (Venus breasts).

Vegy Vollwertimbiss (Map p270; ☎ 87 57 46; Schwarzerstrasse 21; lunch €8; ☎ lunch Mon-Fri) Helga has been dishing up wholesome vegetarian food to Salzburg for more than 25 years. Try the tasty soups and honey-sweetened cake.

SELF-CATERING

If a picnic on the banks of the Salzach appeals, stock up on cheese, bread and honey at the market (Map p270) on Universitätsplatz.

There are several supermarkets for self-caterers, including **Billa** (Map p270; Griesgasse 19). The **Shell** (Map p269; St Julien Strasse 33) garage has a shop open 24 hours, with snacks, provisions and alcohol.

Drinking

Salzburg is starting to shake off its purely traditional image with some trendy bars sprouting up by the Salzach. You'll still find the

beer-and-pretzel type places that have been around for donkey's years, but they are making space for a new generation of lounge bars and clubs that keep party-goers on their toes till the sun rises.

Humboldt Stub'n (Map p270; ☎ 84 31 71; Gstättingasse 4-6; ☎ noon-4am) This bar has an upbeat, pre-clubbing vibe. Cartoons deck the walls and a nail-studded Mozart punk guards the bar. Speaking of Mozart, there's even a cocktail dedicated to the virtuoso here (a sickly sweet composition of liqueur, cherry juice, cream and chocolate). Wednesday is student night, with beers a snip at €2.50.

Republic (Map p270; ☎ 84 16 13; Anton-Neumayr-Platz 2; ☎ 8am-1am Sun-Thru, 8am-3am Fri & Sat) Opposite Humboldt Stub'n, this café is defined by high ceilings and neon lighting. By night it morphs into one of the city's trendiest haunts when DJs spinning house, salsa and electro attract a 20-something, daiquiri-sipping crowd.

Die Weisse (Map p269; ☎ 87 22 46; Rupertgasse 10; ☎ 10.30am-midnight Mon-Sat) The cavernous brewpub of the Salzburger Weissbierbrauerei, this is the place to guzzle cloudy wheat beers beside shiny copper vats. Choose from the wood-floored pub, the industrial-style bar or the shady beer garden out the back.

Living Room (Map p270; ☎ 87 73 61; Imbergstrasse 2a; ☎ 10am-2am Sun-Thru, 10am-4am Fri & Sat) Hugging the banks of the Salzach, this avant-garde newcomer combines a lounge-style bar with a decked terrace. Sink into a wicker armchair to admire the illuminated fortress and listen to mellow grooves. Meals are also served (€8.90 to €11.80).

Baboon Bar (Map p270; ☎ 88 59 32; Imbergstrasse 11; ☎ 7pm-4am Mon-Sat) Look out for the funky monkey at this hip riverside bar, playing '70s and '80s classics and acid jazz. The garden is popular on warm summer evenings.

Augustiner Bräustühl (Map p269; ☎ 43 12 46; Augustinergerasse 4-6; ☎ 3-11pm Mon-Fri, 2.30-11pm Sat & Sun) With swinging steins and pretzels a-plenty, this monk-run brewery proves that quaffing clerics can enjoy themselves. Fill your huge stone mug from the pump in the foyer, visit the snack stands and take a pew beneath the chestnut trees in the 1000-seat beer garden.

Bellini's (Map p270; ☎ 87 13 85; Mirabellplatz 4; ☎ 9am-1am Mon-Fri, 11am-1am Sat & Sun) This Italian job next to Mirabellgarten is a cool, lively bar with a cobbled terrace, great cocktails and tasty *tramezzini*.

StieglKeller (Map p270; ☎ 84 26 81; Festungsgasse 10; ☎ 11am-11pm) Beneath the fortress, this Munich-style beer hall (it shares the same architect as the Hofbräuhaus) has an enormous garden above the city's rooftops. Beer is cheapest from the self-service taps outside.

Shamrock (Map p270; ☎ 84 16 10; Rudolfskai 12; ☎ noon-2am Sun, 3pm-2am Mon, 3pm-3am Tue & Wed, 3pm-4am Thu, noon-4am Fri & Sat) This spit-and-sawdust Irish pub screens big sport events. There's live music daily from 9pm and Guinness on tap.

O'Malley's (Map p270; ☎ 84 92 65; Rudolfskai 16; ☎ 6pm-2am Mon-Thru & Sun, 6pm-4am Fri & Sat) Shamrock's more laid-back twin is run by the same people and centres on a bar built from the timber of a 300-year-old Irish church.

ARGEkultur (Map p269; ☎ 84 87 84-0; www.argekultur.at; Josef-Preis-Allee 16; ☎ 9.30am-1am Mon-Fri, 6pm-1am Sat) Students and arty types hang out at this alternative haunt, which is a bar, a bistro and a small-scale performing arts venue rolled into one. Expect an eclectic line-up of concerts and parties.

May Day Bar (Map p267; ☎ 21 97 www.hangar-7.com; ☎ 5.30pm-2am Sun-Thru, 5.30pm-3am Fri & Sat) After-dinner drinks are served at this bar in the hi-tech Hangar-7 complex, where Flying Bulls aircraft zip around the glasses and virtual bar staff interact with guests.

Entertainment

CLASSICAL MUSIC & MUSICALS

Schloss Mirabell's baroque Marble Hall (p270) sets the scene for **Schlosskonzerte** (☎ 84 85 86; www.saltzburger-schlosskonzerte.at; tickets €8-31), Mozart recitals given by international soloists and chamber musicians.

The **Mozarteum** (Map p270; ☎ 87 31 54; Schwarzerstrasse 26-28; tickets €15-60) stages the works of Mozart and other classical composers. More light-hearted are the **Mozart dinner concerts** (☎ 84 12 68-0; tickets €45; ☎ dinner) held by candlelight and starring performers dressed in period costume at Stiftskeller St Peter (p277). **Mozartconcerts** (www.mozartfestival.at), some with dinner, are also held at the Festung Hohensalzburg (p271).

If you're lucky enough to be in Salzburg during the Festspiele, try to get tickets for concerts, operas and plays at the **Festspielhaus** (Map p270; ☎ 84 45-579; Hofstallgasse 1), which is built into the sheer sides of the Mönchsberg.

If the above options sound too highbrow, the **Sound of Music Show** (☎ 82 66 17; with/without dinner €45/29; ☎ nightly May-Oct) at the Sternbräu

(p277) might appeal. You'll feast on Maria's favourite things as performers bash out much-loved hits from the musical.

ROCK & JAZZ

Rockhouse (Map p267; ☎ 88 49 14; www.rockhouse.at, in German; Schallmooser Hauptstrasse 46; admission €10-20; ☎ 6pm-2am Mon-Sat) Playing to a young crowd, the Rockhouse is Salzburg's premier venue for rock and pop bands – check the website for details of what's on. There's also a tunnel-shaped bar that has DJs (usually free) and live bands.

Szene (Map p270; ☎ 84 34 48; www.szene-salzburg.net; Anton-Neumayr-Platz 2; tickets €10-45) Next to Republic, this venue hosts everything from DJs to cutting-edge dance productions and jam sessions. Visit the website for details of the line-up.

For live jazz, check out **Jazzit** (Map p269; ☎ 87 68 91; www.jazzit.at, in German; Elisabethstrasse 11), which stages regular gigs, or **Urbankeller** (Map p267; ☎ 87 08 94; Schallmooser Hauptstrasse 50; ☎ 5pm-1am), host to live jazz, blues, rock and funk.

VOICES: GRETL AICHER, SALZBURGER MARIONETTENTHEATER

Tension is mounting behind the scenes at the Salzburger Marionettentheater (above): puppeteers take their positions, the music strikes up and the curtain rises on Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*. The granddaughter of the theatre founder, Gretl Aicher, is there; her silhouetted hands fluttering as marionettes glide gracefully across the stage. She grew up with the theatre and has been puppeteering since she was 15. After the performance, she takes time out to answer a few questions:

How did the theatre rise from its humble beginnings? My grandfather was a sculptor and started the marionette theatre in a gym in 1913. He gave it to my father as a wedding present in 1926, who developed techniques and expanded the repertoire to include Mozart operas, fairy tales and, of course, the much-loved *Salzburger Kasperl* [an impish character like Punch]. We've been touring worldwide since 1932.

What is the fascination of performing with marionettes? Puppetry is perfecting the art of illusion. We try to make the marionettes lifelike with natural movements and the effect upon audiences is hypnotic. Each one is like a magical instrument that unleashes hidden emotions and desires. After a while, the technique becomes second nature and you just slip into the characters – they are my alter ego.

Which effects are achievable with marionettes that aren't possible on a 'human' stage? I love the fact you can make marionettes fly, take them apart, even swap their heads. These are tricks that actors can only achieve with complex special effects.

Why is Mozart's music such an inspiration to you? I can't name any composer that can breathe such life into marionettes as Mozart. His operas are joyful, playful, indescribable. They are the perfect companion for puppeteers.

How do you feel about the new Sound of Music production? Excited! It's challenging new territory for us, as it will be the first time we've ever staged a musical. It debuts in Salzburg in May 2008 and, from the look of things, is set to be an evocative and fascinating production.

THEATRE & CINEMA

Das Kino (Map p270; ☎ 87 31 00; www.daskino.at, in German; Giselakai 11; tickets €8) Independent and art-house films are screened in their original language at this small cinema. It's also a good place to pick up fliers for clubs and happenings around town. The Latin American Film Festival takes place here in March.

Landestheater (Map p270; ☎ 87 15 12-0; www.theater.co.at, in German; Schwarzstrasse 22; tickets €5-42) This leading performing-arts venue offers a varied programme of musicals, ballets, plays and operas (mostly in German).

Salzburger Marionettentheater (Map p270; ☎ 87 24 06-0; www.marionetten.at; Schwarzstrasse 24; tickets €18-35; ☎ May-Sep, Christmas, Easter & Mozart Week in Jan) Who says puppetry is just for kids? This traditional marionette theatre stages a repertoire of well-known operas – from *Bastien and Bastienne* to *The Magic Flute* – in a gorgeous baroque auditorium. The talented puppeteers (see boxed text, below) perform with grace

TOP TEMPLES OF KITSCH

- **Miracle's Wax Museum** (Map p270; Getreidegasse 7) is the place to sniff out Mozart eau de toilette (€15), pocket a pair of yodeller's lederhosen (€13) or snap up a gorgeous Sissi bust (€10) to grace your mantelpiece.
- **Residenzplatz** (Map p270) brims with high-quality kitsch – is it to be that sexy feathered alpine hat (€19.90), the stylish edelweiss neckerchief (€5) or child prodigy, Mozart, captured forever in a snow globe (€5.50)?
- **Gifts & Things** (Map p270; Judengasse 6) isn't cheap, but who can resist the gem-encrusted Fabergé egg playing The Blue Danube (€65) or the won't-stop-whistling marmot (€8)?
- **Candela** (Map p270; Getreidegasse 24) is a must if you've always wanted a metallic German Christmas pickle (€3.50 to €10) to hang on your tree. Glittering papayas and gaudy carrots complete your festive fruit-and-veg collection.
- **Perfect** (Map p270; Universitätsplatz 4) has the solution to carry your kitsch home. Whatever your favourite pet – poodle, Pekinese or Siamese puss – this boutique has a bejewelled purse (€12) or bag (€40) to suit.

and gusto to create the illusion of life-sized performers on a miniature stage.

Shopping

You can souvenir-shop for everything from tight-fitting dirndls to cuckoo clocks in the *Altstadt*, particularly on bustling Getreidegasse and Judengasse, but should be prepared to pay over the odds – this is firmly tourist territory. Design divas with bulging bank balances head for boutique-lined Linzer Gasse and Griesgasse.

Salzkontor (Map p270; Waagplatz 6) The shelves in this tiny shop are stocked with mineral-rich Salzkammergut salt, ranging from herby concoctions to bath crystals scented with lavender and citrus.

Kaslöchl (Map p270; ☎ 84 41 00; Hagenauerplatz 2) There's no room to swing a cat in Salzburg's smallest cheese shop. Squeeze in to buy delicious organic, locally sourced cheeses such as creamy Vorarlberger or fresh cheese with basil.

Stiftsbäckerei St Peter (Map p270; Mühlenhof; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat) Right next to the monastery, this 900-year-old bakery still bakes tasty loaves in a wood-fired oven.

Drechserei Lackner (Map p270; ☎ 84 23 85; Badergasse 2) The hand-carved nutcrackers, nativity figurines and filigree Christmas stars are the real deal in this traditional craft shop.

Fürst (Map p270; ☎ 84 37 59; Getreidegasse 47) The *Mozartkugeln* (Mozart balls) at this speciality chocolate shop are based on Paul Fürst's original 1890 recipe. The chocolate-coated nougat and marzipan treats cost €0.90 per mouthful.

Easter in Salzburg (Map p270; ☎ 84 17 94; Judengasse 13) It's impossible to pass this shop without gawping: an incredible 150,000 real, hand-painted eggs are spread over two glittering floors. Prices range from €2 for a modestly painted hen's egg to €146 for an ostrich egg bearing a portrait of Mozart.

Christmas in Salzburg (Map p270; ☎ 84 67 84; Judengasse 10) Just opposite Easter in Salzburg, this five-floor shop puts Santa's grotto to shame. Here, gold cherubs, stockings and delicate baubles replace the eggs. Just, for goodness' sake, don't trip...

Getting There & Away

AIR

Salzburg airport (Map p267; ☎ 85 80-0; www.salzburg-airport.com), half an hour by bus from the city centre, has regular scheduled flights to destinations all over Austria and Europe. Low-cost flights from the UK are provided by **Ryanair** (☎ 0900 210 240; www.ryanair.com). Other airlines flying into Salzburg include **British Airways** (☎ 0179 567 567; www.britishairways.com) and **KLM** (☎ 858 09 69; www.kl.m.com).

BUS

Buses depart from just outside the *Hauptbahnhof* (Map p269) on Südtiroler Platz, where timetables are displayed. Bus information and tickets are available from the information points on the main concourse.

Hourly buses leave for the Salzkammergut between 6.30am and 8pm – destinations include Bad Ischl (€8.70, 1½ hours), Mondsee

(€5.40, 50 minutes), St Wolfgang (€7.90, 1½ hours) and St Gilgen (€5.20, 50 minutes). All prices are for one-way trips. Return tickets include travel on the local city-bus network. For information on bus travel further afield and an online timetable see www.postbus.at.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Three motorways converge on Salzburg to form a loop around the city: the A1 from Linz, Vienna and the east; the A8/E52 from Munich and the west; and the A10/E55 from Villach and the south. The quickest way to Tyrol is to take the road to Bad Reichenhall in Germany and continue to Lofer (Hwy 312) and St Johann in Tyrol.

TRAIN

Salzburg is well served by InterCity (IC) and EuroCity (EC) services. For train information call ☎ 05-1717 (8am to 8pm daily), or visit the office in the *Hauptbahnhof*. Tickets (no commission) and train information are also available from **Salzburger Landesreisebüro** (Map p270; ☎ 87 34 03; Schwarzstrasse 11).

Fast trains leave from the *Hauptbahnhof* hourly for Vienna's Westbahnhof (€43.40, 3½ hours), travelling via Linz (€19.90, 1½ hours). The two-hourly express service to Klagenfurt (€31.70, 3¼ hours) runs via Villach.

The quickest way to Innsbruck is by the 'corridor' train through Germany; trains depart at least every two hours (€33.80, two hours) and stop at Kufstein. Trains to Munich take about two hours and run every 30 to 60 minutes (€27); some of these continue to Karlsruhe via Stuttgart.

If you hop on the train in Salzburg you can also hop off in Berlin (€119, eight hours), Budapest (€70.60, seven hours), Prague (€55.40, seven hours), Rome (€90, 10½ hours) or Venice (€50, 6½ hours).

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Salzburg airport is less than 4km west of the city centre at Innsbrucker Bundesstrasse 95. Bus 2 (€1.80, 25 minutes) departs from outside the terminal roughly every 10 minutes and terminates at the *Hauptbahnhof*. This service operates from 5.30am to 11pm and doesn't go via the old town, so you'll have to take a local bus from the *Hauptbahnhof* once you arrive, or walk (15 to 20 minutes).

A taxi between the airport and the centre costs about €15.

BICYCLE

Salzburg has an excellent cycling network and hiring your own set of wheels is a carbon-neutral, hassle-free way of exploring the city and its surrounds. Next to the *Hauptbahnhof*, **Top Bike** (☎ 06272-46 56; www.topbike.at; Südtiroler Platz 1; ☎ 10am-5pm Apr-Oct, 9am-5pm Jul & Aug) rents bikes for around €15 per day (half-price for kids). The Salzburg Card (see p268) offers a 20% discount off these rates.

BUS

Bus drivers sell single (€1.80), 24-hour (adult/child €4.20/2.10) and weekly tickets (€11.70). Single tickets bought in advance from *Tabak* (tobacconist) shops are cheaper (€1.60 each) and are sold in units of five. Children under six years travel free.

Bus routes are shown at bus stops and on some city maps; buses 1 and 4 start from the *Hauptbahnhof* and skirt the pedestrian-only old town.

BUS TAXI

'Bus taxis' operate from 11.30pm to 1.30am (3am on weekends) on fixed routes, dropping off and picking up along the way, for a cost of €3.50. Ferdinand-Hanusch-Platz is the departure point for suburban routes on the left bank, and Theatergasse for routes to the right bank.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Parking places are limited and much of the old town is only accessible by foot, so it may be better to avoid taking your car in – there are three park-and-ride points to the west, north and south of the city. The largest car park in the centre is the Altstadt Garage under the Mönchsberg. Expect to pay around €14 per day; some restaurants in the centre will stamp your ticket for a reduction. Rates are lower on streets with automatic ticket machines (blue zones); a three-hour maximum applies (€3 or €0.50 for 30 minutes) 9am to 7pm on weekdays.

Car rental offices include:

Avis (Map p269; ☎ 87 72 78; Ferdinand-Porsche-Strasse 7)

Europcar (Map p267; ☎ 87 16 16; Gniglerstrasse 12)

Hertz (Map p269; ☎ 87 66 74; Ferdinand-Porsche-Strasse 7)

FIACRE

A *Fiacre* (horse-drawn carriage) for up to four people costs €33 for 25 minutes. The drivers line up on Residenzplatz. Not all speak English, so don't expect a guided tour.

TAXI

Taxi fares start at €3 plus around €2 per kilometre. To book a radio taxi, call ☎ 81 11 or ☎ 17 15. There's a huge taxi rank outside the main train station.

AROUND SALZBURG

HELLBRUNN

An archbishop with a wicked sense of humour, Markus Sittikus built the yellow-painted **Schloss Hellbrunn** (Map p267; ☎ 82 03 72-0; www.hellbrunn.at; Fürstenweg 37; adult/child/family €8.50/3.80/21.50; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Apr & Oct, 9am-5.30pm May & Jun, 9am-10pm Jul & Aug) in the 17th century as a pleasure palace and an escape vault from his functions at Residenz. The Italianate villa became a wild retreat for rulers of state who flocked here to eat, drink and generally be merry. It was a Garden of Eden to all who beheld its exotic fauna, citrus trees and trick fountains – designed to sober up quaffing clerics without dampening their spirits. Domenico Gisberti, poet to the court of Munich, once penned: 'I see the epitome of Venice in these waters, Rome reduced to a brief outline.'

Today, Hellbrunn attracts the giggling tourist masses in summer; most are here for the fabulously eccentric Wasserspiele (trick fountains). Be prepared to get very wet as you wander past stone lions, cherubs and statues that drench you with water when you least expect it. For a right good soaking, step inside the mother-of-pearl Neptune Grotto or gaze up to admire the 200 limewood figurines at the water-driven Mechanical Theatre. Tours run every 30 minutes. To lose the crowds, take a stroll along the broad oak-lined avenues in the glorious Schloss gardens; these are open year-round till dusk.

Getting There & Away

Hellbrunn is 4km from Salzburg. Bus 25 stops directly outside the Schloss every half-hour (€1.70) – city passes are valid. Catch the bus from the *Hauptbahnhof* or Rudolfskai in the old town.

UNTERSBERG

Rising above Salzburg, 1853m-high **Untersberg** (Map p265) affords a spectacular vista of the surrounding Alps. In winter, skiers swoosh down the 7.5km piste, while in summer the mountain is a magnet for hikers, rock climbers and paragliders. A cable car to the top (up/down/return €11/9.50/18) runs every half-hour year-round except for two weeks in April and six weeks from 1 November. Take bus 25 or 16 from Salzburg *Hauptbahnhof* to St Leonhard to the valley station.

GAISBERG

Follow the road that snakes up to **Gaisberg** peak (Map p265; 1287m) and you'll find there's a tremendous panorama of Salzburg and the Salzkammergut from the 5km Gaisberg Rundwanderweg, which follows a balcony trail. Unless you have your own transport, the only way up is to take bus 151 (€2.60 return, 30 minutes), departing four or five times a day in summer from Mirabellplatz (Map p270). From November to March the bus only goes as far as Zistalpe, about 1.5km short of the summit.

HALLEIN

☎ 06245 / pop 18,900 / elev 460m

Often eclipsed by its big brother, Salzburg, Hallein (Map p265) has industrial outskirts that belie its well-preserved medieval core: a warren of narrow streets and inner courtyards peppered with art workshops, boho cafés and pastel-hued town houses. Tie that with a strong Celtic heritage and must-see salt mine and you're looking at a place that merits at least a day of your time.

Orientation & Information

The train station is east of the Salzach River: walk ahead, bear left and turn right to cross the river for the town centre (five minutes). The post office is opposite the train station. The **tourist office** (☎ 853 94; www.hallein.com; Mauttorpromenade 6; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri) is on the narrow Pernerinsele island adjoining the Stadtbrücke.

Sights

KELTENMUSEUM

Recently brought bang up to date with an all-glass façade overlooking the Salzach, the **Keltenmuseum** (Celtic Museum; ☎ 807 83; Pflegerplatz 5; adult/child €6/2.50; ☎ 9am-5pm) runs chronologically

through the region's heritage in a series of beautiful vaulted rooms. It begins with a fine collection of Celtic artefacts including Asterix-style helmets, an impressively reconstructed chariot and a selection of bronze brooches, pendants and buckles. The 1st floor traces the history of salt extraction in Hallein, featuring high points such as a miniature slide and the mummified Mannes im Salz (man in salt) unearthed in 1577. There is a pamphlet with English explanations (€2.50).

SALZWELTEN SALZBURG

Austria's biggest show-mine, **Salzwelten Salzburg** (☎ 06132-200 2400; www.salzwelten.at Ramsaustrasse 3; adult/child/family; €16.50/9.90/34.70; ☎ 9am-5pm Apr-Oct, 10am-3pm Nov-Mar) pays tribute to the salt that filled Salzburg's coffers during its princely heyday. Visitors don an Oompa Loompa-style boiler suit to descend to the bowls of the earth and board a rickety train. The tour passes through a maze of claustrophobic passageways, over the border to Germany and down a 27m slide – don't break, lift your legs and ask the guide to add wax for extra speed! After crossing a salt lake on a wooden raft, a 42m slide brings you to the lowest point (210m underground) and back to good old Austria. Guided tours depart every half an hour. Bus 41 (€1.80, 12 minutes) runs from Hallein train station hourly on weekdays, less often at weekends.

KELTENBLITZ

Bad Dürnbrenn's family-friendly summer toboggan run, **Keltenblitz** (☎ 851 05; Bad Dürnbrenn; adult/child €8.80/6; ☎ 11am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-5pm Sat & Sun May-Jun & Oct, 10am-6pm daily Jul-Sep) is ideal for those who want to pick up speed after visiting the show-mine. A chairlift whisks passengers to the top of Zinken mountain, where they board little wheeled bobsleds to race 2.2km downhill around hairpin bends. The thrill is over in a flash and affords fleeting views of the Salzach Valley.

Festivals & Events

First-rate musicians and artists draw crowds to the two-week **Halleiner Stadtfestwoche**, which takes place from June to July each year. The festival is one of the headliners on the summer events programme in Salzburgerland, with a line-up spanning everything from classical concerts to live jazz, theatre, comedy acts, readings and ex-

hibitions. For more details, see www.forum-hallein.at (in German).

Sleeping & Eating

Hallein can be visited on a day trip from Salzburg, but there are plenty of value-for-money places to stay if you'd rather base yourself here. The tourist office helps book private rooms.

Pension Sommerauer (☎ 800 330; www.pension-hallein.at; Tschustistrasse 71; s/d €37/57; ☎) Housed in a 300-year-old farmhouse, the rustic rooms at this guesthouse are a bargain. There's a heated pool and conservatory, plus lots of kiddie stuff including a playroom, sandpit and swings.

Pension Hochdürnbrenn (☎ 751 83; Rumpelgasse 14; d/tr €52/60; ☎) Surrounded by meadows, this lovely farmhouse in Bad Dürnbrenn offers country rooms decorated with warm pine and crisp white linen. The furry residents (rabbits, sheep and cows) keep children amused.

Hotel Auwirt (☎ 804 17; www.auwirt.com; Salzburgerstrasse 42; s/d €52/84, campsites per adult/child/tent €5.20/4/3.50; ☎) The light-filled rooms at this three-star hotel are simple but comfy (ask for one with a balcony). It makes a great base for families with its tree-shaded garden and adventure playground. Freshly squeezed juice and homemade jam are served at breakfast.

Koi (☎ 741 08; Schantplatz 2; lunch €6.90-7.90; ☎ 9am-11pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) Buddha welcomes you to Hallein's hippest café. The design is industrial cool with Asian overtones – from chocolate-coloured leather benches to giraffe-print cushions. The menu tempts with fresh-from-the-wok noodles and crunchy bean sprout salads, washed down with organic juices. There's a cool breeze to be had on the raised terrace by the stream.

Café Barock (☎ 806 86; Gollinger-Tor-Gasse 1; lunch €6.90; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Tucked down an alleyway, this little bistro is bedecked with eye-catching modern art. When the sun's out, its cobbled square framed by tall town houses is a popular lunch spot. The chalked menu-board includes lots of pasta, focaccia and vegetarian options.

Stadtkrug Hallein (☎ 830 85; Bayrhamerplatz 10; lunch buffet €6.90, mains €7-10.50; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sun) Tables fill quickly during the midday rush at this bustling, wood-beamed restaurant in the centre. If it's warm, pull up a chair beside the trickling fountain on the square to refuel with an enormous schnitzel or plate of goulash.

Getting There & Away

Hallein is 25 minutes south of Salzburg by bus or train with departures roughly every 30 minutes (€3.70). The main train station in Salzburg sells the Salz Erlebnis Ticket (€22), which covers the train to Hallein, a bus transfer and entry to the salt mine.

WERFEN

☎ 06468 / pop 3200 / elev 525m

For a village of small proportions, Werfen has some real stunners: the world's largest accessible ice caves, the soaring limestone turrets of the Tennengebirge and a medieval fortress lording it over the valley are just the tip of the iceberg. Little wonder, then, that this scenic setting is where the famous picnic took place in *The Sound of Music* – the hills here are definitely alive and kickin'.

Orientation & Information

The town hugs the northern bank of the Salzach River, five minutes' walk from the train station. The friendly **tourist office** (☎ 53 88; www.werfen.at; Markt 24; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri Sep-Jun, 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 5-7pm Sat Jul & Aug) hands out information and maps.

Sights

BURG HOHENWERFEN

Location, location... On its fairy-tale perch above Werfen, **Burg Hohenwerfen** (☎ 76 03; adult/child/family €13/7/30; ☎ 9am-6pm Jul & Aug, 9am-5pm May, Jun & Sep, 9am-4.30pm Apr & Oct, closed Mon in Apr) has one to rival the best. Set against the backdrop of the glowering Tennengebirge range, the fortress was built in the 11th century to guard the valley and Salzach River below, but its current appearance dates to 1570. Highlights include the 16th-century belfry that commands far-reaching views over Werfen and the dungeons that display the usual nasties such as the iron maiden and thumb screw. The entry fee also covers the spectacular falconry show in the grounds (11am and 3pm), where falconers in medieval costume release eagles, owls, falcons and vultures to wheel in front of the ramparts. There is a commentary in English and German.

Both the fortress and the ice caves can be squeezed into a day trip from Salzburg if you start early; visit the caves first, and be at the fortress for the last falconry show. The stiff walk up from the village takes a brisk 20 minutes. For taxis, call ☎ 52 93.

EISRIESENWELT

Billed as the world's largest accessible ice caves, **Eisriesenwelt** (☎ 52 48; www.eisriesenwelt.at; adult/child €8/4, with cable car €17/8.50; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Jul & Aug, 9am-3.30pm May, Jun, Sep & Oct) is a glittering ice empire that spans 30,000 sq m and comprises 42km of narrow passages burrowing deep into the glacial heart of the mountains. It may feel warm outside, but temperatures plummet to subzero as soon as you enter the crevice in the cliffs; similar to the blast of cold air that hits you upon opening the freezer. Be sure to pack sturdy footwear and warm layers.

Taking a tour through these Narnia-like chambers of shimmering blue ice is an extraordinary experience. As you climb wooden steps and duck down pitch-black passages, with carbide lamps aglow and fingers frozen, otherworldly ice sculptures, columns, walls and lakes emerge from the shadows. Among these fantastical formations are Frigga, the polar bear, and Odin, the elephant, named after gods in Norse mythology. A high point is the 42m *Eispalast* (ice palace), where the frost crystals twinkle when a magnesium flare is held up to them. A womblike tunnel leads to a flight of 700 steps, which descends back to the entrance.

In summer, minibuses (single/return €2.80/5.60) operate every 20 minutes between Eisriesenstrasse in Werfen and the car park, which is a 15 to 20-minute amble from the bottom station of the cable car. The last bus departs at 7pm. Allow roughly three hours for the return trip (including tour). You can walk the whole route, but it's a challenging four-hour ascent, rising 1100m above the village. To discover the magnificent scenery that lies above the ground, consider hiking the tough but incredibly rewarding Tennengebirge Circuit (see p 97), which starts just before the caves.

Sleeping & Eating

Most of Werfen's sleeping and eating options are lined up along the village's main street, Markt. The tourist office will make bookings for no commission.

Camping Vierthaler (☎ 565 70; www.camping-vierthaler.at; Reitsam 8, Pfarrwerfen; campsites per adult/child/tent €4.40/1.70/4.80, bungalows d/tr/q €23/30/37; ☎ Apr-Sep) This lovely campsite on the bank of the Salzach River has a back-to-nature feel.

Facilities feature a snack bar and playground. Bungalows with kitchenettes, patios and barbecue areas are also available.

Weisses Rössl (☎ 52 68; Markt 39; s/d €30/50) This marshmallow-pink guesthouse in the centre is a good budget deal, offering basic but spacious rooms with sofas and cable TV. The rooftop terrace has amazing views of the fortress and Tennengebirge.

Pension Obauer (☎ 522 40; Markt 36; s/d €35/64; (P)) Not to be confused with the swish restaurant below, this place runs rings around most of Werfen's pensions. The rooms are immaculate with wooden floors, comfy beds and scatter rugs. The family runs the deli next door, so you'll sample their cheese and homemade sausages at breakfast.

Obauer (☎ 521 20; www.obauer.com; Markt 46; mains €24-48, set lunch/dinner €35/50; (☎) lunch & dinner) Karl and Rudi Obauer cook up a storm in this Michelin-starred restaurant. Everything here strikes the right chord, from the sleek design to the creative cuisine and locally sourced ingredients (most of the fruit and herbs are grown in the garden). Signature dishes include tender Werfen lamb, trout strudel and catfish with capers.

Getting There & Away

Werfen can be reached from Salzburg by Hwy 10. Trains from Salzburg (€7.10, 50 minutes) run approximately hourly.

SOUTHERN SALZBURG PROVINCE

Many of the blockbuster sights in Southern Salzburg Province are covered in the Hohe Tauern National Park Region chapter (p310), but the following places are definitely worth a look. If you're driving to Radstadt or Mauterndorf in the remote Lungau region, keep an eye out for the original Roman milestones that punctuate the Tauern Pass.

LIECHTENSTEINKLAMM

One of the deepest and longest ravines in the Alps, the **Liechtensteinklamm** (Liechtenstein Gorge; ☎ 06412-60 36; adult/child €3.50/2.20; (☎) 8am-6pm May-Sep, 9am-4pm Oct) is off the beaten track but well worth the detour. The jaw-dropping chasm was carved out during the last Ice Age and takes its name from Johann II, Prince of

Liechtenstein, who poured plenty of money into making the gorge accessible in the 19th century. Following raging waters flanked by vertical 300m-high cliffs, the footpath crosses bridges and passes through tunnels gouged into slate cliffs veined with white granite. The mossy boulders and crags glisten with spray from the water, which is at its most striking in the late afternoon when the sunlight turns it opal blue. The trail culminates at a spectacular 50m waterfall. Allow at least an hour to walk the gorge.

Buses operate frequently between Werfen and St Johann im Pongau (€2.80, 30 minutes), which is a 4km walk from the gorge. Free parking is available.

FILZMOOS

☎ 06453 / pop 1400 / elev 1055m

Dwarfed by the shimmering glaciers of the Dachstein massif and fringed by rolling pastures, Filzmoos is an unspoilt village that despite its growing appeal as a ski resort has managed to preserve its rural charm and family-friendly atmosphere. The centrally located **tourist office** (☎ 853 94; www.filzmoos.at; Filzmoos 50; (☎) 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri) provides stacks of information on activities in the region and will help book accommodation.

Activities

In winter, Filzmoos is a top **ski resort** for novices, with gentle and uncrowded slopes that are easily accessed from the centre. Overshadowed by the distinctive peak of Bischofsmütze (2454m), shaped like a bishop's mitre, the village shares 32km of downhill slopes with its neighbour, Neubeck, and is crisscrossed with 50km of serene **winter walking** trails. The nursery slopes, floodlit **toboggan run** and central ski schools make it an ideal resort for families.

When the weather warms, Filzmoos morphs into prime **hiking** territory. Avid walkers keen to trek among the 2000m-high limestone pinnacles should consider tackling the two-day Gosaukamm Circuit (see p95). Equally popular summer activities include **Nordic walking** on marked trails in the surrounding hills and **mountain biking** the challenging and scenic Dachstein Tour (see p79).

Mountain bikes, skis, snowshoes, sledges and cross-country equipment are available for hire at **Intersport Flory** (☎ 82 82; www.flory.at; Filzmoos 103); prices are given online.

Sleeping & Eating

Filzmoos has a smattering of modestly priced chalets, private rooms and hotels, though in the high winter season you should expect rates to be roughly 50% higher than those quoted in the following reviews.

Jugendgästehaus Aumühle (☎ 82 46; Filzmoos 26; dm €24; (P)) Backing onto forest, this darkwood chalet is five-star 'roughing it' with spacious four-bed dorms, convenient access to the slopes, a common room and garden. It's five minutes' walk into town.

Landhaus Elisabeth (☎ 83 36; www.landhaus-elisabeth.com; Filzmoos 137; s/d €43/72; (P) (☎)) This inviting chalet offers snug rooms with balconies or verandas. The sauna, sunny garden and free bike hire are extra perks. Delicious cakes make mouths water and waistlines expand in the café.

our pick Bio-Hotel Hammerhof (☎ 82 45; www.hammerhof.at; Filzmoos 6; s/d €73/130; (P) (☎)) Set in a beautifully converted 400-year-old farmhouse, this ecofriendly hotel is a gem. The light-filled rooms are decorated with plenty of natural wood and country touches; some have balconies and tiled ovens. The restaurant cooks with home-grown organic produce. Unwind in a herbal bath at the beauty centre or saddle a horse to canter off into the hills (the owner, Matthias, is a riding instructor and arranges tours).

Fiakerwirt Mandlinghof (☎ 82 09; Filzmoos 23; mains €5.50-11; (☎) lunch & dinner) This rambling farmhouse and beer garden serves hearty fare such as schnitzel and pork roast. Kids love the pet goats, ducks and ponies. In winter, horse-drawn sleighs depart from here (€14 to €17 per person).

Getting There & Away

Filzmoos is a 10km detour from the A10/E55 Tauern-Autobahn motorway. Several buses operate daily between Salzburg **Hauptbahnhof** and Filzmoos (€11.90, 1½ hours), but most require a change at Bischofshofen.

RADSTADT

☎ 06452 / pop 4800 / elev 856m

Radstadt has an attractively walled town centre, with round turrets and a **Stadtpfarrkirche** (town parish church) that is a potpourri of Gothic and Romanesque elements. Most

people, however, come for the fantastic skiing and snowboarding in the region, which forms part of the huge Salzburger Sportwelt skiing area. Around 100 lifts provide access to 300km of pistes geared mostly towards intermediates and beginners, plus several snowboard parks and high-altitude cross-country trails. For information, contact the **Salzburger Sportwelt Tourist Office** (☎ 06457-29 29; www.sportwel-t-amade.com).

The same mountains attract active types in summer, too, with more than 1000km of walking trails and opportunities for canyoning, climbing, white-water rafting and mountain biking.

Getting There & Away

Radstadt is on the route of two-hourly IC trains running between Innsbruck and Graz, both about three hours away. Zell am See (€13.10, 80 minutes) and Bruck an der Mur (€24.30, 2½ hours) are on this route. From Radstadt, Hwy 99 climbs to the dramatic Radstädter Tauern Pass (1739m), then over to Carinthia. Just to the west is the A10/E55, which avoids the high parts by going through a 6km tunnel.

MAUTERNDORF

☎ 06472 / pop 1685 / elev 1122m

The sleepy village of Mauterndorf is postcard-perfect Austria; its narrow streets are dotted with candy-coloured houses and fountains. While the surrounding high moors and exposed bluffs are set up for walking and skiing, its remote setting in the Lungau region detracts the masses. The centrepiece of the village is medieval **Burg Mauterndorf** (☎ 74 26; adult/child €8/5; (☎) 10am-6pm May-Oct). Dominating a rocky outcrop, this 13th-century castle was built by the archbishops of Salzburg on the site of a Roman fort. The castle now houses a regional museum and provides the backdrop for various cultural events. It is believed that in the Middle Ages the main road passed directly through the castle courtyard and tolls were extracted from road users.

Getting There & Away

Mauterndorf is on Hwy 99. Bus 780 runs from Radstadt to the Mauterndorf post office (€7.10, 50 minutes, three times daily).

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Carinthia



Few regions in Europe match the rugged beauty of Carinthia, and you'll find that travelling through it is often a serpentine journey in valleys and natural conduits. Carinthia can also at times seem larger than life: the high peaks, the gouged valleys and the glistening lakes, not to forget the flamboyant show of opulence in the capital, Klagenfurt, and the several popular resorts around the best-known of its 1270 pristine mountain lakes. The most popular of these lakes, like the large Wörthersee, have waters warmed to a comfortable swimming temperature by thermal springs. In stark contrast, parts of Carinthia have a 'backwoods' feel that comes from its isolation, the presence of primary industries and its often conservative politics. Consistently 'red' Villach, an important crossroad, defies this description with dynamic development, and the people living in far-flung villages and towns themselves, though often conservative by nature, are also surprisingly open.

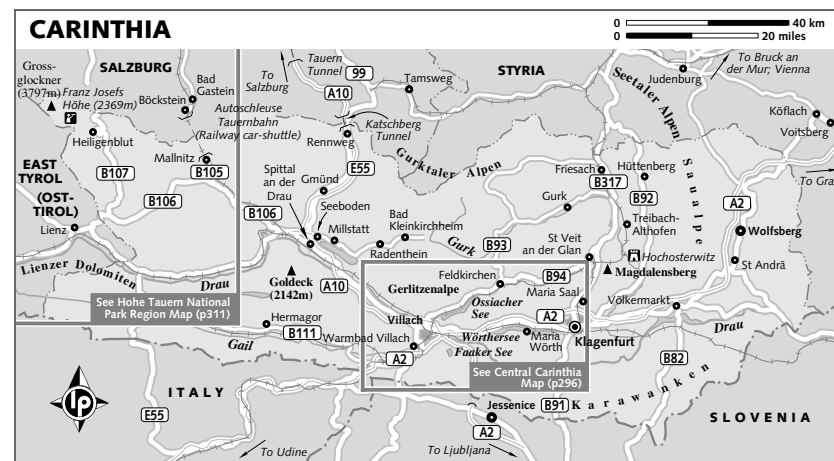
Carinthia's deep medieval heritage is celebrated in picturesque walled villages such as Friesach and Gmund, and impressive castles like the hilltop fortress of Hochosterwitz. Many of the towns and villages nestled in Carinthia's rolling hills hold an annual summer festival, with folk-music groups and bands of roving performers coming from neighbouring Italy and Slovenia to take part alongside locals. The province's proximity to Slovenia (the border between Austria and Slovenia has been redrawn several times over the centuries) means that many of the place names are of Slavic origin and Slavic surnames are common among the local inhabitants.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hiking the spectacular Garnitzenklamm gorge and cycling through the mountainous wilds around **Hermagor** (p301)
- Visiting the innovative **Die Spur des Einhorns exhibition** (p301) in Friesach, Carinthia's prettiest medieval village
- Swimming the shores of the **Wörthersee** (p292) and enjoying a lakeside meal afterwards at **Restaurant Maria Loretto** (p294)
- Stopping over in lively **Villach** (p297) for skiing in winter, some splashy fun in summer in the nearby lakes, or hiking in the mountains
- Transporting yourself to the tranquil ambience of Tibet at the **Heinrich Harrer Museum** (p302) in Hüttenberg
- Admiring the views from the top of **Burg Hochosterwitz** (p304), a spectacular medieval castle



■ POPULATION: 560,300 ■ AREA: 9536 SQ KM ■ HIGHEST ELEVATION: GROSSGLOCKNER 3797M



History

Carinthia (once called Carantania) belonged to Slovenian tribes until the 800s, when the Avars, an eastern tribe, invaded. The locals called upon the forces of the Bavarian monarchy to help them, leading to the gradual displacement of Slavic culture by a Germanic one. Carinthia became part of Austria in 1335.

The Slovenes attempted to reclaim the southern part of Carinthia after WWI, with a Yugoslav army crossing the border and occupying Klagenfurt, the provincial capital. On October 10 in 1920 the province was restored to Austria after a popular vote.

Climate

Carinthia gets more sunshine than elsewhere in Austria – in summer it can be blazingly hot, with lake water temperatures reaching 25°C to 28°C. The mild climate means winters are milder than elsewhere, too, leading to a shorter ski season (late December to March). Hiking is good all summer, but the more exposed trails are best done in autumn.

National Parks

Carinthia shares an area of outstanding natural beauty, the Hohe Tauern National Park (p310), with neighbouring Salzburg province and Tyrol.

Getting There & Around

Klagenfurt airport has cheap connections with the UK (www.ryanair.com) and Germany (www.tuifly.com), plus Austrian domes-

tic flights (www.aua.com). Klagenfurt and Villach are the main hubs for trains from elsewhere in Europe.

Carinthia is divided into regional zones for public transport, with either single tickets or passes that are valid for 24 hours, seven days, 30 days or one year. Ticket clerks can advise, or contact **Kärntner Linien** (☎ 0463-5461821; www.kaerntner-linien.at) in Klagenfurt. Many of the lakes are served by boat services in summer.

The **Kärnten Card** (www.kaerntencard.co.at; 2-/5-week card €34/49) gives free/cheaper access to the province's major sights and 50% discounts on buses and trains. It's sold at hotels and tourist offices from mid-April to October.

KLAGENFURT

☎ 0463 / pop 92,400

Provincial and not an urban centre comparable with Graz or Vienna, Klagenfurt walks a very fine line between being Austria's boondocks capital and a playground for a partying set. For all this, it's an enjoyable, sunny city that offers easy access to some good swimming and water sports, and to lakeside villages on and around the beautiful Wörthersee. Several attractive medieval towns to the north are also within easy reach.

Ring roads today mark the site of the old city walls, pulled down in 1809 on the orders of Napoleon, while the city centre has attractive Renaissance courtyards, alleyways and arcades, many filled with smart boutiques and cafés.

The **Dom** (cathedral; Domplatz 1), with its ornate marble pulpit and pink-and-white stuccoed ceiling, is another highlight.

At the far end of Radetzkystrasse is a rather limp **Botanischer Garten** (Botanical Garden; off Map p290; admission free; ☎ 9am-6pm May-Sep, 9am-6pm Mon-Thu Oct-Apr). Adjoining the gardens is the **Kreuzbergkirche**, perched on a hillock with a set of very pretty mosaic stations of the cross on the path leading up to it.

EUROPAPARK VICINITY

The large, green expanse of Europapark and the **Strandbad** (beach) on the shores of Wörthersee are centres for splashy fun, particularly for kids. Boating and swimming are usually possible from May to September. Buses 10, 11, 12, 20, 21 and 22 from Heiligengeistplatz run to Minimundus, but usually only the 10, 11 and 12 continue the short distance to **Strandbad**.

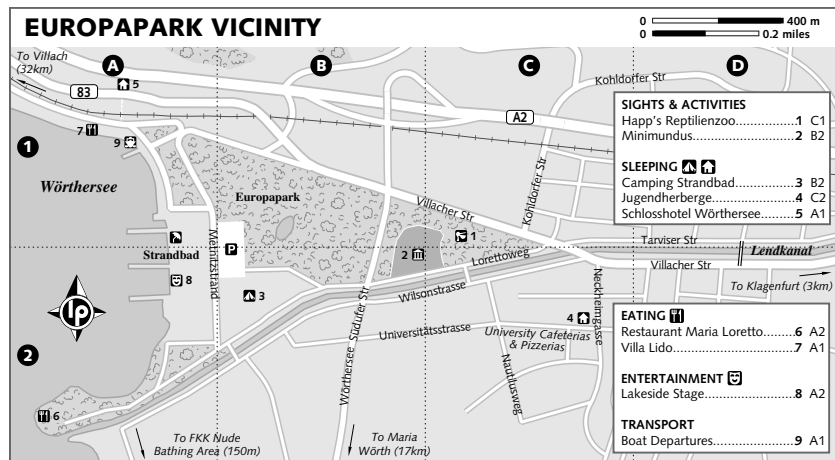
Down near the Wörthersee, **Minimundus** (Map p292; ☎ 211 94-0; www.minimundus.at; Villacher Strasse 241; adult/student/child €12/8/7; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr & Oct, 9am-7pm May, Jun & Sep, 9am-10pm Jul & Aug) has around 140 replicas of some of the world's architectural icons, downsized to a scale of 1:25. By lying on the ground with a camera, you can later impress your friends at parties with great snaps of the Taj Mahal, Eiffel Tower or Arc de Triomphe. Building materials are true to the original. The Sydney Opera House, Tower of London, Statue of Liberty and Schloss Neuschwanstein are also here. English guides to the less recognisable models –

such as Bad Ischl train station – are on sale for €4. There's a café and restaurant (normal size) on site.

Swimmers can dip a paw into the **Strandbad** (Map p292; ☎ 0676-88 521 6331; www.stw.at/inhalt/Strandbaeder.htm; Metnitzstrand 2; day card adult/child €3.40/1.50, 1hr before closing €1.50/free; ☎ 8am-8pm early May-late Sep), Klagenfurt's lakeside beach with cabins, restaurants and piers for basking. You can plough a circuit 100m offshore for 500m or so along the line of buoys and back. It's a decent swim of about 1km in warm waters in summer, and uncrowded. **Kästchen** (lockers large enough for day packs) in the **Strandbad** cost €1 plus €10 deposit and are located on the extreme right of the complex as you walk in.

There's also good swimming outside the buoys further south, past the Maria Loretto beach. A permanent nude bathing beach (marked FKK on the tourist office maps) is near Maria Loretto. Those lounge lizards for whom all this might sound a tad too strenuous will enjoy indulging in **paddle or electric boat** (per 30 minutes €2-6) escapades alongside the **Strandbad**.

Lounge lizards can also nip down the road to check out real-life role models at **Happ's Reptilienzoo** (Reptile Zoo; Map p292; ☎ 234 25; www.reptilienzoo.at, in German; Villacher Strasse 237; adult/student/child €9/8/5; ☎ 8am-5pm winter, 8am-6pm summer); there are crocodiles plus all manner of creepers, crawlers and slitherers here for kids and adults to admire. Some signs are in English.



WALKS

To take a walking tour, pick up the brochure in English from the tourist office. It has a map and detailed descriptions of monuments, historic buildings and hidden courtyards. Free guided tours depart from the tourist office at 10am during July and August.

Festivals & Events

Klagenfurter Stadtfest is a two-day music and theatre festival that takes place every year in early July. The **Wörthersee Festspiele** (Wörthersee Festival; ☎ 507355-0; www.woertherseefestspiele.com, in German; €45-70) happens every summer between late June and mid-August, with operas, ballets and pop concerts taking place on an offshore stage on the Wörthersee.

Sleeping

When you check into accommodation in Klagenfurt, ask for a **Gästekarte** (guest card), entitling you to discounts.

BUDGET

Camping Strandbad (Map p292; ☎ 211 69; www.tiscover.at/camping-klagenfurt, onsite caravan hire www.caravan-interland.nl; Metnitzstrand 5; site per person/tent €8/5; ☎ May-Sep; ☎ ☎). This shady camping ground gives free use of the **Strandbad** swimming complex. Caravans can also be rented here.

Jugendgästehaus Klagenfurt (Map p292; ☎ 23 00 20; www.oehv.or.at; Neckheimgasse 6; dm/s/d €18.90/26.90/45.80; ☎ ☎). The modern HI hostel is near Europapark. To get there from the centre, take bus 10, 12 or 22 and get off at Jugendgästehaus or (depending on the bus route) Neckheimgasse.

Hotel Garni Blumenstöckl (Map p290; ☎ 577 93; www.blumenstoekel.at; 10 Oktober Strasse 11; s €42-54, d €76-80) Rooms are arranged around a plant-filled courtyard in this two-star, family-run place in a 400-year-old building. The traditionally furnished ones aren't terribly grand, but a central position and very friendly owners make up for this.

Cityhotel Ratheiser (Map p290; ☎ 512 994; www.cityhotel-ratheiser.at, in German; Völkemarkter Strasse 10; s €53, d €72-75, ste €95-110; ☎ ☎) This quirky hotel has two extraordinary suites (8 and 10) with upstairs and downstairs sections joined by a spiral staircase. Bright and modern this hotel is not, but it has been in the same family for generations, and as a result it has some interesting connections with past people and events in Klagenfurt.

Schlosshotel Wörthersee (Map p292; ☎ 211 58-0; www.schloss-hotel.at; Villacher Strasse 338; s/d €48/76; ☎ ☎) There are a few of these in Austria – historic oddities that rise out of the landscape like Norman Bates' childhood house from the Hitchcock film *Psycho*. Rooms are definitely in need of a make-over, and if the sound of a night time freight train makes you wake in a sweat, it's not for you. It's packed with atmosphere, though, and all rooms except two singles face the lake.

Hotel Liebetegger (Map p290; ☎ 569 35; www.liebetegger.com, in German; Völkemarkter Strasse 8; s/d €58/85; ☎ ☎) Though not an art hotel, the first two floors are decorated with original artwork in this three-star option. There are no designated non-smoker rooms, though.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Hotel Geyer (Map p290; ☎ 578 86; www.hotelgeyer.com; Priesterhausgasse 5; s €55-75, d €80-106, tr €95-114; ☎ ☎) This three-star hotel offers some of the best value in town. Rooms are modern and comfortable, the breakfast room is tasteful and complemented by a summer patio. Although the walls can let through some sound from bathrooms and neighbours, it's still reasonably quiet.

Arctotel Moser Verdino (Map p290; ☎ 578 78; www.arctotel.at/moserverdino; Domgasse 2; s €74-162, d €108-240, ste €142-260, apt €172-280; ☎ ☎) Prices in this excellent four-star hotel vary by demand, making it always worth a phone call, even if your budget is tight. What you get are high quality, modern rooms with flair, very helpful staff and a free stay for kids under 12.

Hotel Palais Porcia (Map p290; ☎ 51 15 90-0; www.hotel-palais-porcia.com; Neuer Platz 13; s €84-182, d €113-197, ste €197-349; ☎ ☎) This is a marvellously ornate and old-fashioned hotel on the 2nd floor of a historic building, right in the town centre. Expect lots of gilt, mirrors and red-velvet couches, with pink marble and gold taps in the bathrooms. It also has a private beach guests can use near its other hotel in Pörtlach.

Palais Hotel Landhaushof (Map p290; ☎ 59 09 59; www.landhaushof.at; Landhaushof 3; s €130, d €190-220, ste €380; ☎ ☎) Klagenfurt's grandest hotel is housed in a converted Renaissance palace. Rooms range from elegant and traditional to kitsch and funky, with original baroque furniture given a new lease of life with new fabrics and colours. The restaurant, café and bar are a bonus, with an airy, glass-roomed atrium in

the main restaurant and café tables outside in the cobblestone courtyard.

Eating

Wörthersee Ätisch Ptsch (Map p292; ☎ 220 440; mains €3-19; ☎ 4pm-late, closed Mon & Tue Sep-Apr, closed Mon May) At the Schlosshotel Wörthersee, this hip pub-like place serves grills, calamari, jacket potatoes and other tasty dishes. It's open until midnight (at least) on most nights

Zauberhutt'n (Map p290; ☎ 547 95; Osterwitzgasse 6; mains €5-17; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat) The fried squid in a light garlic oil is a delight, but pasta, pizza and classic meat dishes all feature on the menu of this inexpensive, family-run restaurant. It's also the headquarters of the Magic Club of Klagenfurt (with a very unexpected visiting card).

Restaurant Arkadenhof ((Map p290; ☎ 590 959; Landhaushof 3; mains €7-20, 3-5 course evening menu €21-36 ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) This is the more formal of the two restaurants in the upmarket Palais Hotel Landhaushof with a menu of grills and steak flambéed in cognac, wok noodles, pasta dishes and classics like *Tafelspitz*.

Restaurant Salzamt (Map p290; breakfast buffet €15, mains €7-20; ☎ 7am-midnight) Next door to Arkadenhof is this smart bar and restaurant, which serves from the same menu.

ourpick Restaurant Maria Loretto (Map p292; ☎ 244 65; Lorettoweg 54; mains €10-19; ☎ lunch & dinner, closed Jan & Feb) Situated on a headland above Wörthersee, this wonderful restaurant is easily reached by foot from the *Strandbad*. You might also hire a bicycle and make a day of it, perhaps taking a dip from reedy banks or the lakeside beach before or after the culinary deed. It does a very good trout and some flavoursome meat dishes, but it's the sheer character of the place that makes it a wonderful choice for food and casual drinks. Call ahead Mondays, when it's sometimes closed except from May to August.

Wirtshaus zum Heiligen Josef (Map p290; ☎ 500 807; Osterwitzgasse 7; mains €12-17; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) This restaurant with outside tables serves excellent Austrian food, plus a few Italian vegetarian options such as risotto and gnocchi. There are daily soups and lunchtime specials and it has a very friendly English-speaking owner.

Villa Lido (Map p292; ☎ 21 07 02; Friedelstrand 1; mains €16-24.50, 3-4 course menu €32-39.50; ☎ lunch & dinner) A short walk along the lakeshore from Europapark, this classy and attractive lakeside restaurant has a café terrace on land and tables

on a wooden jetty over the water (reserve for one of these). Its menu takes your taste buds through Italian saltimbocca, classic fish or red-meat dishes and pasta, and culminates in delicious sorbets. The upstairs lounge is open from 5pm till late.

Dolce Vita (Map p290; ☎ 554 99; Heuplatz 2; lunch menu €6-19, dinner mains €24-28, 6-10 course menu €58-90; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri) In a region strongly influenced by northern Italian cuisine, this restaurant is something of a local flagship. Inexpensive it is not, but it builds a seasonal menu mostly around fresh local produce and game, while also offering a lunchtime Venetian *Sarde in saor* (sardines in a marinade). Expect to pay about €14 for a pasta entrée.

A fruit and vegetable market as well as a flower market (Map p290) comes to life on Benediktinerplatz on Thursday and Saturday mornings. There are several tiny restaurants in the market square and a set of food stalls inside, making it a very cheap and atmospheric place to pick up a lunch of sausages, stew or cheese.

Self-caterers can stock up at the Spar supermarkets on Dr-Hermann-Gasse (Map p290), Bahnhofstrasse (Map p290) or in the station itself.

Drinking

Winter nights in Klagenfurt are the liveliest as in summer many people decamp to the bars and nightclubs in the Wörthersee resorts of Pörschach (p296) or Velden (p296). Herrengasse can be a bit of a teenage drinking dive, but there are alternatives.

Checkpoint Charlie (Map p290; ☎ 0650-221 20 20; Herrengasse 3; ☎ 9am-2am, closed Sun) This downbeat, low-life bar has an alternative feel and sometimes hosts live rock and blues outfits.

Café-bar G@tes (Map p290; ☎ 50 97 77; Waagplatz 7; ☎ 9am-1am Mon-Fri, 5pm-1am Sat & Sun) If you like Checkpoint Charlie, also try this place, which has a whacky edge.

Pankraz (Map p290; ☎ 516 675; 8 Mai Strasse 16; ☎ 9am-4am Mon-Sat, 1pm-1am Sun) Another good option for music lovers is this funkily decorated place, which sometimes features DJs and live music. There's a shop selling house and electronica CDs here, too.

Kamot (Map p290; ☎ 0676-562 56 55; Bahnhofstrasse 9; ☎ 7pm-2am) This jazz joint has a warm pub atmosphere and a bar where you can sit and chat into the late hours. It hosts some of the top national jazz names on the pub circuit, but it's a nice place for a drink anytime.

Bierhaus zum Augustin (Map p290; ☎ 51 39 92; Pfarrhofgasse 2; ☎ 11am-midnight Mon-Sat) Traditional in character, this place has an attractive, copper-plated bar and wooden floorboards. There's a cobbled courtyard at the back for cheap alfresco eating.

Entertainment

Entertainment options in Klagenfurt are somewhat limited, but you can catch plays, musicals and operas at the **Stadttheater** (Map p290; ☎ 540 64; www.stadttheater-klagenfurt.at, in German; Theaterplatz 4; tickets €4-64; ☎ box office 9am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Sat mid-Sep-mid-Jun), and the **Konzerthaus** (Map p290; ☎ 542 72; www.konzerthaus-klagenfurt.at, in German; Miesstaler Strasse 8) stages a mixed bag of opera and popular music. An events booklet from the tourist office is useful. In summer, the lakeside stage (Map p292) by the Europapark is a great experience.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Klagenfurt's **airport** (☎ 415 00-0; www.klagenfurt-airport.com; Flughafenstrasse 60-66) is 3km north of town. Ryanair connects Klagenfurt with London Stansted, TUIfly (Hapag-Lloyd Express) does a handful of northern German cities, and Austrian Arrows (Austrian Airlines) flies to Frankfurt am Main in Germany (p395).

BOAT

The departure point for boat cruises on the lake is a few hundred metres north of *Strandbad*. See p297 for information on time-tables and lakeside resorts.

BUS

Postbus services depart outside the *Hauptbahnhof* (Map p290), where there's an **information office** (Map p290; ☎ 543 40; ☎ 7am-5pm Mon-Fri) with a timetable board outside. See p297 for information on buses going to lake resorts.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

The A2/E66 between Villach and Graz skirts the north of Klagenfurt. Car rental offices:

Avis (☎ 559 38; Klagenfurt Airport)

Denzeldrive (☎ 5 01 05 41 40; Klagenfurt Airport)

Hertz (Map p290; ☎ 561 47; St Rupprechter Strasse 12)

LaudaMotion (☎ 0900 240 120; Klagenfurt Airport)

TRAIN

Frequent direct IC/EC (InterCity/EuroCity) trains run from Klagenfurt station to Vienna

(€44, four hours) and Salzburg (€31.70, 3¼ hours). Trains to Graz depart every one to two hours (€32, two to three hours); these go via Bruck an der Mur (€25, 2¼ hours). Trains to western Austria, Italy, Slovenia and Germany go via Villach (€7.60, 30 to 40 minutes, two to four per hour). See p300 for more information.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

To get to the airport, take bus 40 from the main train station or Heiligengeistplatz to Annabichl (€1.70, 25 minutes), then change to bus 45 (10 minutes). A taxi will cost about €6.

BICYCLE

In summer the tourist office works together with a local company hiring out **bicycles** (per 24 hr €10-19), which can also be picked up and dropped off at various points around the lake. The tourist office (p291) has a brochure with the points. Also see p297.

BOAT

A **motor ferry** (☎ 0664 34 25 788; one way adult/child €5/3) chugs along the Lendkanal between the centre of Klagenfurt, through Europapark and up to the shore of the Wörthersee (50 minutes, twice daily May to September).

BUS

Single bus tickets (which you buy from the driver) cost €1 for two or three stops or €1.70 for one hour. Drivers also sell 24-hour passes for €4, but these cost only €2.80 when purchased from the **STW Verkehrsbetriebe office** (Map p290; ☎ 521 542; Heiligengeistplatz 4; ☎ 7.30am-1.30pm Mon-Fri) near the city bus station. Validate your advance tickets after boarding.

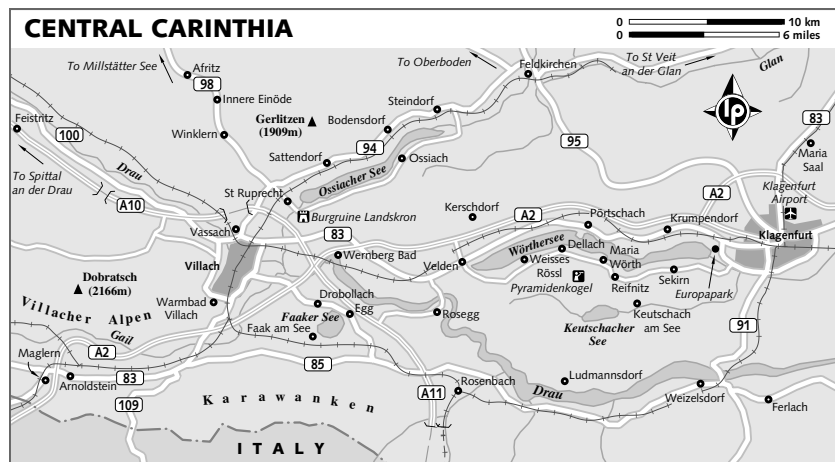
TAXI

For taxi services in Klagenfurt, call ☎ 311 11 or ☎ 27 11. A taxi between the Wörthersee and the city costs about €9.

CENTRAL CARINTHIA

WÖRTHERSEE

Owing to its thermal springs, the picturesque Wörthersee is one of the warmer lakes in the region and among the best for swimming, frolicking on the lakeshore or whizzing



across the waters in pursuit of sport. The average water temperature between June and September is 21°C. The lake stretches from west to east between Velden and Klagenfurt, and the long, thin shoreline provides unfolding vistas on a boat trip. The northern shore has the best transport access and is the busiest section. The website for lakeside towns is www.woerthersee.com.

Pörschach

☎ 04272 / pop 2693

Tiny Pörschach is the most exclusive of all Wörthersee resorts, with a distinctive tree-lined peninsula and a sumptuously curving bay on either side where society figures from Salzburg, Vienna and elsewhere spend time in villas and inhabit upmarket bars and restaurants.

Contact **Pörschach Information** (☎ 04272-23 54; www.poertschach.at; Hauptstrasse 153; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun Jun-Aug, 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat May & Sep, 7.30am-4pm Mon-Thu, 7.30am-1pm Fri Oct-Apr) for information on (often expensive) hotels and its activities.

The cheapest rooms at the four-star **Seehotel Dr Jilly** (☎ 04272-2258; www.jilly.at, in German; Alfredweg 5-7; s €119-145, d €170-238; (P) (E)) have no balconies, but at the top end you get lake views and a terrace in this quiet hotel situated on the lake with modern furnishing, wellness facilities and its own beach.

The most celebrated nightclub on the lake is **Fabrik** (☎ 0463-57 186 75; www.fabrik.at, in German; Saag 10; €17), in the tiny village of Saag between

Pörschach and Velden. Shuttle buses run to here from both places.

Velden

☎ 04274 / pop 8577

Velden enjoys a reputation as the Wörthersee's top nightlife resort and is also the venue of various high-adrenaline sports events on summer weekends. It's a brash, lively place packed with a strange combination of young and beautiful people nursing cocktails and parties of old-age pensioners nibbling ice cream.

Veldener Tourismus (tourist office; ☎ 21 03-0; www.velden.at; Villacher Strasse 19; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Thu, 8am-10pm Fri & Sat, 9am-6pm Sun Jul & Aug, 8am-6pm Mon-Thu, 8am-8pm Fri & Sat, 9am-5pm Sun May, Jun, Sep & Oct, reduced hr Nov-Apr) can advise on accommodation and provide lists of events and bike hire locations.

Five kilometres south of Velden is Rosegg, with its **Tierpark** (animal park; ☎ 04274-523 57; www.rosegg.at; adult/child €6.50/3.60; ☎ 9am-6pm Jul & Aug, 9am-5pm Apr-Jun & Sep-Oct) and a **Schloss** (palace; ☎ 04274-30 09; www.rosegg.at; adult/child €5.50/3.30; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun May, Jun & Sep, daily Jul & Aug). Both of these are closed in winter.

Maria Wörth

☎ 04273 / pop 1254

Maria Wörth is a small resort on the southern shore dominated by two medieval churches. The larger **Pfarrkirche** combines Gothic, baroque and Romanesque elements, while the smaller 12th-century **Winterkirche** has some frescoes of the apostles.

On the hill southwest of Maria Wörth is the **Pyramidenkogel** (☎ 04273-2443; adult/child/family €63/16; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr & Oct, 9am-7pm May & Sep, 9am-8pm Jun, 9am-9pm Jul & Aug), a hill topped by a rather avant-garde tower that provides fine views of Wörthersee and the surrounding mountain ranges. Further information is available from the Maria Wörth **tourist office** (☎ 04273-22400; www.maria-woerth.at; Seepromenade 5; ☎ 8am-1pm & 2-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm & 2-5pm Sat & Sun Jul & Aug, 8am-12.30pm & 1.30-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-12.30pm & 1.30-4.30pm Sat & Sun mid-May-Jun & early Sep, reduced hr rest of year).

Getting There & Around BICYCLE

A circuit of the lake is about 50km, and enjoyable with an overnight stop. In summer a **Fahrrad Verleih** (rent-a-bike) scheme allows you to take a standard bicycle at one of many outlets round the lake and return it at any other (three hours/24 hours/one week/two weeks €6/10/40/70). Mountain bikes (€12/19/85/160) are also available. The tourist office in Klagenfurt is one convenient outlet. This and tourist offices around the lake can set you straight on others.

BOAT

STW (☎ 0463-211 55; schiffahrt@stw.at; St Veiter Strasse 31, Klagenfurt) runs motorboats and steamers on the lake from early May to early October. Boats call at both sides, stopping at Klagenfurt, Krumpendorf, Sekirn, Reifnitz, Maria Wörth, Pörschach, Dellach, Weisses Rössl, Auen and Velden. They return by the same route, departing from Klagenfurt at least every two hours.

A **Tagesticket** (adult/child/family €10/6/28) is valid all day and allows as many stops as you like. Two-week tickets cost adult/child €28/17 (no family tickets). The longest trip (Klagenfurt-Velden) takes 1½ hours on a steamer but motorboats are quicker.

BUS & TRAIN

Postbuses travel along both shores of the lake; for information call ☎ 0463-543 40. Three to four buses run between Villach and Klagenfurt weekdays and Saturday (€6.40, 1¼ hours), travelling along the northern shore. Two to three buses also run weekdays and Saturday along the southern lakeshore between Klagenfurt and Velden (€4.80, 40 minutes) via Maria Wörth.

Trains between Klagenfurt and Villach run along the northern shore of the lake (€7.60, 40 minutes). Regional trains from Klagenfurt stop at Krumpendorf (€2.90, seven minutes), Pörschach (€4.40, 15 minutes) and Velden (€6, 20 minutes); express trains stop at only one or two of those stations.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

The A2/E66 and Hwy 83, which runs closer to the shore, are on the northern side of the lake. On the southern side, the route is classified as a main road, but it's much smaller.

VILLACH

☎ 04242 / pop 58,300

Although there are more picturesque cities in the region, Villach is arguably the most dynamic, partly because it's an important transport hub for routes into Italy and Slovenia. It attracts an international bunch of visitors and is a very lively and liveable city. Consider using it as a base for exploring the nearby lakes, beaches and beauty spots.

Orientation & Information

The old town centre is south of the Drauf River. The train and bus stations are north of the river. Villach is currently redeveloping its train station and Bahnhofstrasse area in a long-term upgrade. The area on the Drauf is also being developed, so expect some temporary changes to locations we give here.

Café Nicolai (☎ 22 511; Nikolaigasse 16; per 10 mins €1; ☎ 7am-9pm Mon-Fri, 7am-2pm Sat) Fast but expensive internet access.

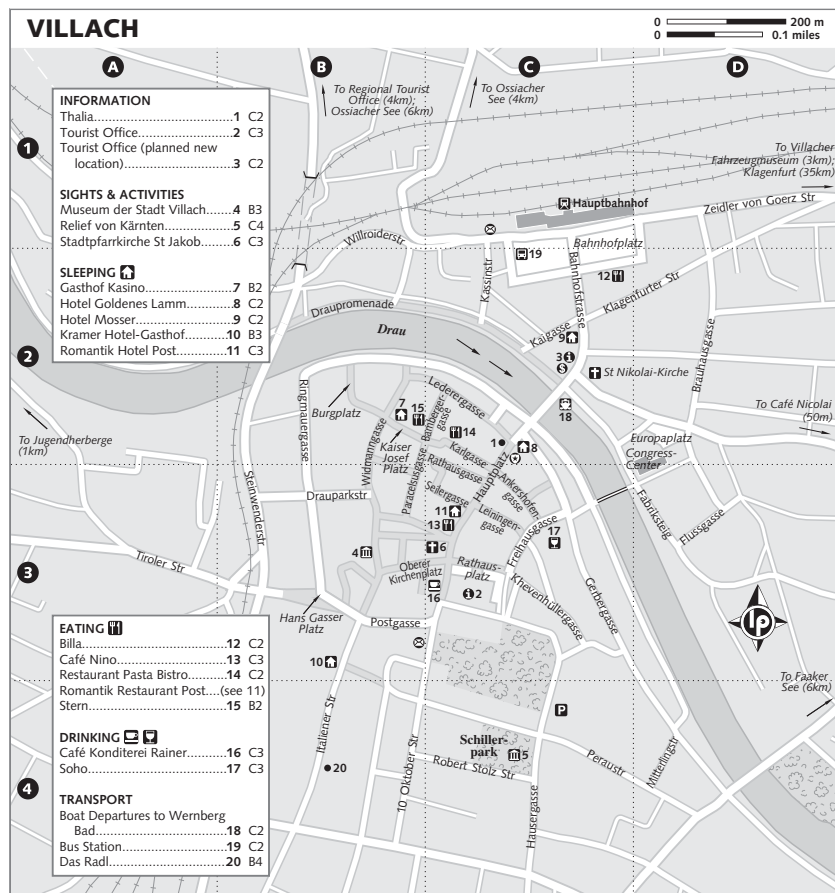
Thalia (☎ 23 434 38; Hauptplatz 4) A large bookshop with guidebooks, hiking maps and some English-language books.

Tourist office (☎ 205-2900; www.villach.at; Rathausplatz 1; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat Jul & Aug, 9am-12.30pm & 1.30-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat Apr-Jun, Sep & Oct, reduced hr rest of year) Helps with accommodation and maps. It's relocating to Bahnhofstrasse in 2008.

Sights

Pick up a copy of the tourist office's free walking booklet in English with descriptions of buildings and sights.

The monolithic **Stadtpfarrkirche St Jakob** (parish church of St Jakob; ☎ 205 3540; Oberer Kirchenplatz 8; ☎ dawn-dusk) dominates the old town. The interior is interesting, but bring binoculars or a good zoom lens to really appreciate details of its frescoes. The far end of the nave has a stuccoed ceiling and a vast rococo altar in



gold leaf, arrayed with fresh cream flowers, and its walls are studded with the ornate memorial plaques of the region's noble families. Each summer a pair of falcons nests in the **Stadtpfarrturm** (steeple; adult/child & student €2/1.20; ☎ 10am-4.30pm Mon-Sat May-Oct), and you can even follow their domestic life on a closed-circuit TV screen from the café across the street.

Relief Von Kärnten (relief map; ☎ 20 53 550; Peraustrasse; ☎ 10am-4.30pm Mon-Sat May-Oct) is a huge relief model of Carinthia housed in Schillerpark, south of the old town. It covers 182 sq metres and depicts the province at a scale of 1:10,000 (1:5000 vertically, to exaggerate the mountains).

Located 3km outside town, the **Villacher Fahrzeugmuseum** (☎ 25 530; Ferdinand-Wedenig-

Strasse 9; adult/child €6.50/4.50; ☎ 9am-5pm mid-Jun-mid-Sep, 10am-noon & 2-4pm mid-Sep-May) focuses on icons of everyday motoring such as the Fiat Topolino, BMW Isetta and about 250 others. Take bus 5179 from the train station towards Zauchen.

Back in town, the **Museum der Stadt Villach** (☎ 20 53 500; Widmannsgasse 38; adult/student €2.50/1.80; ☎ 10am-4.30pm Mon-Sat May-Oct) is a fairly unexciting museum covering local history, archaeology and medieval art.

Festivals & Events

On the first Saturday in August, the pedestrian centre is taken over by the **Kirchttag** (☎ 205 3211; www.villachkirchttag.at, in German; tickets about €8), a folk-music festival featur-

ing national and local musicians, as well as international acts from Italy, Latvia, Slovenia and elsewhere. There are plenty of costumes, food stalls and fireworks. Many events begin during the preceding week, culminating on the Saturday.

Sleeping

The tourist office can help with finding accommodation in town.

Jugendherberge (☎ 563 68; www.oehv.or.at; Dinzweg 34; dm/s/d €17.90/24.80/43.80) This HI hostel is about 1km west of the centre, off Sankt-Martiner-Weg. Rooms have their own shower and toilet from the corridor. Sauna facilities are on-site.

Gasthof Kasino (☎ 244 49; www.hotel-kasino.at; Kaiser Josef Platz 4; s/d €50/84; (P) ☎) The corridors retain a rather dated look but the rooms themselves are quite modern and decorated in good taste at the centrally located Kasino. Although rooms are sizable, it's at the expense of the rather poky bathrooms.

Kramer Hotel-Gasthof (☎ 249 53; www.hotel-gasthofkramer.at; Italiener Strasse 14; s €45-75, d €83-132, tr €117-144; (P) ☎) You'll find very good value among contemporary furnishings in rooms at this hotel just up the road from the Stadtpfarrkirche. They're spacious, have a comfortable feel and most are set away from the main street.

Hotel Goldenes Lamm (☎ 241 05; www.goldeneslamm.at; Hauptplatz 1; s/d/tr €63/100/126; (P) ☎) With tatty corridors that definitely won't get your pulse zipping, this hotel has very uneven aesthetics throughout but a great location in the heart of town. Ask for something nice or check out a couple of rooms before choosing.

ourpick Hotel Mosser (☎ 241 15; Bahnhofstrasse 9; s €55-68, d €85-150, ste €180-210, apt €140-190; (P) ☎) Despite an unfortunate bomb-drop during WWII, this hotel retains genuine historic charm (look for the collection of old room keys in the cabinet downstairs). Some rooms have angled mirrors above the head boards for romantic interludes, and rooms and bathrooms here are very generous with space if the interlude turns to a wild escapade requiring room to move. You could probably even spend a good honeymoon or silver anniversary in some of the doubles.

Romantik Hotel Post (☎ 261 01-0; www.romantik-hotel.com; Hauptplatz 26; s €70-120, d 85-170, tr €175-190, ste €225-250; (P) ☎) The corridors of this smart

hotel offer a foretaste of its charms, with chandeliers and oriental rugs, but even some of the refurbished rooms don't quite pull off the act. The wooden furnishings have a light and breezy feel though, and there's a very good restaurant downstairs (below).

Eating & Drinking

Café Konditerei Rainer (☎ 243 77; Oberer Kirchenplatz 5; cakes €2.60; ☎ 7am-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-7pm Sun) Villach's oldest café offers a sumptuous array of more than 50 different cakes, lunch snacks, a kid's play area, and in summer a screen with live pictures from the 'falcon cam' at the top of the church steeple (opposite).

Café Nino (☎ 24 802; Hauptplatz 28; mains €3-6; ☎ 7.30am-8pm Mon-Sat) Nino's is a friendly, buzzing café on the old town square, with plenty of tables outside and fresh calamari on the menu each Friday. It also serves great ice cream and extravagant coffees.

Romantik Restaurant Post (☎ 261 01-0; Hauptplatz 26; mains €5.90-16.50; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) The restaurant of the Romantik Hotel Post is decidedly more old-fashioned than most others, but it serves acclaimed regional specialities and has a cosy and intimate atmosphere. The midday meat or veg **Menü** (set menu) is good value and there's also a good selection of salads.

Stern (☎ 24 755; Kaiser Josef Platz 5; mains €9-13.50; ☎ 7am-midnight Mon-Thu, 7-2am Fri & Sat) This lounge and restaurant gets a clientele from the very young hanging out on the psychologist's couches and postmodern sofas during the day to a mixed crowd that comes here to feed on steak – its speciality (though Stern also does wok and salad dishes). The steaks are fine, but don't always live up to the lengthy check list you fill out to order one, and the chef certainly doesn't mess around with his meat when you tick 'well done'.

Restaurant Pasta Bistro (☎ 214 797; Kaiser Josef Platz 7; pasta €16, fish €10-16, salads €6.50-17.50; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat) This restaurant and vinothek set in a cosy, vaulted room offers an unusual menu of fish specialities alongside fresh, gourmet baguettes (as a main course) and a selection of salads and pastas (with about 16 different sauces). There are also a couple of meat and vegetarian dishes available.

Soho (☎ 0664-14 54 222; Freihausgasse 13; ☎ 9pm-late) Under the same management as Stern, this is Villach's fashionable bar-cum-club,

with a resident team of DJs and plenty of sponsored events during which you can dance to the beat.

The main area for bars extends from Hauptplatz to Kaiser-Joseph-Platz and north towards the river.

For self-caterers, there's a Billa supermarket opposite the train station, with various snack places close by.

Getting There & Around

Villach is situated on three Austrian ICE rail routes, which serve Salzburg (€28, 2½ hours, every two hours), Lienz (€18, 1½ hours, hourly) and Klagenfurt (€6.20, 30 to 40 minutes, two to four per hour). Direct services run to seemingly everywhere: Munich, Germany (€56, 4½ hours, four daily), Venice, Italy (€30, 3½ hours, three per day), Ljubljana (€17, 1½ hours, four daily) and Bled (€11, one hour, six daily) in Slovenia, Zagreb (€33, 4½ hours, three daily) and Rijeka in Croatia (€33, 4¾ hours, once daily), and Belgrade, Yugoslavia (€73, 11½ hours, three daily).

Buses also radiate out from Villach; call ☎ 44410-1510 for Postbus information. The bus station is opposite the *Hauptbahnhof*. For information about bus services to the Wörthersee resorts, see p297.

Das Radl (☎ 269 54; www.das-radl.at, in German; Italiener Strasse 25; per day city bike/mountain bike €10/19) rents bikes in Villach and also from Bodendorf and Faak train stations on the Ossiacher and Faaker lakes respectively.

AROUND VILLACH

Faaker See & Ossiacher See

Villach is blessed with two major lakes nearby with low-key summer resorts. Both the **Faaker See**, situated 6km east of Villach and close to the Karawanken Range, and the **Ossiacher See**, 4km to the northeast, provide plenty of camping, boating and swimming opportunities. Above Annenheim and providing a backdrop to the Ossiacher See is **Gerlitzen** (1909m), a popular ski area. Expect to pay about €32 for a ski pass here. With its accessible pistes and decent nightlife, Villach is therefore quite a good winter stopover for skiing.

Browse through the region-wide accommodation brochure obtainable from the Villach tourist office, or contact the **regional tourist office** (☎ 04242-420 00; www.da-lacht-das-herz.at; Töbinger Strasse 1, Villach), for more on the lakes and skiing.

The local tourist offices at the specific resorts can also help out.

On the Ossiacher See, **boats** (☎ 04242 58071; www.schiffahrt.at/drau, in German) complete a criss-cross circuit between St Andrä and Steindorf (adult/child €11.50/5.80, 2½ hours, approximately hourly from May to October). Boats run by the same company also navigate the Drau River from Villach Congress-Center to Wernberg Bad (one way adult/child €7/3.50, 45 minutes) via St Niklas an der Drau (about 2km northeast of the Faaker See) up to four times a day between late April and early October.

Regular train and Postbus services leave from the bus station and Villach train station, running along the northern shore of Ossiacher See via Annenheim (€1.70, 12 minutes) and Bodendorf (€3.20, 20 minutes). Regular trains run to Faak am See (€3.20, 30 minutes) and frequent buses to Drobollach (€3.20, 20 minutes), both on the Faaker See.

You can also explore the region by bicycle. These can be hired in Villach if you ring ahead (see left), and at the Bodendorf (Ossiacher See) and Faak (Faaker See) train stations; hotels and campsites in the region hire them out, too.

Burg Landskron

Situated between Villach and the Ossiacher See, the castle ruins of Burg Landskron are home to the impressive **Adler Flugschau** (falconry show; ☎ 04242-428 88; www.adlerflugschau.com; Burgruine Landskron, Schlossweg; adult/child €8/4; ☎ 11am, 2.30pm & 5.30pm Jul & Aug, 11am & 2.30pm Mon-Sat, 11am, 2.30pm & 4.30pm Sun May, Jun, Sep & Oct), a 40-minute spectacle featuring these birds of prey. **Affenberg** (Monkey Mountain; ☎ 04242-430375; adult/child €8/4; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm, half-hourly Apr-Sep, hourly Oct), a monkey reserve, is also here.

Regular buses (€1.70, eight minutes) from alongside Villach's train station stop in St Andrä, below the castle.

Dreiländereck

Walkers and mountain bikers will find much to do in the **Dobratsch** (2166m) area, in the Villacher Alpen about 12km west of Villach. Just south of here, hiking trails go from the small town of Arnoldstein to the Dreiländereck – the point where Austria, Italy and Slovenia meet. At 1500m there's an **Alpine garden** (☎ 0664 91 42 953; adult/child €2.50/1; ☎ 9am-6pm Jun-early Sep) with flora from the southern Alps. To reach the garden, follow the Villacher Alpenstrasse

from town. This is a toll road (€13 per car), but it's free from about November to mid-March, or free in summer with the Kärnten Card. It's closed to caravans. Dobratsch is popular with cross-country skiers.

Kowatsch (☎ 04242-442 39; www.kowatsch.at, in German) runs buses from Villach to Arnoldstein Monday to Saturday six times daily (€4, 30 minutes).

HERMAGOR

☎ 04282 / pop 7300

Situated about 50km west of Villach, Hermagor is popular as a base for skiing in the nearby Nassfeld ski pistes, where there are 110km of pistes (day pass €36) and also Nordic skiing trails and snowboarding runs; in summer it morphs into a low-key spot for hikers and mountain bikers. Hermagor is the starting point for hiking the spectacular Garnitzenklamm, a narrow gorge some 2.5km west of town (see p105).

Facilities such as banks, supermarkets and a post office are all central or near the tourist office.

The **tourist office** (☎ 2043; www.hermagor.com; Göseringlände 7; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-noon & 1-6pm Sat, 9am-noon Sun Jun-Aug, 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-noon Sat Sep-May) is about 400m west of the train station on the B111. It has well-informed staff with information on skiing, guided and unguided hiking, and mountain biking in the area.

The **Millennium-Express cable car** (adult/child €15/4 return) climbs 6km up to Nassfeld, making it Austria's longest. The valley station is in Tröpolach, 8km west of town along the B111 and then B90.

Hotel Bürgerbräu (☎ 250 85; www.buergerbrau.at; Gasserplatz 1; s/d €46/92) has clean, modern rooms and a helpful owner, free bicycle use for guests and facilities catering to skiers in winter – a free bus to the Millennium-Express picks you up here.

Getting There & Around

Every one to two hours trains run to Hermagor from Villach (€9.30, one hour), some continuing to Tröpolach (€2.90, 10 minutes) and complemented by a few buses each day (€1.70, eight minutes). **Bike Paradies** (☎ 2010; hermagor@bikeparadies.at; Obervellach 48), at the Rudolf service station 1km towards Villach on the B111, rents mountain/trek/child bicycles for €15/13/8 per day.

EASTERN CARINTHIA

Eastern Carinthia's prettiest medieval towns and most impressive castles lie north of Klagenfurt, on or close to Hwy 83 and the rail route between Klagenfurt and Bruck an der Mur, with mountain ranges on either side: the Seetaler Alpen and Saualpe to the east and the Gurktaler Alpen to the west.

FRIESACH

☎ 04268 / pop 5300

Once a key staging post on the Vienna-Venice trade route, Friesach is Carinthia's oldest town. The hills on either side of town bristle with ruined fortifications and the centre is surrounded by a moat (it's the only town in Austria that still has one) and a set of imposing, grey-stone walls. These have been tested to the fullest over the centuries, with successive invasions by the Bohemians, Hungarians, Turks and French before the town came under the wing of the Habsburgs in 1803.

Once a year Friesach's gates are locked, everyone in town dresses up in medieval costumes and Friesach re-enacts its history.

Orientation & Information

Picturesque Hauptplatz is a few minutes' walk from the train station along Bahnhofstrasse. Turn left on leaving the station. There's a bank with an ATM on the town square. The **tourist office** (☎ 43 00; www.friesach.at; Fürstenhofplatz 1; ☎ 10am-4pm May-Sep, 8am-noon Mon-Fri Oct-Apr) is in the Spur des Einhorns exhibition complex.

Sights & Activities

Die Spur des Einhorns (☎ 43 00; www.friesach.at; Fürstenhofplatz 1; adult/student/child €5.50/3.50/2.50; ☎ 10am-4pm May-Sep) is Friesach's main attraction, a contemporary and dreamlike art installation housed in a 15th-century bishop's palace and loosely based on the myths and stories of the medieval age in Europe. Music, voices and light effects accompany the visitor throughout a visit, from an 'enchanted forest' made of mirrors to the final resting place of the mighty sword, Excalibur. It's fascinating, beautiful and perfect for children and adults alike.

Ranged along the hills rising above Hauptplatz to the west are four ancient **fortifications**, all providing excellent views of the town and valley. The northernmost is Burg Geyersberg; the furthest south are the

Virgilienberg ruins. The middle two are the most easily visited from the town, with lovely views from **Peterskirche** (☎ 2272; ☞ 11am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Sep), accessible by paths ascending from the front of the Romanesque **Stadtpfarrkirche** (☎ 2272; ☞ dawn-dusk), dating from 927. Call or drop by the Pfarramt, next to the tourist office, to see Peterskirche outside these months.

Behind Peterskirche, Petersberg houses the small town **museum** (☎ 26 00; adult/child & student €3/1; ☞ dawn-dusk), with exhibits covering the town's medieval history and religious art. The Petersberg castle is also the site for open-air theatre performing anything from Shakespeare to Brecht in summer. Obtain details and tickets (prices ranging from about €10 to €20) from the tourist office.

Festivals & Events

The **Spectaculum** is held on the last Saturday in July: electric lights are extinguished and the town closed off and lit by torches and flares as jesters, princesses and armoured knights stroll around juggling, fire-eating and staging jousting tournaments and duels. Friesach reverts to the currency that made it famous, with medieval meals from street stalls being paid for with Friesach pennies. Contact the tourist office for event information.

Sleeping & Eating

Zum Goldenen Anker (☎ 23 13; www.goldeneranker.at, in German; Bahnhofstrasse 3; s/d €26/52; ☐) This small *Gasthof* just off the main town square is the best deal in town. Some of the spick-and-span rooms have antique furniture and traditional ceramic stoves. Reception is in the restaurant next door.

Gasthof Weisser Wolf (☎ 22 63; astrid.david@weisser-wolf.at; Hauptplatz 8; s/d €32/64; ☐) This three-star guest house is cyclist friendly and, like the other two places mentioned, hires out bicycles to guests. Rooms here are clean and comfortable, some overlooking the square.

Metnitzalerhof (☎ 25 10-0; www.metzitzalerhof.at; Hauptplatz 11; s €53-62, d €88-106; ☐) This pastel-pink edifice at the far end of the town square is the only four-star hotel in Friesach; rooms are modern and comfortable and have small balconies, but ask for one away from the restaurant exhaust fan. There's a sauna, Jacuzzi and steam room on site, plus a restaurant (mains €9 to €18.50) that serves Austrian and Carinthian dishes at lunch and dinner. There's a fine view of the square from the raised terrace.

Ostera (☎ 0664 99 33 822; €7.20-15; ☞ 11am-midnight Tue-Sat, 10am-9pm Sun) Downstairs from *Gasthof Weisser Wolf*, it serves pizza, pasta and traditional meat dishes.

Getting There & Away

Friesach is on the railway line between Vienna's Südbahnhof (€37, 3¼ hours) and Villach (€15, 1½ hours). Bruck an der Mur (€20, 1½ hours), St Veit (€6.40, 30 minutes) and Klagenfurt (€9.40, 40 to 60 minutes) are also on this route.

GURK

☎ 04266 / pop 1300

This small town (Krka in Slovenian), some 18km west of the Friesach-Klagenfurt road, is famous for its former **Dom** (cathedral; ☎ 82 36-12; Domplatz 11; ☞ closed during services), which was built between 1140 and 1200. With its harmonious pillared crypt, this is Austria's foremost church from the Romanesque epoch. Inside you will also find Gothic reticulated vaulting, and most of the church fittings are either baroque or rococo. The early-baroque high altar has 72 statues and 82 angel heads.

The frescoes in the **Bischofskapelle** (episcopal chapel; adult/child & student €3.70/3; ☞ guided tours 11.20pm, 2.20pm & 3.50pm), dating from around 1200, are all the more beautiful for the use of raw colours.

Getting There & Away

Go on a weekday if using public transport, when a morning train from Klagenfurt to Treibach-Althofen connects with a bus (€14, 1¼ hours). Direct buses also do the trip two to three times weekdays and Saturday from Klagenfurt (€11.30, 1¼ hours). With your own transport, take Hwy 93.

HÜTTENBERG

☎ 04263 / pop 1800

Step off the bus in the tiny mining village of Hüttenberg and you might be forgiven for thinking you've stumbled into Tibet: fluttering prayer flags rise up the cliff at the entrance to the town, and a giant painting of the Buddha gazes benevolently down on the populace. Hüttenberg is the birthplace of Austria's most famous explorer, Heinrich Harrer, who famously spent Seven Years in Tibet and was immortalised by Brad Pitt in film.

Outside the **Heinrich Harrer Museum** (☎ 8108; Bahnhofstrasse 12; adult/concession €7.50/4; ☞ 10am-5pm

Apr-Oct, till 6pm Jul & Aug) you can sip on a bowl of butter tea and listen to the rush of water through wooden prayer wheels, before going inside the beautiful stone and wood building to see the huge collection of objects and photographs Harrer brought back from his world travels. Opposite the museum is the Lingkor, a metal walkway built up the cliff face as an aid to prayer and meditation. The colourful prayer wheels made from oil drums are testament to Hüttenberg's history of being a site for heavy industry (this is an iron-ore mining area).

Getting There & Away

Three direct buses run to Hüttenberg weekdays from St Veit an der Glan, but only one is convenient on Saturday and none leave Sunday (€7.10, one hour). Two direct buses leave from Klagenfurt (€9.40, 1¼ hours); a few indirect bus services from both cities add to frequency Monday to Saturday. A train/bus connecting service works on weekdays via Treibach-Althofen (€13, one hour).

ST VEIT AN DER GLAN

☎ 04212 / pop 13,000

St Veit was historically important as the seat of the dukes of Carinthia from 1170 until 1518, when the dukes skipped down the road to Klagenfurt and the status of this town took an inelegant nosedive. These days it's a mildly interesting, mid-sized town that makes an agreeable base for explorations of the medieval towns and other attractions further north.

Orientation & Information

St Veit is near the junction of primary road routes to Villach (Hwy 94) and Klagenfurt (Hwy 83). To get to the pedestrian-only town centre from the *Hauptbahnhof*, walk left down Bahnhofstrasse for 600m and then go one block right.

The **tourist office** (☎ 288 806 911; www.stveit.carinthia.at, in German; Hauptplatz 23; ☞ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8pm Sun Jul-Sep; 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat & Sun Oct-Jun) sells maps of the town for €1. There's also an information screen in the Rathaus.

Sight & Activities

The centrepiece of St Veit's Hauptplatz at No 1 is the **Rathaus**; its baroque stuccowork was applied in 1754 and features a double-headed eagle on the pediment. St Veit (the saint, not the town) stands between the eagle's wings. By

walking through the Gothic vaulted passage you arrive at an arcaded courtyard bedecked with sgraffito (a mural or decoration in which the top layer is scratched off to reveal the original underneath).

Hauptplatz itself has a fountain at both ends and a central column erected in 1715 as a memorial to plague victims. The northeastern fountain, the **Schüsselbrunnen**, is surmounted by a bronze statue, created in 1566. This figure is the town mascot: its hand is raised as if in greeting, while a jet of water spits forth from its mouth. The southwestern fountain bears a statue of the local medieval poet, Walther von der Vogelweide.

For an antidote to the ubiquitous neoclassical architecture, have a look at the crazily tiled **Rogner Hotel Ernst Fuchs Palast** (below), a surrealist structure designed by mystical artist Ernst Fuchs.

The **Verkehrsmuseum** (Transport Museum; ☎ 5555-64; Hauptplatz 29; adult/child €3/free; ☞ 9am-noon & 2-6pm Apr-Jun, Sep & Oct, 9am-6pm Jul & Aug) is an unusual place appealing not only to railway freaks. It has lots of moving parts that whoosh and whistle, so the kids will get a kick out of it too, but its coup de grace is a simulator that allows you to drive a virtual locomotive between Maria Saal and Friesach. This is more difficult than it sounds. Don't forget to keep hitting the 'dead man's' pedal otherwise you'll be grinding to unscheduled stops while the attendant tells you rather unnervingly, 'Dead man, dead man!'

Sleeping

Gasthof Sonnhof (☎ 2447; Völkermarkter Strasse 37; s/d €30/53; ☐) South of the rail tracks (15 minutes from the centre), the Sonnhof has light and modern, though slightly impersonal, rooms – some with a balcony.

Hotel Garni Mosser (☎ 3223; www.hotel-mosser.at, in German; Spitalgasse 6; s/d €35/64) This budget hotel is excellent value – the rooms are extremely comfortable, it's bang in the centre of town and there's a generous breakfast buffet.

Weisses Lamm (☎ 23 62; www.weisseslamm.at, in German; Unterer Platz 4-5; s €40, d €70-84; ☐) This central, four-star place has rather poky rooms arranged around an atmospheric arcaded courtyard. There's also a sauna and a therapeutic massage service.

Rogner Hotel Ernst Fuchs Palast (☎ 4660-0; www.hotel-fuchspalast.at; Friesacher Strasse 1; s/d €82/130;

(P) (M) If you're still shaking from the Transport Museum's simulator, Rogner will finish you off. Outside it is studded with blue and red glass tiles in fantastical and astrological designs. Inside, this surrealism trickles into the public areas, with fluted columns and jewel-like mosaics. That was where it ended when we visited, but it has new ownership, so hopefully the rather bland rooms will be spruced up soon.

Eating & Drinking

Suppenkasper (mains €7.50-14.50; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Downstairs at Hotel Garni Mosser, this place has simple and filling Austrian mainstays.

La Torre (☎ 39250; www.latorre.at; Grabenstrasse 39; mains €10-22, 6-course menu €58; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat) This magnificent Italian restaurant is set in one of the towers of the 14th-century town wall. As well as the smart, romantic interior there's a beautiful, walled garden and terrace and an Italian owner who exudes bonhomie. The calamari with inky spaghetti and pepperoncino, washed down with wine, is a tasty lunchtime interlude.

The **restaurant** (mains €8.50-15, menus pizzas €6-10; ☎ lunch & dinner) at Weisses Lamm is a good place for cheap local eats, with several set-menu options. St Veit also has a couple of buzzing cafés in the centre, all catering to a mixed crowd.

Havanna (☎ 0676-84 34 89 100; Hauptplatz 29; ☎ 6pm-4am Tue-Sun) is a nightlife hub inside the Transport Museum building that kicks on till late.

Getting There & Away

St Veit is 33km south of Friesach and 20km north of Klagenfurt. Hourly express trains run to Villach (€9.30, 45 minutes), stopping at Friesach (€7.60, 25 minutes) and Klagenfurt (€4.40, 20 minutes). There are no left-luggage lockers at the station, but staff can usually help out.

Frequent Postbus services run to Klagenfurt, Maria Saal and Friesach.

BURG HOCHOSTERWITZ

This fairytale fortress (it claims to be the inspiration for the castle in *Sleeping Beauty*) drapes itself around the slopes of a hill, with 14 gate towers on the path up to the final bastion. These were built between 1570 and 1586 by Georg Khevenhüller, the then owner,

to protect against Turkish invasion. It certainly looks impregnable and the *Burgführer* information booklet (in English; €4) outlines the different challenges presented to attackers by each gate – some have spikes embedded in them, which could be dropped straight through unwary invaders passing underneath. The fortress is particularly imposing when viewed from the northeast – sit on the left of the train coming from Friesach.

The **castle** (☎ 04213-20 20; adult/child incl tour €7.50/4.50; ☎ 9am-5pm Apr & Oct, 9am-6pm May-Sep) has a museum featuring the suit of armour of one Burghauptmann Schenk, who measured 225cm at the tender age of 16. There's a small café serving sausages, soup, rolls and coffee at the top.

Getting There & Away

Regional trains on the St Veit–Friesach route stop at Launsdorf Hochosterwitz station, a 3km walk from the car park and the first gate, where a lift (€5) will take you directly to the castle.

MARIA SAAL

☎ 04223 / pop 3800

Maria Saal, a small town perched on a fortified hill 10km north of Klagenfurt, is famous for its pilgrimage church, whose twin spires can be seen for miles around. It is easily visited on an excursion from Klagenfurt or St Veit.

The **tourist office** (☎ 22 14-25; www.maria.saal.at; Am Platzl 7; ☎ 7.30am-4pm Mon-Fri) is just off Hauptplatz.

Sights & Activities

The **church** (☎ 22 14-12; Domplatz 1; ☎ dawn-dusk), sometimes known as the Wallfahrtskirche, was built in the early 15th century from volcanic stone, some of it filched from a nearby Roman ruin. Originally Gothic, it later received Romanesque and baroque modifications. The exterior south wall is embedded with relief panels and ancient gravestones – look for the Roman mail wagon carved into one of the stones and the weird frescoes of people growing out of bulbous flowers on the church ceiling (they represent the genealogy of Christ).

Getting There & Away

There are no left-luggage facilities in the small train station, but if you're just passing through on the way somewhere else,

the ticket clerk might watch your bags. Regional trains stop hourly from St Veit (€4.40, nine minutes) and Klagenfurt (€2.90, nine minutes).

WESTERN CARINTHIA

Besides Hohe Tauern National Park (p310), the main attractions of Western Carinthia are Millstatt with its serene and pretty lake for swimming and boating, its abbey and famous music festival (p309), and Spittal an der Drau, with its stately Renaissance palace and pretty, floral park (right).

Both Millstatt and Spittal an der Drau are close to the primary road route north from Villach, the A10/E55 that leads to Salzburg. It has a special toll section (on top of the normal Autobahn toll) between Rennweg and a point north of the Tauern Tunnel (€9.50 for cars and motorbikes). Traffic jams are common.

GMÜND

☎ 04732 / pop 2600

Gmünd is an attractive 11th-century village with a walled centre and a 13th-century hill-top castle, **Alte Burg**. From 1480, Hungarians conducted a seven-year siege of the city and castle. They broke through and partially destroyed the castle; a fire in 1886, however, brought its ultimate demise. Today it's the setting for plays and musical events.

Of an entirely different era is the privately owned **Porsche Museum Helmut Pfeifhofer** (☎ 24 71; Riesertratte 4a; adult/child €7/3; ☎ 9am-6pm mid-May–mid-Oct, 10am-4pm mid-Oct–mid-Nov & late Dec–mid-May). A Porsche factory operated in Gmünd from 1944 to 1950 and the first car to bear that famous name (a 356) was handmade here. One of these models is on display (only 52 were built), together with about 15 other models and a couple of the wooden frames used in their construction. There's a film (in German) on Dr Porsche's life and work.

Gmünd has a range of inexpensive accommodation, including hotels with child-minding geared towards families with young children. Staff at the **tourist office** (☎ 22 22; www.familiental.com), in the **Rathaus** on Hauptplatz, can outline options.

Gasthof Kohlmayr (☎ 2149; www.gasthof-kohlmayr.at, in German; Hauptplatz 7; s/d €36/59; (P)) has cosy and affordable rooms in a 400-year-old building right in the heart of Gmünd and a restaurant (€6.50 to €13) serving tasty local fare.

Getting There & Away

Gmünd is not on a rail route; one to two hourly buses connect it with Spittal an der Drau (€4, 30 minutes) Monday to Saturday, but none runs on Sunday.

SPITTAL AN DER DRAU

☎ 04762 / pop 16,000

Spittal is an important economic and administrative centre in upper Carinthia. Its name comes from a 12th-century hospital and refuge that once succoured travellers on this site. Today it's a town with an impressive Italianate palace at its centre and a small, but attractive, park with splashing fountains and bright flowerbeds. To get into town from the station, walk straight up the road, then cut through the Stadtpark on your right.

Information

Post office (Südtirolerplatz 3; ☎ 8am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 9-11am Sat) Near the train station. A second one is located off Tiroler Strasse.

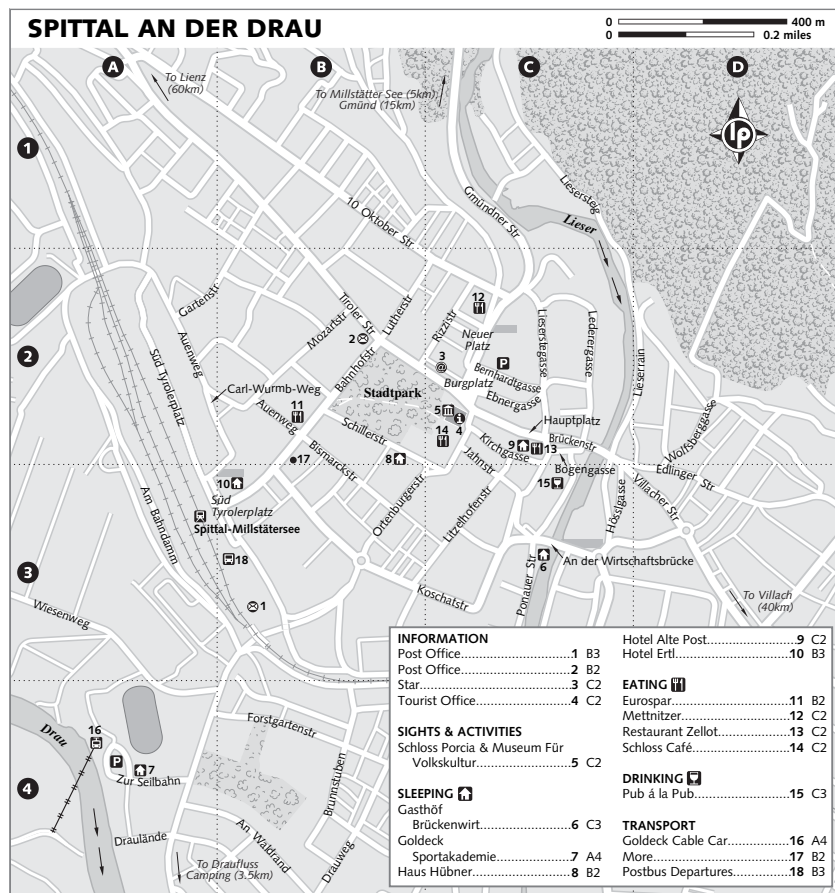
Star (☎ 36 897; Tiroler Strasse 10; per 30min €1.50; ☎ 9.30am-9pm Mon-Sat, 11am-9pm Sun) Internet access and call shop. The Schloss Café (p307) also has access.

Tourist office (Kulturamt Spittal; ☎ 56 50 220; www.spittal-drau.at, in German; Burgplatz 1; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat Jul & Aug, 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat Sep-Jun) Round the side of Schloss Porcia.

Sights & Activities

SCHLOSS PORCIA

Boasting an eye-catching Renaissance edifice, **Schloss Porcia** (☎ 8am-8pm) was built between 1533 and 1597 by the fabulously named Duke of Salamanca. Inside, Italianate arcades run around a central courtyard used for summer **theatre performances** (☎ 42020-20; ksporca@aon.at) and the top floors contain the enormous **Museum für Volkskultur** (Local Heritage Museum; ☎ 28 90; www.museum-spittal.com, in German; adult/child & student €5/2.50; ☎ 9am-6pm mid-April–Oct, 1-4pm Mon-Thu Nov–mid-Apr). Highlights are its 3-D projections, and one not to be missed has been developed in cooperation with the Hohe Tauern National Park: you sit at a joystick and navigate a virtual flight through the park, doing hair-raising climbs and dives between altitudes of 100m and 10,000m while changing the angle of flight. Another 3-D cinema projection takes you on a journey through Carinthia. The museum has a small brochure with information in English.



GOLDECK

Spittal's nearest mountain, offering inspiring views, is **Goldeck** (2142m) to the southwest. In summertime, the peak can be reached by cable car (€10.50/15 one-way/return, 15 minutes) or by the Goldeckstrasse toll road (cars/motorbikes €12/6; reductions with *Gästekarte*). The road stops 260m short of the summit. In winter, the peak is the domain of skiers (lift pass adult/child €28/14). The cable car doesn't operate from mid-April to mid-June or from mid-September to mid-December.

Sleeping

Staff at the tourist office help with accommodation free of charge.

Draufluss Camping (☎ 24 66; www.draufluss.at; Schwaig 10; site per adult/tent/car €4.70/3.70/3.50; ☞ mid-Apr–mid-Oct). This camping ground is about 3.5km from the town centre on the southern bank of the Drau River.

Jugendherberge (☎ 27 01; goldeck@jungehoteles.at; s, d & dm per person €18, €26 half-board; ☞ Jul–mid-Sep & Christmas–Mar). The hostel is at the Goldeck mid-station (1650m), accessible only by cable car. Alpine skiing begins at the door.

Goldeck Sportakademie (☎ 0699-144 144 60; www.sportsacademy.at, in German; Zur Seilbahn 2; s, d & dm per person €22) This former youth hostel at the base of the Goldeck cable car has reinvented itself as a sports academy aimed at young skiers and snowboarders (there's ski hire and a ski school). It also has summer activities.

Gasthof Brückenwirt (☎/fax 2772; An der Wirtschaftsbrücke 2; s/d €30/60) Brückenwirt is a few minutes' walk east of the town centre, by the Lieser River. Most of the old-fashioned but comfortable rooms have a balcony and some have a view of the river. There's also a garden, a cheap restaurant and friendly staff.

Haus Hübner (☎ 2112; huebner.spittal@aon.at; Schillerstrasse 20; s €38, d €62-66, s apt €47, 2-4 person apt €62-74; ☐) This central, peaceful pension near Schloss Porcia has a lovely garden. The rooms are modern, clean and very comfortable, but some lack character. The minimum stay for apartments is five days.

Hotel Alte Post (☎ 22 17 0; www.tiscover.com/alte.post; Hauptplatz 13; s €43-55, d €86-110; ☐) Situated in the centre, this hotel caters to tour and ski groups, so it can fill up at times. Rooms are well appointed and comfortable, and a bonus is the ski room and transfers to the ski fields.

Hotel Ertl (☎ 204 80; info@hotel-ertl.at; Bahnhofstrasse 26; s/d €55/105; ☐) Rooms are variable and some are in need of a makeover, but the standard is quite good and staff are very helpful at this three-star hotel close to the station (and convenient for day trips out of town). The pool is about 25m and outdoors.

Eating & Drinking

The tourist office has a good *Gastronomieführer* (Gastronomy Guide), with restaurants and bar listings (in German).

Schloss Café (☎ 47 07; Burgplatz 1; cakes €2.50, mains €3.50-8; ☞ 7.30am-8pm Mon-Sat, till midnight Jul & Aug; ☐) This bakery/café occupies one end of Schloss Porcia, with a terrace overlooking the fountains and greenery of the Stadtpark. It does a few light dishes, and for €2 per 30 minutes you get a laptop and can surf the internet at your table.

Restaurant Zellot (☎ 21 13; Hauptplatz 12; mains €6.60-20; ☞ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat) This is possibly the most important address in town: it's a funky and rather eccentric restaurant that does a good steak as well as Austrian staples. On top of that, it has the Glashaus bar and bistro (open 9am to 1am Monday to Saturday), and the Garage, a space for live acts and DJs that is decked out like a garage and whose features become even more intriguing after your second drink. It's open 9.30pm to 4am Friday and Saturday.

Mettnitzer (☎ 358 99; Neuerplatz 17; mains €9-21; ☞ lunch & dinner Wed-Sun) Zellot is a hard act to beat all round, but Mettnitzer – the finest

THE AUTOSCHLEUSE TAUEBNBAHN

If you're driving to Bad Gastein from Spittal an der Drau, you'll need to use the *Autoschleuse Tauernbahn* (railway car-shuttle service) through the tunnel from Mallnitz to Böckstein. The fare for cars is €17 one way or €28 return (valid for two months). For motorcycles, the price is €10/20. For information, call ☎ 05 717. Departures are every 30 minutes in summer or 60 minutes in winter, with the last train departing at 10.25pm heading south, and 9.55pm going north. The journey takes 13 minutes.

eatery in town – does it from the purely gastronomic standpoint. It has a strong focus on steaks, and you can also get one of our favourites – a salad with beef strips (€8.90).

Just off Bahnhofstrasse is a Eurospar supermarket.

The main nightlife area is on Brückenstrasse and Bogengasse. It's a thin and eclectic line of lowlife bars and regular pubs. Occasionally stray dimwits from the local army barracks get tanked and aggro there, though. **Pub à la Pub** (☎ 33 445; Ponauer Strasse 2; ☞ 7pm-2am) is one decent place to start.

Getting There & Away

Spittal-Millstättersee is an important rail junction: two-hourly IC/EC services run north to Bad Gastein (€9.90, 40 minutes), frequent regional services run west to Lienz (€11, one hour), and others to Villach (€7.60, 30 minutes, hourly), 37km to the southeast. The railway line north via Mallnitz-Oberveßellach clings spectacularly to the valley walls (sit on the left).

Postbuses leave from outside the train station to Gmünd (€4, 30 minutes, one to two hourly Monday to Saturday). Call ☎ 39 16 for schedule information.

For taxis, call ☎ 5580.

More (☎ 2555-0; service@more-der-spezialist.at; Bahnhofstrasse 11) rents city and mountain bikes for €9/45 per day/week. Get the tourist office's free city/regional map, which has paths marked.

MILLSTÄTTER SEE

Stretching out 12km and just 1.5km wide, the Millstätter See is second in size in Carinthia

after the Wörthersee. It was gouged out during the Ice Age about 30,000 years ago, and today is studded with a handful of small towns. Millstatt on the north shore and Seeboden at the western end are the most important. Warm (about 22°C to 26°C in summer) and all but plugged at both ends, the lake lends itself to sailing, kayaking and open water swimming.

The central information office, **Infocenter Millstätter See** (☎ 04766-3700-0; www.millstaettersee.at; Thomas-Morgenstern-Platz 1; ☹ 9am-6pm), is situated in a new building in **Seeboden** with an unusual 'curtain' of water that parts as you enter. This symbolises 'touching the lake' (the curtain is tap water, though), a theme to bring people close to water (see boxed text, below). The Infocenter doubles as a call centre with English and Italian speaking staff, and there's a supermarket, café and ATM, as well as toilets, in or near the building.

Also in Seeboden (incidentally, the birthplace of ski-jumping ace Thomas Morgenstern), a few minutes' walk towards Hotel Steiner, is **Sportcamp Seeboden** (☎ 04762-816 69, 0664-993 1698; Seehofstrasse 23; ☹ summer only), which rents mountain and city bikes (€13/52 per day/week), offers sailing courses and hires out windsurfing boards (€9 per hr), kayaks (€4 per hr) and sailing boats (€9 to €17 per hr).

The bus to Millstatt stops near the Infocenter in Seeboden (ask the driver to let you off there).

MILLSTATT

☎ 04766 / pop 3200

The genteel lakeside village of Millstatt lies 10km east of Spittal an der Drau on the northern shore. It got its name from Emperor Domitian, an early Christian convert who tossed *mille statuæ* (1000 heathen statues) into the lake.

A gaunt and crazed-looking sculpture of the emperor stands in the lake, portrayed in the act of consigning a Venus to a watery grave.

The town has three main parallel streets: the B98 (Kaiser-Franz-Joseph-Strasse) and square Georgsritterplatz, Marktplatz north (uphill) from this, and the beach road on the lake. Stiftgasse/Seemühlgasse, near Full House, connects all three.

The **tourist office** (☎ 20 23; www.millstaettersee.com; Marktplatz 8) inside the **Rathaus** can help with information on the town.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Apart from the lake itself, Millstatt's main attraction is its Romanesque **Benedictine abbey** (tours in German, adult/child €5/2.50; ☹ tours 10.30am Wed & Fri, 10am Sat early Jun-Sep), founded in 1070. This pretty complex consists of the 11th-century abbey, a graveyard that invites a stroll, and foundation buildings south of the abbey, with lovely yards and arcades. If you walk downhill along Stiftgasse from the abbey, you see on the left a 1000-year-old lime tree. Millstatt was no exception to the practice common during the Middle Ages of holding trials beneath a tree (often a lime tree) and using the same tree for hangings.

The **Stiftsmuseum** (Abbey Museum; ☎ 06246-750 35; Stiftgasse 1; adult/child €2.50/1.50; ☹ 10am-noon & 2-6pm Jun-Sep) contains everything from documentation of the town's history to reliquaries and a geology collection.

Back on the lake, **Wassersport Strobl** (☎ 2263; Seemühlgasse 56a) hires out sailing boats (€7 to €12 per hour) and electric boats (€10 to €12 per hour) as well as kayaks (€5 per hour).

East of Millstatt is **Bad Kleinkirchheim**, a spa resort and large winter skiing centre with 26 lifts and cable cars. Its **tourist office** (☎ 04240-82 12; www.badkleinkirchheim.at; Dorfstrasse 30) can help.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

If two Carinthians meet, they start a choir, according to a local saying. If two Millstätters get together, they start a music festival, and one that's put this minute place firmly on the classical music map is the **Musikwochen Millstatt** (Millstatt music weeks; ☎ 2022-35; www.musikwochen.com, in German; tickets €13-35). It happens every year from May to September, with most performances taking place in the Abbey.

SLEEPING & EATING

The high season is June to September. It's advisable to check availability with tourist offices outside these months as some places go into winter hibernation. Most hotels and pensions are south of the B98. The cheapest are back from the lake.

our pick Villa Verdin (☎ 374 74; www.villaverdin.at, in German; Seestrasse 69; s €50-65, d €100-130; (P) ☹) This converted 19th-century villa-hotel mixes contemporary design style with antiques and interesting junk to create a comfortable, informal yet stylish atmosphere. The rooms are all different, some with funky, red furniture and zebra-print accessories, some with Buddhas and Japanese screens. Several have enclosed verandas or balconies with views of the lake. It's gay friendly and there's also a retro beach café for daytime snacks and a low-key restaurant for evening meals.

Hotel See-Villa (☎ 21 02; www.see-villa-tacoli.com; Seestrasse 68; s €55-76, d €106-158, ste €156-181; (P) ☹) Next door to Villa Verdin, this staid, old-fashioned hotel is a complete contrast: it's a handsome old building right on the lake, with a huge terrace restaurant, a private sauna and a swimming jetty. The rooms are wooden floored, creaky and quaint, with a variety of

different styles and colour schemes, all very traditional. Its restaurant (mains €11 to €18) does a Greek salad at the low end, and a venison filet steak towards the top. It's open daily for lunch and dinner.

Die Forelle (☎ 2050-0; www.hotel-forelle.at; Fischer-gasse 65; s €84.50, d €145-228; (P) ☹) Some guests like its lakeside bar, others choose this large lakeside hotel for its wellness facilities, including whirlpool and various baths, fitness and chill-out rooms, plus a Hawaiian massage or cosmetic treatment. Rooms are well sized, the more expensive doubles have a balcony to the lake, and prices fall significantly in shoulder season or with special deals. Check out the website for details. Its mid-priced restaurant opens for lunch and dinner, and offers a reduced menu between meal times and half-board (€20 extra).

Bio-Hotel Alpenrose (☎ 2500; www.biohotel-alpenrose.at, in German; Obermillstatt 84; s €78-88, d €156-206; lunch buffet €5.50, 4-course evening meal €22; ☹ 1-5pm) This eco-hotel is 3km north of town in Obermillstatt and serves an organic lunch buffet and evening menu. It's open most of the year.

Pizzeria Peppino (mains €5.20-12; ☹ 4pm-midnight) is a good in-town eating option beyond hotel fare.

For pub entertainment, **Full House** (☎ 2073; Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Strasse; ☹ 1pm-2am summer, 7pm-2am winter), near the Volksbank, is a nice hangout.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Postbus services to Millstatt depart from outside Spittal train station (€3.20, 20 minutes, two hourly), with some continuing to Bad Kleinkirchheim (from Spittal €6.40, one hour). The road from Spittal gives good views of the lake – sit on the right.

NOSHING ON A RAFT

Among the interesting tours and events on the Millstätter See, several are clustered around the idea of 'touching the lake' – designed to bring people close to the water. For example, you can have your own romantic dinner for two out on the water. A boat chugs you to a raft, the food is delivered in seven courses, and later it returns at some point to bring you back to digest it all – or file for divorce, as the case may be (this one costs €120 per person, including a romantic tour of the lake to prime the palate). If the kids get sick of watching from the shore while mum and dad bob about stuffing their faces, they can be placated with pirate hunts (€12) in costume and make-up, or mellowed out by the fascinating 'Massage of 1000 Hands', which is about meditating in water and capping it off with a cup of herbal tea. The helpful Infocenter Millstätter See (see above) can arrange the 1000 hands, the dinner and other goodies for you.

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Hohe Tauern National Park Region



Hohe Tauern National Park is no place for acrophobes: you're constantly on a high. This vast tract of mountainous terrain is Austria's largest nature reserve, and three is its magic number: almost 300 peaks towering 3000m create enormous ripples in the landscape. The park is carved up between Carinthia, Tyrol and Salzburgerland (which naturally stole the biggest slice of the strudel). The scenery invites applause: waterfalls gouge deep ravines, Pinzgauer cattle graze spongy pastures, vultures wheel in a china-blue sky and glaciers shimmer like diamonds in spiky tiaras. It is amazing.

The central vein is the precipitous Grossglockner Road, which twists like a ribbon through a crumpled white sheet at the foot of Grossglockner (3797m), the granddaddy of the Austrian Alps. Down south the Dolomites give you a toothy grin in Lienz, a Roman-rooted city with Italian pizzazz, while stepping west the Krimml Falls begin to thunder when the ice cracks. Further north it's a different picture, with life spiralling around the lake at Zell am See and Bad Gastein serving up a winning combination of ski and spa.

This is where Austria's wild things are, but it's no empty wilderness and the resident marmots, chamois and ibex share their playground with active types. The locals have been legging it up these peaks since the Stone Age, so it stands to reason that opportunities for serious hiking are plentiful. If you'd prefer to freewheel over hill and dale, tourist offices hand out maps of the cycling routes that crisscross the reserve. Up for an adventure? Nearly every village offers an array of pursuits for those keen to throw themselves down a cliff, along a river or off a mountain's edge. Tempted...?

HIGHLIGHTS

- Getting high on glacier views on the precipitous **Grossglockner Road** (p318)
- Bathing in radon-rich waters and basking in *belle époque* glory in **Bad Gastein** (p320)
- Kicking off your ski boots to chill in the igloo at **Kitzsteinhorn Glacier** (p314)
- Soaking in the misty spray of **Krimml Falls** (p317), Europe's highest waterfall at 380m
- Letting llamas lead the way through the dramatic Dolomites in **Lienz** (p323)



■ AREA: 1816 SQ KM

■ HIGHEST ELEVATION: GROSSGLOCKNER 3797M



History

The Austrian Alps once formed the boundary between the more-established southern Roman territories and their newer, less stable conquests to the north. The main trade route for pack animals ran along the pass at the end of the Tauern Valley, but few settlements were established due to the Romans' distrust of the treacherous climate (tales of malevolent, snowy spirits abounded) and difficult mountainous topography.

In 1971 the provinces of Carinthia, Salzburg and Tyrol agreed to the creation of a national park; regions were added in stages between 1981 and 1991 until it became Europe's largest national park. Today it's widely regarded as one of Europe's biggest conservation success

stories, an example of an approach where the needs of the local population are addressed right from the start.

Information

All tourist offices in places bordering the park have maps of and information on Hohe Tauern. The *Experience in Nature* map (in English) shows information offices, overnight accommodation and tour ideas. You could also investigate the national park's website at www.hohetauern.at, listing the various provincial tourist offices responsible for the national park.

Climate

The national park has an Alpine climate with high rainfall, short summers and long winters

with heavy snowfall. Avalanches are common in spring. Be aware that the sun is intense at high altitudes.

Dangers & Annoyances

Extremes of climate and terrain make parts of the park potentially dangerous for walkers and climbers. Always come prepared for abrupt changes in weather conditions and visibility, bring warm clothing and adequate maps, and consider taking a guide on more difficult routes. For more tips on staying safe in the mountains, see p86.

The number for emergency mountain rescue services is ☎ 140. Call ☎ 0512-291600 for weather information.

Getting There & Around

The main hubs for train services are Zell am See (for services to Salzburg and points north via St Johann im Pongau) and Lienz (for trains east and west into Tyrol and Carinthia).

The authorities are determined to limit the flow of traffic through the park, so most of the roads through it have toll sections and some are closed in winter. The main north-south road routes are Felber Tauern Rd, open year-round, and the Grossglockner Road (p318). The 5.5km-long Felber Tauern Tunnel is at the East Tyrol-Salzburg border: the toll is €10 for cars

and €8 for motorcycles. Buses on the Lienz-Kitzbühel route operate along this road.

Getting around by bus is made more attractive by special passes; such deals change periodically, so make inquiries upon arrival. Buying zonal day or week passes for provincial transport should work out significantly cheaper than buying single tickets.

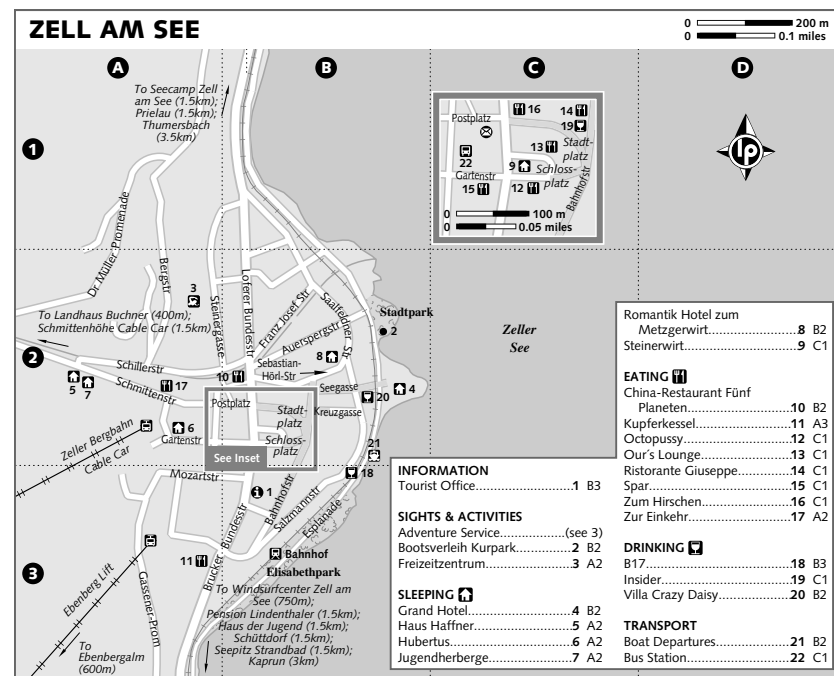
ZELL AM SEE

☎ 06542 / pop 10,050 / elev 757m

Zell am See is Austria's Van Gogh – it lays on its colour thick. Taking the ice white canvas of the Hohe Tauern range, it suffuses it with a sapphire blue lake, emerald spruce forests, golden moors and the multicoloured sails of windsurfers. Step into the picture in summer and you're within easy reach of High Alpine walking trails, the Krimml Falls and the awe-inspiring Grossglockner Road. In winter, the scene shifts to downhill thrills in Zell am See and Kaprun, which together form the Europa Sports Region (p75). In both seasons, Zell am See's medieval centre serves up excellent dining and nightlife in its tangle of pedestrianised streets.

Orientation & Information

Almost adjacent to the main resort of Zell am See is the residential area of Schüttdorf,



which is generally cheaper for accommodation. Both are on the western shore of the Zeller See. You should ask for the handy *Gästekarte* (guest card) wherever you stay and show it for discounts on activities, sights and transport.

Tourist office (☎ 770-0; www.europasportregion.info; Brucker Bundesstrasse 1a; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon, 2-6pm Sat, 10am-noon Sun mid-Dec-Feb & Jul-Aug). Staff at this office will help find rooms; there's also an accommodation board in the foyer with a free 24hr telephone.

LORD OF THE RINGOS

Zell am See has plenty of pedalos and rowing boats, but you might like to venture into the resort's wackier waters with a spin in the brand-new **BBQ-Donut** at Schmittenhöhe. From June to early October this giant Ringo (inflatable ring), complete with a charcoal grill in the centre and a shady parasol above to block the rays, floats leisurely across the summit's 2000m reservoir.

It's a deliciously different experience to glide across an Alpine lake with the aroma of steak filling your nostrils, an ice-cold beer on the side and 3000m-high peaks drifting into view. The Alps-meets-Australia experience costs €20 per person per hour for groups of up to five. Solo travellers keen to give the whole donut thing a go should turn up for the **Grilling & Chilling** picnic programme, which departs from the Schmittenhöhe cable car at 9.45am every Friday and costs €15.

HIKING & CLIMBING IN HOHE TAUERN NATIONAL PARK

Europe's biggest national park, Hohe Tauern is a mecca to hikers and climbers with its extraordinary landscape of verdant valleys, towering mountains, virgin forests and shimmering glaciers. The reserve has treks to suit every level of ability, from gentle day walks (see p102) to extreme expeditions to inaccessible peaks and ridges.

Freytag & Berndt produces nine 1:50,000 walking maps covering the national park and surrounding areas. If you plan to undertake major walking expeditions, you should plan your overnight stops in advance – some small-scale guesthouses provide food and accommodation, but they are widely scattered. Contact the regional or local tourist offices for accommodation lists.

Popular walking trails include the ascent of the **Grossvenediger** (3674m), a peak permanently coated with ice and snow and flanked by glaciers. The closest you can get by road is the **Matreier Tauernhaus Hotel** (1512m; ☎ 04875-88 11; www.matreier-tauernhaus.at; A-9971 Matrei in Osttirol) at the southern entrance to the Felber Tauern Tunnel. You can park here and within an hour's walk gain fine views of the mountain.

Anyone with mountain-climbing experience and a reasonable level of fitness can climb the mighty **Grossglockner** (3797m) via the 'ordinary' route, though guides are recommended. The main route for hikers begins from the **Adlersruhe (Eagles Rest) overnight hut** (☎ 04876-500), a four- to five-hour hike from Heiligenblut. From here, the route to the summit crosses ice and rocks, following a steel cable over a narrow snow ridge. The final ascent to the cross at the summit is relatively easy. It's essential to have the proper equipment (including maps, ropes and crampons) and to check weather conditions before setting out. For guides, contact the tourist offices in Heiligenblut or Kals, or ring the **mountain guides association** (☎ 04824-2700).

ICE, ICE BABY

High above Zell am See, the Kitzsteinhorn Glacier is one place you're guaranteed a frosty reception since the opening of the subzero **Volvo XC Ice Camp**. If you're game for giving up your warm Alpine chalet in exchange for a hollowed-out ice cube, this igloo village 2500m above sea level is the place to live out your wildest Eskimo dreams. Frostdite? Forget it. These dome-shaped dwellings may be built from snow, but they feel positively cosy once you've blown out the tea lights and slipped beneath your thick reindeer-skin cover. Staying here isn't cheap at €147 per night, but rates include a fondue feast and few experiences can beat drinking *gluhwein* (mulled wine) at an ice bar before taking a starlit stroll on the glacier.

The benefit of being up so high, of course, is that you can be the first to carve up the slopes in the morning. Snowboarding fans can also attend free safety and freestyle workshops during the day. The camp is open from mid-December to April and overnighting is possible on Wednesdays and Saturdays. For more details, visit Zell am See tourist office or see www.icecamp.at.

and snowboarding at the **Volvo XC Ice Camp** (see above).

Combined lift passes for the region cost per adult/child €68.50/34 for a two-day minimum period; ski buses are free for ski-pass holders. Ski/boot rental prices are roughly €22/37 for one day. Cable cars (Ebenberg Lift and cityXpress) from Zell am See ascend to the ridge on either side of the **Schmittenhöhe cable car** (adult/child return €20.50/10.25), which reaches 1965m. These operate from December to April.

HIKING

The hiking around Zell am See is some of the finest in Austria; almost everywhere you tramp you're rewarded with splendid vistas of **Grossglockner** (3797m), standing like a shepherd guarding snow-white flocks. Snowfields often linger till early summer above 2000m, but when they melt the region becomes a trekking wonderland comprising 400km of trails that stretch from gentle ambles through flower-speckled pastures to the glacier trail at Kitzsteinhorn. For a taste of the dramatic scenery this region has to offer, consider walking the five- to six-hour **Pinzgauer Spaziergang** (p102), leading from Schmittenhöhe peak to Saalbach.

From June to mid-October, the tourist office arranges guided walks including mountain treks, picnic tours to a 2000m-high reservoir and, the perennial family favourite, llama expeditions. They also hand out a free *Wanderkarte* (walking map) to help plan your own route.

SWIMMING

When the weather warms, the chilly waters of the **Zeller See** can be tempting for a quick dip.

Lidos dotted around the lake include those at Seespitz, Thumersbach and Zell am See, which feature sunbathing lawns, solar-heated outdoor pools and splash areas for the little 'uns; all cost €5.60/3.50 per adult/child. Unless you're a fan of ice-bathing, the **Freizeitzentrum** (Leisure Centre; ☎ 785-0; Steinergerasse 3-5; pool adult/child €7.90/5.70; ☎ 10am-10pm) is preferable to the lake in winter; it shelters a 25m swimming pool, plus a whirlpool and saunas perfect for an après-ski unwind.

BOAT TRIPS

A laid-back way to soak up the sights is to board a **boat tour** (☎ 789-0; adult/child €8.70/4.35; ☎ May-Oct) from Zell am See Esplanade for a 45-minute round trip of the lake. Boats also shuttle across the lake, occasionally stopping at **Seecamp Zell am See** (one-way/return €2.75/4.60). But if you'd prefer to row your own, a number of places along the promenade hire out rowing boats, pedalos and motorboats. Pick of the bunch is **Bootsverleih Kurpark** (☎ 0664-358 17 95; pedalo/motorboat per hr €10.50/13.50; ☎ 9am-10pm Apr-Oct), situated close to the Grand Hotel.

ADVENTURE SPORTS

A one-stop daredevil shop is **Adventure Service** (☎ 735 25; www.adventureservice.at; Steinergerasse 9), which offers a long list of adrenaline-charged activities from tandem paragliding (€100) and white-water rafting (€44) to canyoning (€51 to €69), climbing (€41) and guided mountain-bike tours (€22 to €29).

There's also plenty of high-speed action on the water, such as knuckle-whitening waterskiing or wakeboarding at **Strandbad Thumersbach** (☎ 0664-206 85 06; Pocherweg 28). The breeze that blows down from the mountains

creates ideal conditions for windsurfing. To master the fine art of balancing on a board, slip on a wet suit and head for **Windsurfcener Zell am See** (☎ 551 15; Seespitzstrasse 13; half-/full-day course €27/44).

Festivals & Events

Zell am See celebrates two summer festivals on the shores of its glistening lake. The first is held in mid-July and attracts a lively crowd with its line-up of fireworks, live music and sports events. The second, in early August, stages concerts and costumed parades. The **Zell Summer Night** festival runs from June to August and draws Dixie bands, street entertainers and improvised theatre to the town's cobbled streets and squares every Wednesday night.

Sleeping

Zell am See's best beds can fill up in a flash during high season, so it's wise to book ahead. Aside from the top-end hotels by the lake, there are loads of cheap-and-cheerful private rooms about town, which usually add 5% to 10% for stays of less than three nights; ask the tourist office for a list of such places. Expect winter prices to be roughly 50% higher than the summer rates quoted below.

BUDGET

Seecamp Zell am See (☎ 721 15; www.seecamp.at; Thumersbacherstrasse 34; campsites per adult/child €7.90/4.70; ☎) If waking up to views of Grossglockner appeals, camp out at this tree-shaded site on the lakeshore. Facilities include a shop, restaurant and kids club. Guided mountain-bike and hiking tours are available.

Haus der Jugend (☎ 571 85; www.hostel-zell.at, in German; Seespitzstrasse 13; 6/4/2-bed dm €17.50/19.50/21.50; ☎) For budget digs on the lake, head to this hostel with a waterfront terrace and prime vistas of the peaks. There's a windsurfing school and volleyball court a few paces away. The centre is a 15-minute stroll along the shore.

Jugendherberge (☎ 470 36; www.lsh-zell.at, in German; Schmittenstrasse 27; dm €23.50; ☎) Next to Haus Haffner, this place is a cut above your average HI hostel. The four-bed dorms are spotlessly clean and facilities include bike hire (per day €10), internet access, a gym and restaurant.

Haus Haffner (☎ 723 96-0; www.haffner.at; Schmittenstrasse 29; s €27, d €48, apt €60-73; ☎) Tucked down a quiet backstreet near the ski lift, this cheery guesthouse has spacious rooms and

family apartments with rag rugs, kettles and chunky wood furniture (the owner is a cabinet maker!).

Pension Lindenthaler (☎ 572 21; Porscheallee 43; s/d €30/54; ☎) This pension in Schütteldorf scores points for its chirpy staff, terrace and free internet access. The comfy rooms were recently revamped and painted in sunny shades. It's a 25-minute walk along the promenade into town.

Landhaus Buchner (☎ 720 62; www.landhausbuchner.at; Schmittenstrasse 57; s/d €39/58; ☎) The twittering birds in the forest behind Landhaus Buchner are likely to be your wake-up call at this quaint Alpine chalet. A short toddle from the lake, the light-filled rooms are a great deal. The party hut in the garden is a welcome bonus.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Hubertus (☎ 724 27; www.hubertus-pension.at; Gartenstrasse 4; s/d €42/70; ☎) Facing the ski lift, Hubertus has made other guesthouses green with envy since being awarded the Austrian Eco-Label. The three-star chalet uses 100% renewable energy (solar and wind power), serves local organic produce and fair-trade coffee at breakfast. The rooms are country style with laminate floors, crisp linen and floral drapes.

Steinerwirt (☎ 725 02; www.steinerwirt.com; Schlossplatz 1; s/d €55/110; ☎) Steinerwirt has been around for donkey's years, but recently morphed into an arty boutique hotel. The light-filled rooms are defined by muted tones and untreated pinewood. Up in the attic, the Think Tank is a calm spot for early-morning meditation. The restaurant (open for both lunch and dinner) uses meat from Hohe Tauern pastures and fresh fish from the lake. Mains cost from €6 to €20.

Romantik Hotel zum Metzgerwirt (☎ 725 20; www.romantik-hotel.at; Sebastian-Hörl-Strasse 11; s €89-113, d €148-196, ste €199; ☎) Creeping ivy envelops this little love nest dating to 1493. It's the small details that matter here: from the roaring fire in the lounge to the 300-year-old apple tree in the garden. Guests can bathe beneath the stars in the solar-heated outdoor pool or in a chocolate-filled bath in the spa.

Grand Hotel (☎ 788-0; www.grandhotel.cc; Esplanade 4-6; s/d/ste €113/226/328; ☎) The *belle époque* beauty of Zell am See, this posh pad beside the lake has a private beach and waterfront spa that give it an exclusive air. The lobby is all chandeliers and sweeping staircases, while understated elegance sums

up the rooms. Hundertwasser's *Österreich-Brunnen* (Austria Fountain) adds a splash of colour outside.

Eating

Zell am See has a number of decent restaurants; many at the plush hotels afford mesmeric views of the lake. The pedestrianised centre is a melting pot of Austrian and world flavours. Fish plucked fresh from the lake features on practically every menu.

Kupferkessel (☎ 727 68; Brucker Bundesstrasse 18; mains €6-23; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, dinner Sun) Once upon a time this wacky place was a petrol station. It has now been reincarnated as a family-friendly restaurant, filling tummies instead of tanks with mammoth steaks and cheap pasta dishes. There are plenty of curios to feast your eyes on – from mounted Vespas to portraits framed in toilet seats.

China-Restaurant Fünf Planeten (☎ 701 34; Loferer Bundesstrasse 3; lunch €5.50-5.90, mains €7-11; ☎ lunch & dinner) Spicing up the centre is this Chinese den centred on a fish pond, where the midday crowds tuck into crispy spring rolls, beef with bean sprouts and huge plates of noodles.

Octopussy (☎ 470 42; Schlossplatz 2; mains €7-18.50; ☎ dinner) There's very little that's Bond about this Octopussy, but the fishy menu certainly delivers with juicy crustaceans, spinach-stuffed octopus and grilled calamari. Retreat to the terrace on warm summer evenings.

Ebenbergalm (☎ 0664-351 2307; Schmitten 38, Ebenburg; mains €8-12; ☎ lunch & dinner) Wild whiskered Günter and his (less hairy) sister, Gudrun, serve solid mountain fare at this little wooden hut near the top of the Ebenberg lift. Take a seat beside the tiled oven or on the panoramic terrace. You can walk up in around an hour or call for a lift (free pick-up from the town hotels).

Our pick Our's Lounge (☎ 772 44; Schlossplatz 5; mains €8-18; ☎ 10am-1am) Floor-to-ceiling glass walls, throne-like red velvet chairs and rotating exhibitions of modern art draw your attention to this sassy lounge bar. The vibe is young and the heated terrace jam-packed at weekends. The menu is a successful blend of Austrian and Mediterranean flavours – try the fresh scampi and vitamin-rich juices. There's free wi-fi for customers.

Zur Einkehr (☎ 723 63; Schmittenstrasse 12; mains €9.50-19; ☎ lunch & dinner winter, dinner Mon-Sat summer) Near the slopes, this barn-style bistro is a local favourite. Sticky spare ribs and seafood lasagne

are polished off nicely with a pear schnapps (or three) at the crescent-shaped bar.

Ristorante Giuseppe (☎ 72 37 35; Kirchengasse 1; pizza €6-9.50, mains €10-22; ☎ lunch & dinner) This upbeat bistro and café in the pedestrian-only centre hits the spot with Italian flavours. The antipasti and salads are tasty and the pizzas enormous. There's a pavement terrace and a rustic wood-panelled restaurant upstairs.

Zum Hirschen (☎ 774; Dreifaltigkeitsgasse 1; mains €14-25; ☎ lunch & dinner) This smart restaurant creates an intimate mood with warm pine panelling, flickering candles and friendly yet discreet service. Signature dishes include Pinzgauer *Kasnocken* (cheese noodles) and crispy pork drenched in beer sauce.

Self-caterers can stock up on supplies at a number of supermarkets in the centre, including **Spar** (Brucker Bundesstrasse 4).

Drinking

Zell am See's nightlife gathers momentum in winter when ski bums descend on the town in droves. The following watering holes are also lively in summer high season.

B17 (☎ 474 24; Salzmannstrasse 2; ☎ 5pm-2am Mon-Sat) This corrugated shack is stuck in a WWII time warp. The shell recreates a B17 bomber and is festooned with engines, army combats and fighter-plane pictures. The cheery barman mixes excellent fresh fruit cocktails and the measures are generous. Check out the heated roof terrace and free sweets in the loos.

Insider (☎ 739 69; Kreuzgasse 1; ☎ 7pm-4am) This groovy underground haunt with blood red walls and neon light panels lures a young crowd with its daily cocktail specials (the frozen daiquiris and lychee shots pack a punch). DJ Rudi spins mostly funk, and up-and-coming bands perform here three times a week.

Villa Crazy Daisy (☎ 725 26; Salzmannstrasse 8; ☎ 9pm-4am) The maddest cow in town, Daisy rocks in high season and is the place for full-on après-ski parties in winter. The raucous drinking hole occupies a rambling villa next to the Grand Hotel; head upstairs for live music, DJs and lots of slapstick fun.

Getting There & Away

Train destinations from Zell am See include Salzburg (€12.70, 1¼ hours, hourly), Kitzbühel (€9.90, 45 minutes, every two hours) and Innsbruck (€23.30, two hours, every two hours). You can hire bikes at any of the sports shops in town.

Buses leave from outside the *Bahnhof* (train station) and the bus station behind the post office. They run to various destinations, including Kaprun (€2.80, 20 minutes, hourly) and Krimml Falls (€8.70, 1½ hours, hourly). For details of buses to Lienz via Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Höhe, see p318.

Zell am See is on Hwy 311 running north to Lof, where it joins Hwy 312, which connects St Johann in Tyrol with Salzburg (passing through Germany). It's also just a few kilometres north of the east-west highway linking St Johann im Pongau with Tyrol (via the Gerlos Pass).

KRIMML

☎ 06564 / pop 890 / elev 1076m

Most people come to Krimml for the mountains, fresh air and pure water – all 380m of it. The mighty roar of the three-tier **Krimmler Wasserfälle** (Krimml Falls) echoes through the valley. Hung in mist, the brilliance of Europe's highest waterfall illuminates the deep-green pine forest like a spotlight in the dark. It's worthy of all the attention it gets, but spare a little time for Krimml's other charms – alpine pastures, vistas of Grossvenediger and the earthy authenticity of a village that hasn't yet let fame go to its pretty head.

Orientation & Information

The Krimml Falls are on the northwestern fringes of the national park, within the protected area. The village is about 500m north of the falls, on a side turning from Hwy 165. There are parking spaces (€4 per day) near the path to the falls, which branches to the right just before the toll booths for the Gerlos Pass road (see p318).

The **tourist office** (☎ 72 39; www.krimml.at; ☎ 8am-noon, 2.30-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 8.30-10.30am Sat) is in the village centre next to the white church. The post office is next door.

Sights & Activities

Near the entrance to the falls is **Wasserwunderwelt** (adult/child €7/3.50; ☎ 9.30am-5pm May-Oct), a water-related theme park with loads of hands-on activities for kids – from physics experiments to art installations and outdoor games where the aim is to get completely soaked.

Krimml's star attraction is, of course, the waterfall itself and the best way to get up close and feel the spray is to walk the **Wasserfallweg** trail (see Krimml Falls Loop, p104). The lower

levels are crawling with day-trippers in summer but the further you climb the quieter the path becomes. The **ticket & information offices** (☎ 201 13; adult/child €1.80/0.50, free Dec-Apr; ☎ ticket office 8am-6pm May-Nov, unattended Dec-Apr) are a few minutes' walk along the path.

Sleeping & Eating

Krimml is easily visited as a day trip from Zell am See. It's a shame to hurry, though, as this unspoilt village has some beautiful places in which to stay; many are set on a hillside overlooking the falls. The staff at Krimml tourist office can help arrange accommodation. Winter prices are roughly a third higher than those given here.

Höhlzahnalm (☎ 0664-402 68 78; www.hoelzahn.at; dm adult/child €18/12; ☎ May-Oct) High above the falls, this wood-shingled farmhouse is a superb budget choice. You'll need to do the legwork, but that makes the *Kaspressknödel* (dumpling in gooey Pinzgauer cheese) all the more welcome. The ecofriendly chalet generates its own electricity, uses natural spring water and has comfy bunks for weary walkers upstairs.

Hotel Klockerhaus (☎ 72 28; Wasserfallstrasse 10; www.klockerhaus.at; s/d €39/68; ☎) This family-run hotel has a unique claim to fame: it nurtures the largest free-roaming guinea-pig colony in Salzburgerland. What you'll get is also more than just a hutch – neat and tidy rooms with balconies, views of the falls while you eat breakfast, an untreated pool and plenty to entertain the tots (a playground, goats and ubiquitous racing rodents).

Our pick Heimathaus Anton Wallner (☎ 71 17 67; Oberkrimml 8; apt €68-250) Way up there on Austria's most quirky list, this rickety chalet has heaps of charisma, with crooked beams and lantern-lit corridors that creak under the weight of their 400-year history. Owner Herbert has poured both love and labour into renovating the gorgeous apartments, where the horn-sledge beds (ask for the *Schlittenzimmer*) come with old-fashioned stripy nightcaps. The sign on the gate says: *Wanderer und andere lustige Leut willkommen* (Walkers and other fun-loving folk welcome). If you fit either or both of these categories, come on in.

La Piazza (☎ 75 34; Oberkrimml 94; mains €6-12; ☎ dinner) After walking your socks off in the mountains, this central taverna fills the gap with its large helpings of spaghetti and pizzas from a wood-fired oven.

Getting There & Away

Buses run all year from Zell am See to Krimml (€8.70, 1½ hours, last return bus 5pm). The Krimml Falls path begins near the starting point of the *Tauernradweg* (cycle path) to Salzburg (175km) and Passau (325km).

GERLOS PASS

This High Alpine pass links the Zillertal (p346) in Tyrol to Krimml in Salzburgerland, zigzagging 12km through high moor and spruce forest and reaching an elevation of 1630m. The viewpoint above the turquoise *Stausee* (reservoir) is a great spot to pause for a picnic and tremendous views of the Alps. On the approach to Krimml near Schönmoosalm, there are also fine vistas of the Krimml Falls. The pass is open year-round and there is a toll: €7 for cars and €4 for motorcycles.

Buses make the trip between Krimml and Zell am Ziller (one-way including toll €8.70, 1½ hours) in Tyrol from 1 July to 30 September. By car, you can avoid using the toll road by following the (easy-to-miss) signs to Wald im Pinzgau, 6km north of Krimml.

GROSSGLOCKNER ROAD

Surely one of Europe's greatest drives, the snaking **Grossglockner Road** (Grossglockner Hochalpenstrasse; ☎ 065-46 650; toll per car/motorcycle €28/18; ☎ 6am-8pm May-15 Jun, 5pm-9.30pm 16 Jun-15 Sep, 6am-7.30pm 16 Sep-Oct) is a 1930s feat of engineering and a feast of perpendicular towers, ice blue glaciers and razor-sharp peaks. If the 43km highway doesn't take your breath away with its hairpin bends, the incredible views of Grossglockner ringed by snowy peaks should do the trick.

Linking Bruck in Salzburgerland to Heiligenblut in Carinthia, the former Roman trade route comprises 36 stomach-churning switchbacks, passing gemstone lakes, pine forest and high pastures streaked with waterfalls. As the hills are steep, the easiest way to tackle them is by car or motorbike. If you're fighting fit and fancy a challenge, however, a free and more carbon-neutral alternative is to get on your bike and pedal it. The going is pretty tough uphill but the downhill stretches are exhilarating.

Just before the start of the tour, you'll reach **Wildpark Ferleiten** (☎ 06546-220; www.wildpark-ferleiten.at; adult/child €5.50/3; ☎ 8am-dusk May-Nov), a 15-hectare reserve home to 200 Alpine animals such as chamois, marmots and bears. Kids

can let off steam in the playgrounds or on the mini-roller coasters.

Once through the tollgate, the road begins to climb steeply. Situated at 2260m is the **Alpine Nature Museum** (admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm), screening films on local flora and fauna. A little further along, a 2km side road (no coaches allowed) cuts a path through a wall of ice up to **Edelweiss Spitze** (2577m), the highest viewpoint on the route with a lookout tower affording 360-degree views of more than 30 peaks of 3000m. You can refuel with coffee and strudel on the terrace at the hut.

Soon you'll want your camera handy for **Fuscher Törl** (2428m), commanding superb vistas on both sides of the ridge, and the petrol blue lake at nearby **Fuscher Lacke** (2262m). Here there is a small exhibition that vividly documents the construction of the road; originally conceived as a way of beating the economic depression of the 1930s, it was built by 3000 men over the course of five years.

Hochtor (2504m) is the second-highest point on the pass, after which there is a steady descent to **Guttal** (1950m). Here the road splits: to the east lies Heiligenblut and the route to Lienz, while to the west is the 9km **Gletscherstrasse** (Glacier Road). Following the Gletscherstrasse, the initial views south to Heiligenblut are fantastic, yet soon your attention is drawn to the looming Grossglockner massif. The road features signs warning *Achtung Murmeliere* (Beware of marmots); keep an eye out for burrowing rodents along the way.

The Gletscherstrasse emerges at **Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Höhe** (2369m), where there is a visitor's centre with mountain-themed displays. It's a stupendous viewpoint from which to admire Austria's highest peak, Grossglockner, and the 9km **Pasterze Glacier**, a swirl of fissured ice that shimmers when the light hits it. Steps lead down to the edge of the glacier which, despite its majestic appearance, is receding at a disastrous rate because of global warming (it has shrunk to half its size over the past 150 years and is predicted to disappear entirely within 100 years). A popular walk taking in the glacier is Gamsgrubenweg, a trail that winds above the glacier and leads to a waterfall (allow roughly 1½ to two hours return).

Getting There & Away

Bus 5002 operates between Lienz and Heiligenblut nine times a day from Monday

WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Anyone who wants to get out and stride through the Hohe Tauern National Park should consider signing up for one of the back-to-nature guided tours led by a team of well-informed rangers. From July to September, Hohe Tauern offers 36 hikes (11 are free with a guest card) that aim to get every last lovely drop out of the reserve. The broad spectrum covers everything from herb discovery trails to High Alpine hikes, around-the-glacier tours, gorge climbing, wildlife spotting (bring your binoculars), and early morning mountain photography courses. For the complete programme and price list, visit www.nationalpark.at.

to Friday (€7.10, one hour); services are less frequent at weekends. From 24 June to 23 September, four buses run from Monday to Friday and three at weekends between Heiligenblut and Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Höhe (€3.90, 30 minutes). The buses connect neatly so that you can spend time in Heiligenblut and at Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Höhe and still do the trip in one day. From 3 June to 23 September, bus 651 runs twice daily between Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Höhe and Zell am See (€10.30, 1½ hours). Add an extra €2 per person to these fares to cover the toll.

HEILIGENBLUT

☎ 04824 / pop 1200 / elev 1301m

One of the single-most striking images on the Grossglockner Road is Heiligenblut, the needle-thin spire of its pilgrimage church framed by the glaciated summit of Grossglockner. The village's iconic scenery and easy access to the mountains draws skiers, hikers and (less-loveable) hordes of camera-toting tourists; stay overnight or get here early to avoid the crowds. The compact centre is lined with log chalets and, despite an overload of yodel-when-you-press-me kitsch, still retains some traditional charm.

Information

National park information office (☎ 27 00; www.hohetauern.at; ☎ 10am-5pm daily late May-early Oct, 3-6pm winter) In the Gästehaus Schober; has some museum exhibits. From 4pm to 5pm Monday to Friday someone from the Bergführerinformationsbüro (mountain guides office) gives advice on climbing and walking.

Tourist office (☎ 20 01 21; www.heiligenblut.at;

☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon & 4-6pm Sat Jul-Aug, 9am-6pm Mon-Fri Dec-Apr, rest of the year 9am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon & 4-6pm Sat) On the main street, close to the Hotel Post bus stop. Books mountain guides.

Sights & Activities

Soaring skywards and clearly visible from the Gletscherstrasse, the **church** steeple of Heiligenblut demands attention. Steeped in legend, the 15th-century pilgrimage church shelters statues of saints and a fine late-Gothic altar. The tabernacle is purported to contain a tiny phial of Christ's blood – hence the name of the village (*Heiligenblut* means 'holy blood') – which was discovered in the possession of a saint named Briccius. He was buried in an avalanche on this spot more than a thousand years ago.

Heiligenblut's 55km of snow-sure slopes (geared towards beginners and intermediates) and a Bobo's Kids' Club make Heiligenblut a top choice for families. Most of the **skiing** takes place on Schareck (2604m) and Gjaidtroghöhe (2969m) peaks. A one-day local lift pass costs €34 and will also get you into other resorts in Carinthia and East Tyrol. In summer, **mountaineering** is a popular pursuit (see p312). Inquire at the tourist office for details of mountain-bike trails in the park.

Sleeping & Eating

Heiligenblut has a smattering of places to stay and eat, with most clustered around the village centre. Private rooms usually offer the best value and the tourist office can make bookings. Expect rates to increase 20% to 30% in winter.

Camping Grossglockner (☎ 20 48; Hadergasse 11; campsites per adult/child/car €6.90/3/2.50; (P)) Open year-round, this green and pleasant site on the outskirts of the village features a restaurant and affords prime vistas of Grossglockner.

Jugendherberge (☎ 22 59; www.oehv.or.at; Hof 36; dm/r €18.40/26.40; ☎ reception 7-10am & 5-8pm; (P)) Near the church, this chalet-style HI hostel has light, spacious dorms and handy extras including ski storage and a common room. It's right next to the public swimming pool, sauna and climbing wall.

Hotel Senger (☎ 22 15; www.romantic.at; Hof 23; s/d €64/130; (P) (A)) The colourful prayer flags fluttering at this farmhouse are a tribute to the Tibetan monks that stayed here during a visit to Austria. There is a real sense of being

stuck in the mountains – think stone floors, open fireplaces and plenty of cosy nooks. All of the snug-as-a-bug rooms have balconies except room 24, which offers Grossglockner views instead.

Café Dorfstüberl (☎ 20 19; Hof 5; mains €7-12; ☒ lunch & dinner) Opening onto a tiny terrace, this smoky local den dishes up hearty, reasonably priced food. The *halbes Hendl* (half a roasted chicken) with a mound of potato salad goes down well.

Die Casa (☎ 20 28; Hof 9; mains €8-14; ☒ lunch & dinner) Step back to the 16th century at this alpine hut, where the walls are festooned with ram's heads, ploughs and leather boots. The first mountaineers to climb Grossglockner supped here, so expect wholesome fare (the grill platter and sander fillet are favourites). Retreat to the patio for stunning views.

Getting There & Away

As well as buses running to/from Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Höhe from late June to September, there is a year-round service to/from Lienz (see p318).

BAD GASTEIN

☎ 06434 / pop 6100 / elev 1000m

Bad Gastein runs hot and cold: thermal waters gush from its hot springs and deep powder beckons skiers to the slopes of the Gasteiner Tal (Gastein Valley). A far cry from your chocolate-box Austrian ski resort, this grand old dame is spiritually somewhere between Brighton and St Moritz. The town exudes an air of 19th-century gentility with sublime *belle époque* villas, scintillating spas and higgledy-piggledy streets that afford glimpses of the Gasteiner Ache falls. The elixir of life? Take a deep breath and plunge into the radon-rich waters to find out...

Orientation & Information

Clinging precipitously to the valley slopes, Bad Gastein's winding streets are punctuated with scenic viewpoints. Tumbling through the centre in a series of waterfalls is the Gasteiner Ache. Its thundering waters can be heard throughout the valley. The *Bahnhof* is to the west of town and the central hub, Kongressplatz, down the hill to the east; make your way down near the Hotel Salzburger Hof.

Post office (Bahnhofplatz 9; ☒ 8am-noon & 2-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 8-10am Sat) Next to the train station.

Tourist office (☎ 06432-3393 560; www.gastein.com; Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Strasse 27; ☒ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & 10am-2pm Sun high season) To get here, go left from the train station exit and walk down the hill. Staff will find you accommodation free of charge. There's information on the national park in the foyer.

Sights

Bad Gastein still mirrors the grandeur of its 19th-century heyday, with *belle époque* villas and elegant hotels hugging its sheer cliffs. The best way to soak up the resort's ambience is by strolling its steep streets and manicured gardens.

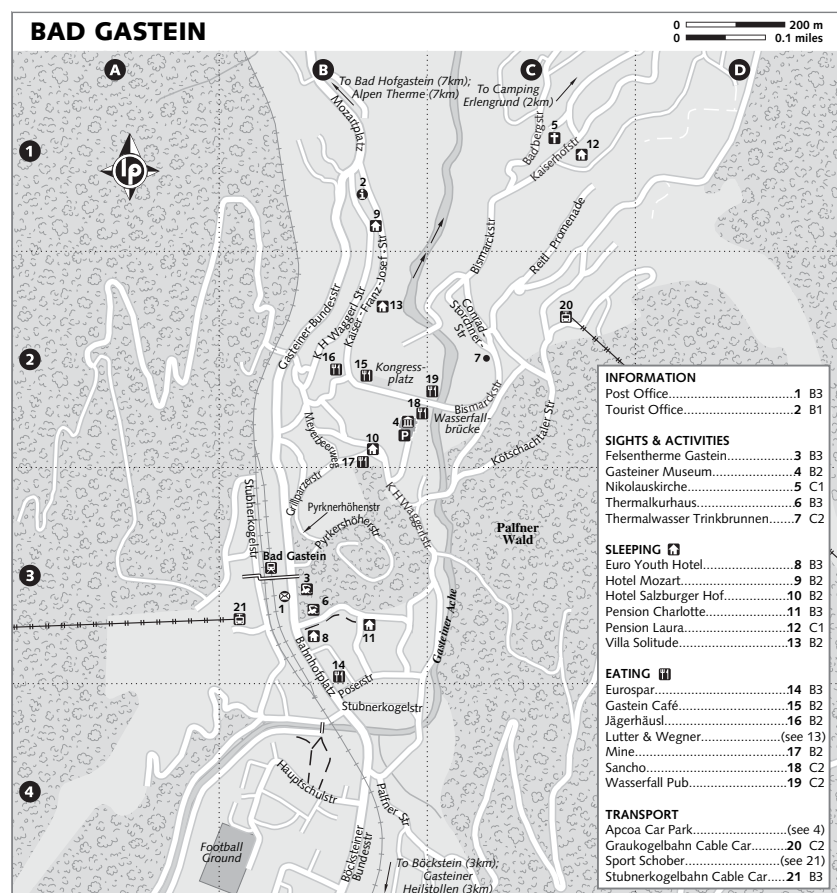
Worth a peek on the way down to the waterfall is the **Gasteiner Museum** (☎ 3488; 2nd fl, Haus Austria, Kongressplatz; adult/child €3/free; ☒ 10.30am-noon & 3.30-6pm, closed Nov & May). The collection is small but ambitious, spanning everything from minerals (including a 76kg-heavy rock crystal) to Stone Age artefacts, devilish *Krampus* (devil) costumes, vintage tourist posters and 19th-century oil paintings of Bad Gastein.

The nearby stone Wasserfallbrücke (waterfall bridge) is a great lookout point over the 341m-high **Gasteiner Ache** falls. Raging through the town and cascading into three brilliant turquoise pools, the waterfall has inspired painters and poets over the ages, and the negatively ionised air here is famed for its therapeutic benefits. The *Wasserfallweg* (waterfall trail) shadows the magnificent cataract.

Situated in the lower part of town, the late-Gothic **Nikolauskirche** (Bismarkstrasse) is a little gem of a church, tiled with wood shingles and built around a central pillar. Its interior is simple yet beautiful with an uneven flagstone floor, baroque altar and rudimentary frescoes that are fading with age. Look out for the statue of 16th-century physician Paracelsus outside.

Activities

Bad Gastein is famous for its **radon-laced waters**, which seep down from the mountains, heat up to temperatures of 44°C to 47°C around 2000m underground, then gush forth at 18 different springs in the area. Renowned since the Middle Ages for their healing properties, the thermal waters are said to repair human cells, alleviate rheumatism, boost potency and alleviate menopausal problems. Strauss and Sissi (Empress Elisabeth) both put the waters' benefits to the test; the empress was so impressed that she penned a poem beginning:



'Only sick bones I thought of bringing, where mystically your hot water springs...

The product of 3000 years of geological forces, the radon is absorbed through the skin and retained in the body for nearly three hours. Most people take the cure by bathing in the radon-rich waters of the spa, but **vapour tunnels** burrowed deep in the rock and emitting radon gases are used for more intensive treatments. To sample the magical waters without splashing out, make the pilgrimage to **Thermalwasser Trinkbrunnen**. You can slurp or bottle the water for free at this fountain beside the Gasteiner Ache – two to six cups per day are recommended for glowing health.

A great glass elevator zooms from street level up to **Felsentherme Gastein** (☎ 222 30;

Bahnhofplatz 5; 3hr/day ticket adult €17.50/19.50, child €10/12; ☒ 9am-9pm Apr-Nov, 9am-10pm Dec-Mar), where you can take the rejuvenating waters. The spa shelters grottos, an adventure pool for kids and an outdoor thermal bath with pummeling massage jets, and superlative views of the mountains. Curative massages, radon baths and electrotherapy are available next door in the **Thermalkurhaus** (Bahnhofplatz 9; ☒ 8am-noon, 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat).

In winter Bad Gastein's slopes and spas are a match made in heaven; a place where you can cruise challenging red runs before indulging in a little radon therapy. **Skiing** and **snowboarding** are centred on Stubnerkogel (2246m) and Graukogel (2492m), where the varied terrain is aimed mostly at intermediates.

The resort is part of the expansive Sportwelt Amadé arena, comprising 865km of slopes. A day ski pass in the high winter season costs €38. **Cross-country skiing** is also big news in Bad Gastein, with 90km of prepared *Loipe* (tracks) including a floodlit trail at Bockstein (3km south of Bad Gastein). **Sport Schober** (☎ 32 68-0; Stubnerkogel; ☞ 8am-6pm) rents skis for around €20 and cross-country sets for €11 per day.

When the weather warms, both Stubnerkogel and Graukogel are excellent for **walking**, with plenty of high-altitude trails traversing Alpine pastures and craggy peaks. The two-section Stubnerkogelbahn cable car near Bad Gastein's train station costs €15 return. The Graukogelbahn cable car, 300m northeast of the centre, is the same price. From June to September, the tourist office organises daily guided walks and can give tips on family favourites such as llama trekking.

Sleeping

Pick up a list of budget hostels and private rooms from the tourist office. Some of the resort's *belle époque* hotels feature their own spas and are surprisingly affordable. Expect rates in the winter high season to be roughly 30% higher than those quoted in these listings.

Camping Erlengrund (☎ 27 90; www.kurcamping-gastein.at; Erlengrundstrasse 6; campsites per adult/child/tent €7/4/7.50; ☎ ☞ ☞) Close to a natural lake, this campsite offers shady pitches and, in summer, a heated pool. It's 2km north of Bad Gastein in Kötschachdorf and accessible by buses departing from the train station.

Euro Youth Hotel (☎ 233 00; www.euro-youth-hotel.at; Bahnhofplatz 8; dm/s/d €16.45/25/40; ☞ closed Apr & Oct-Nov; ☎ ☞) These backpacker digs occupy a rambling turn-of-the-century manor. The superb facilities include a restaurant, TV lounge and barbecue area. Ask the staff about adventure sports such as rafting and canyoning (costing about €38 per day) and bike hire (€10 per day). The hostel is 50m from the slopes and spa.

Pension Laura (☎ 27 04; Bismarckstrasse 20; s/d €24/42; ☎) Opposite Nikolauskirche, this pension's rooms teeter on the old-fashioned with loads of wood panelling and gingham, but they're cosy and good value. The restaurant downstairs has a gamey menu and walls smothered in stuffed animals.

Pension Charlotte (☎ 24 26; Paracelsusstrasse 6; s/d €25/50) Hidden down a side alley, this guest-house is run by the super-friendly Weghofer

family and their docile Great Dane, Aramis. It's a homy place with a flower garden and plenty of curios – from handcarved *Krampus* masks to chattering budgies. The bright, spotless rooms open onto balconies overlooking the forest and mountains.

Hotel Mozart (☎ 268 60; www.hotelmozart.at; Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Strasse 25; s/d €46/82; ☎ ☞) With a name that reflects the founder's passion for Mozart melodies, this smart three-star place pushes the right buttons with professional service, a radon-rich thermal bath and sunny, spacious rooms (some have balconies). The high-ceilinged breakfast room is glammed up with polished cherry wood, chandeliers and portraits of the virtuosos.

Villa Solitude (☎ 51 01; www.villasolitude.com; Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Strasse 16; ste €150-250; ☎ ☞) The one-time home of an Austrian countess, this 19th-century villa shelters six suites crammed with oil paintings and antiques. The intimate salon downstairs is the place to slip into your role as lord or lady of the manor beside the grand piano. Lutter & Wegner is next door (see below).

Hotel Salzburger Hof (☎ 203 70; www.salzburgerhof.com; Grillparzerstrasse 1; s/d 103/176; ☎ ☞ ☞) This *belle époque* beauty is knocking 100, but still charms the birds from the trees with her lemon-meringue façade and lavish interior. The lobby is swanky with chandeliers and a roaring fire, while the rooms are dressed with plush fabrics and polished wood. Other pluses include a galleried piano lounge, kids' play area and a spa offering thermal baths, whirlpools and indulgent treatments.

Eating & Drinking

Bad Gastein has a generous sprinkling of restaurants, cafés and snack bars; most line up along Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Strasse and offer appetising views of the thundering Gasteiner Ache.

Mine (☎ 301 41; Grillparzerstrasse 14; snacks €3-5.50; ☞ noon-1am summer, 9am-1pm winter) Crimson walls, cushion-filled nooks and wi-fi create a hip vibe at Mine – hands-down the best spot for a quick beer or bite to eat. The snacks are scrawled on a blackboard – try the delicious tortilla wraps.

Jägerhäusl (☎ 202 54; Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Strasse 9; mains €6.50-10; ☞ lunch & dinner) A zesty lemon-and-lime paint job and arched windows give this galleried villa an avant-garde twist. The menu is packed with Austrian staples such

as tender beef and smoked trout, which are served on the maple tree-shaded terrace when the sun's out.

Gastein Café (☎ 50 97; Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Strasse 4; mains €6-14; ☞ lunch & dinner) Gastein Café is popular for its enormous terrace and smorgasbord of cuisines from Austria, Italy and virtually every other country under the sun. Dishes range from salmon-and-shrimp pizza to the humorously named *Pongauer Kasnocken* (a cheesy pasta dish).

Wasserfall Pub (☎ 54 70; Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Strasse 2; mains €6-14; ☞ lunch & dinner) The name makes no secret of the fact that this no-frills pub is right opposite the falls. There are a handful of tables outside where you can drink in the view over sizeable portions of pasta and schnitzel.

Sancho (☎ 217 62; Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Strasse 1; mains €12.50-18.50; ☞ dinner) Kitsch, colourful and as lively as a Mexican jumping bean, Sancho is a flamboyant affair decked out with dangling sombreros, stuffed cockatoos and Mayan murals. The jalapeno peppers and burritos are tasty, but the sizzling steaks are the stars of the show – thick, juicy and drenched in salsa.

Lutter & Wegner (☎ 510 11; Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Strasse 16; mains €15-24; ☞ lunch & dinner Fri-Sun, dinner Tue-Thu) The fairy-tale tower setting, fusion cuisine and terrace overlooking the Gasteiner Ache make this smart restaurant at Villa Solitude a top choice. Fine wines (choose from 180 bottles) accompany flavours such as porcini risotto and creole lamb curry.

Supermarkets in town include the **Eurospar** (☎ 60 01; Bocksteiner Bundesstrasse; ☞ 8am-7pm Mon-Thu, 8am-7.30pm Fri, 7.30am-5pm Sat) south of the train station.

Getting There & Away

IC express trains trundle through Bad Gastein's station every two hours, connecting the town to points north and south including Spittal-Millstättersee (€9.90, 40 minutes), Salzburg (€12.70, 1½ hours) and Innsbruck (€30.20, three hours). When travelling north from Bad Gastein to Bad Hofgastein, sit on the right side of the train for the best views.

If you're driving south, you'll need to use the Autoschleuse Tauernbahn (railway car-shuttle service) through the tunnel that starts at Bockstein (€18 one-way).

AROUND BAD GASTEIN

Stepping three kilometres south of Bad Gastein, you reach the unassuming village of

Bockstein, whose medieval gold mine has been reinvented as a much-celebrated health centre, the **Gasteiner Heilstollen** (Gastein Healing Gallery; ☎ 375 30; www.gasteiner-heilstollen.com; ☞ mid-Jan-late Oct). Visitors board a small train at the Gasteiner Heilstollen that chugs 2km into the depths of Radhausberg mountain, where you absorb the healing radon vapours. The trial session costs €26, while the full three-week cure will set you back €513 (includes 10 entries to the tunnel).

Seven kilometres north of Bad Gastein is the sibling spa town of **Bad Hofgastein** (858m), where the big draw is the state-of-the-art **Alpen Therme** (☎ 06432-829 30; www.alpentherme.com; Senator-Wilhelm-Wilfling-Platz 1; adult/child €19.50/12; ☞ 9am-9pm Sat-Wed, 9am-11pm Thu, 9am-10pm Fri). This mammoth spa is split into six different worlds, where experiences stretch from relaxing in radon-rich thermal baths to racing down white-knuckle flumes. The sauna village comprises brine grottos, loft saunas, red-hot Finnish saunas and an ice-cold plunge pool. For some pampering, pop over to the beauty centre offering treatments such as goat's milk wraps and silky smooth hot-chocolate massages.

Bad Gastein, Bad Hofgastein and Bockstein are linked by both bus and rail. There are two access roads to the national park (with parking spaces at each road's terminus): the toll road (€4 per car – price included in the ski pass; see opposite) to Sportgastein; and the road that turns east just south of Bad Gastein and follows the Kötschachtal.

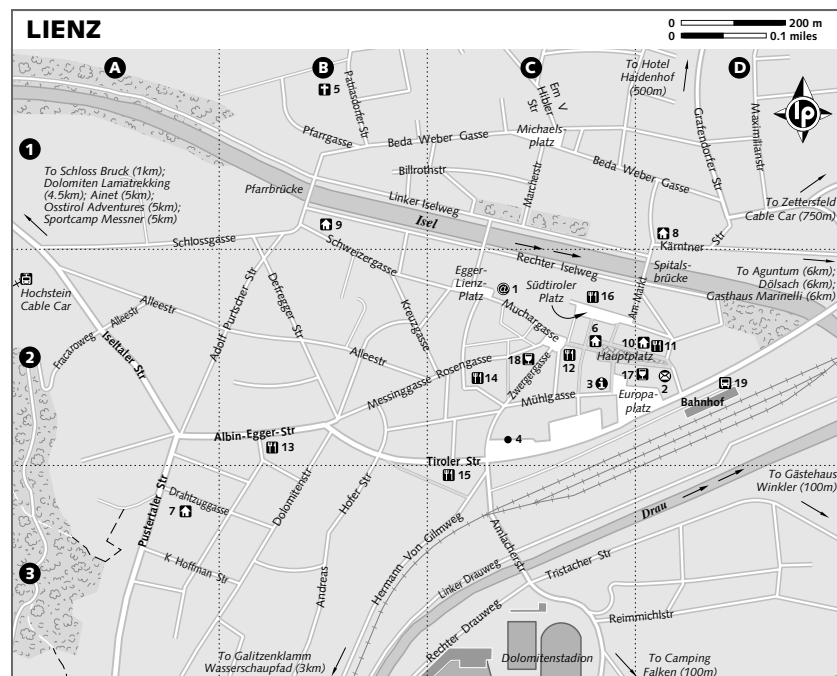
LIENZ

☎ 04852 / pop 13,000 / elev 673m

With the jagged Dolomites on its doorstep, Lienz dishes up Italian charm around its cobble centre, where chirpy locals kick back with *gelato* (ice cream) in the palm-studded square. Just 40km north of Italy, this snippet of East Tyrol expertly blends big wilderness with cultural clout: the glacial Isel River, Roman treasures and a medieval castle brimming with art are all there for the savouring. But it's the mountains that really demand attention – austere beauties piercing the town's southern skyline and looking their best when the last of the sun makes their pinnacles blush.

Orientation

The town centre is within a 'V' formed by the junction of the rivers Isel and Drau. The pivotal Hauptplatz is directly in front of the train station; three other squares lead from it



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(Europaplatz, Südtiroler Platz and Bozener Platz). Hauptplatz has lots of parking in its *Kurzparkzone*, with a 90-minute limit during indicated hours.

Information

The Osttirol Card, available from the tourist office, gives free access to cable cars, pools and museums. It costs €35/17.50 per adult/child for eight days and is valid from June to September.

Library (☎ 639 72; Muchargasse 4; ☎ 9am–noon & 3–7pm Tue & Thur, 9am–1pm & 3–6pm Wed & Fri, 9am–noon Sat) Free internet access at four terminals.

Osttirol Werbung (☎ 653 33; www.osttirol.com) For information about the wider East Tyrol area. The office sends out information, but isn't set up for visits.

Post office (Bozener Platz 1; ☎ 7.30am–6.30pm Mon–Fri, 8–11am Sat) Opposite the train station.

Tourist office (☎ 652 65; www.lienz-tourismus.at; Europaplatz 1; ☎ 8am–6pm Mon–Fri, 9am–noon & 5–7pm Sat Jul–mid-Sep, 10–noon Sun Jul & Aug) Staff will help you find accommodation (even private rooms) free of charge.

Sights

STADTPFARRKIRCHE ST ANDRÄ

A Gothic gem just north of the Isel River, **Stadtpfarrkirche St Andrä** (St Andrew's church; ☎ 621 60; Pfarrgasse 4; ☎ daylight hr) is a quiet spot for

contemplation. Peer inside the rib-vaulted interior to see 14th-century frescoes and a pair of tombstones sculpted in red Salzburg marble. Its hidden gem is the solemn **Kriegergedächtniskapelle** (war memorial chapel) sheltering Albin Egger-Lienz's eye-catching sculpture of Jesus in nought but a skimpy loin cloth, which scandalised the Vatican when it was unveiled to the public in 1925. To visit the chapel, pick up the key that hangs on the door at Pfarrgasse 13 (across the bridge facing the main entrance).

SCHLOSS BRUCK

Lienz's biggest stunner is this medieval fortress situated slightly west of town. Once the seat of the counts of Görzt, the hilltop castle now houses the **Heimatsmuseum** (☎ 625 80; Schlossberg 1; adult/child €7/2.50; ☎ 10am–6pm Palm Sunday–1 Nov), which chronologically runs through Tyrol's heritage in its atmospheric rooms, displaying everything from oil paintings to Cold War memorabilia. The tower rotates exhibitions of avant-garde works and is worth climbing for exhilarating views over Lienz. The real highlight, however, is the sprawling gallery devoted to the emotive works of Albin Egger-Lienz (1868–1926), whose brushstrokes reveal recurring themes of toil, conflict and death. Among his masterpieces are the *Totentanz* (Dance of Death) and *Das Kreuz* (The Cross). When asked what he was working on shortly before he died in 1926, the artist bluntly replied '*Ich bin fertig*' (I have finished).

AGUNTUM

This **Roman archaeological site** (☎ 615 50; www.aguntum.info; Stribach 97; adult/child €5/3; ☎ 9.30am–4pm Apr–May & mid-Sep–Oct, 9.30am–6pm Jun–mid-Sep), with an ultramodern museum to boot, is unique in these parts. Excavations are still under way to piece together the jigsaw puzzle of this 2000-year-old *municipium*, which flourished as a centre of trade and commerce under Emperor Claudius. Take a stroll outside to glimpse the Roman spa, artisan quarter and a reconstructed villa. The glass-walled museum explores Lienz's Roman roots in greater depth, with interactive stuff for the kids (a virtual tour through Aguntum and dress-up costumes) and an exhibition featuring fun elements such as traditional Roman recipes. Sow's udder with sea urchins, anyone?

Activities

SKIING

The skiing in Lienz is geared mainly towards beginners and intermediates, with just a handful of knee-trembling black runs. Its downhill offer is not huge by Austrian standards, but the views of the rugged Dolomites are awesome. Most of the action takes place around **Zettlersfeld**, where a cable car and five lifts whizz skiers up to slopes reaching between 1660m and 2278m. Slightly west of Lienz, **Hochstein** (2057m) is also popular for its groomed pistes; a free bus runs from the train station to the cable-car valley stations in summer and winter high seasons. One-day ski passes for both mountains cost €28.50 and the ski lifts run from 1 December to Easter, depending on snow. Multiday passes (eg two days for €70) cover all of East Tyrol's ski lifts (see www.topski.at, in German, for full ski-pass details). Several peaceful cross-country trails also criss-cross the valley. Ski hire (from various outlets in town) starts at €20 per day, including boots, while cross-country equipment will set you back around €10.

WALKING

The tourist office can advise on the high-altitude trails that wriggle around the steep peaks of the Dolomites. For something more family-oriented, check out the **Galitzenklamm Wasserschaufad** (☎ 0664-1567 457; adult/child €3/2; ☎ 9am–6pm Jul & Aug, 10am–5pm Jun & Sep, 10am–5pm Sat & Sun May & Oct, closed winter), a specially built walkway that clings to sheer cliffs above the gorge of the Drauf. To get there, head for Leisach, 3km from Lienz.

You'd be forgiven for thinking you were in the Andes when on a trek with Karl-Peter, who runs **Dolomiten Lamatrekking** (☎ 680 87; www.dolomitenlama.at; Oberlienz 36; 2hr trek €30; ☎ year-round) and is a dab hand at getting those stubborn llamas to walk his way. The llamas obligingly lug the heavy packs, leaving walkers free to enjoy the stunning Hohe Tauern scenery. Tours take place come snow or shine and stretch from two-hour taster sessions to four-day uphill hikes.

The cable cars spring back to life for the summer season (June to September). The ride up to Hochstein costs €11 return, while Zettlersfeld costs €10, or €17 including the chairlift to 2214m. Family and child fares are also available. If you're planning on making more than one trip, it makes sense to buy the Osttirol

Card. Both lifts are run by **Lienz Bergbahnen** (☎ 639 75; Zetttersfeldstrasse 38).

CYCLING

A network of mountain-bike trails radiates from Lienz, taking in the striking landscape of the Dolomites. Ask the tourist office for the map *Rad und Mountainbike Karte Osttirol*, which details cycling routes. **Probike Lienz** (☎ 735 36; Amlacherstrasse 1a; half-/full-day €13/18; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) is the most central place to hire your own set of wheels.

ADVENTURE SPORTS

The foaming rivers, narrow gorges and pine forests of the Dolomites around Lienz are the perfect place for adrenaline-pumping sports such as white-water rafting, canyoning, rock climbing and kayaking. The following two companies, both based in the village of Ainet near Lienz, will set you up: **Osttirol Adventures** (☎ 0664-356 0450; www.osttirol-adventures.at) and **Sportcamp Messner** (☎ 0664-897 8259; www.raftcompany.at).

Festivals & Events

Lienz hosts the testosterone-fuelled **Dolomiten Mann** (www.dolomitenmann.com) in September, a Red Bull-sponsored iron-man competition billed as the world's toughest team challenge. Headlining the programme is the cross-country relay race, where teams of mountain-runners, paragliders, kayakers and mountain-bikers battle it out for the title. Lively open-air concerts and parties complement the line-up.

In late July, a free street festival takes the centre by storm, drawing top circus and theatre acts from around the world. Summer also welcomes a series of events celebrating Tyrolean culture, plus free concerts on Hauptplatz and in other squares (8pm on Wednesdays and Sundays June to September).

Sleeping

For a town of its size, Lienz has oodles of decent hotels, pensions and campsites. The tourist office will help you trawl through them and hands out a free brochure listing inexpensive private rooms; expect to pay around €15 to €20 per person per night. Wherever you stay, ask your host for the *Gästekarte* to receive discounts on local sights and transport.

BUDGET

Camping Falken (☎ 640 22; camping.falken@tirol.com; Eichholz 7; campsites per adult/child/tent €6.50/4/8.50; ☎ mid-Dec-late Oct; P) Pitch a tent beneath the apple trees at this camping ground 10 minutes' walk from the centre. The first-rate facilities include a minimarket, restaurant and playground, plus free access to Lienz swimming pools.

Gästehaus Masnata (☎ 655 36; Drahtzuggasse 4; d €38; P) Maria runs this little chalet with *Liebe* (love) and speaks good English. There's enough space to swing several well-fed moggies in the modern, balconied rooms. Rates don't include breakfast, but you can make a cuppa or snack in the kitchen. This place fills up quickly, so book ahead in high season.

Gästehaus Winkler (☎ 705 18; Roter Turmweg 5; s/d €19.50/39; P) Handy for the cycling and cross-country trails that are on its doorstep, this convivial pension on the town's southern fringes has eight comfy rooms. There's a well-kept garden, playground and ski storage room.

Goldener Stern (☎ 621 92; Schweizergasse 40; s/d €34/62; P ☎) Framed by neat gardens, this 600-year-old guesthouse with bright, spacious rooms makes a great base for exploring Lienz. Breakfast is served in the pocket-sized courtyard in summer. Cheaper rooms with shared bathrooms are also available.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Altstadthotel Eck (☎ 647 85; altstadthotel.eck@utanet.at; Hauptplatz 20; s/d €42/74) It's not quite as plush as its neighbour, Hotel Traube, but this hotel still exudes old-world charisma with its grandfather clock and wood-panelled corridors smothered in oil paintings. The good-value rooms have tea-making facilities. Guests can soak up Lienz views over brekkie in the conservatory.

Goldener Fisch (☎ 621 32; www.goldener-fisch.at; Kärntnerstrasse 9; s/d €45/88; P) The beer garden shaded by chestnut trees is a big draw at this family-run hotel. The Goldener Fisch offers contemporary rooms kitted out with mod cons such as wi-fi and satellite TV. Other pluses include the sauna and cosy restaurant (mains €5 to €17), which dishes up a mean *Tafelspitz* (boiled beef with apple and horseradish sauce).

our pick Hotel Haidenhof (☎ 624 40; www.haidenhof.at; Grafendorferstrasse 12; s/d €61/110; P) Perched above Lienz, this retreat oozes coun-

try charm. Fringed by pear and plum orchards, Haidenhof is where rustic farmhouse meets 21st-century chic. Rooms are understated yet elegant, with plenty of natural light and honey pine. After steaming in the sauna, the roof terrace is a fine place to curl up in a blanket and enjoy the vista of the Dolomites. In the South Tyrolean-style restaurant (mains €7 to €20), nearly everything that lands on your plate is home-grown: the herbs, the trout and even the apples in the strudel!

Hotel Traube (☎ 644 44; www.hoteltraube.at; Hauptplatz 14; s/d €82/124; P) This green-shuttered hotel on the main square has bags of charm; it catapults you back to the Biedermeier era with its high ceilings, polished antiques and wrought-iron balconies. The 6th-floor pool is a calm oasis overlooking Lienz's spires and the brooding Dolomites.

Eating

Italy is but a hop and skip away from Lienz and it shows: menus are often a double whammy of Tyrolean and Italian fare. When the sun shines, the Hauptplatz fills with the hum of chatter as locals spill from pavement cafés.

Hendl Ortnr (☎ 623 91; Albin-Egger-Strasse 5; chickens €2.60; ☎ lunch & dinner, closed Jan-Apr) The tasty rotisserie *Hendl* (half-chickens) sprinkled with spices make this one of the best fast-food joints in town, but you're pretty stuffed if you don't like chicken.

Gasthaus Marinelli (☎ 682 08; Dölsach 78, Dölsach; mains €5-10; ☎ lunch & dinner Thu-Tue) Locals rave about the home-cooked local food at this tiny restaurant in the schnapps-making village of Dölsach, just outside Lienz. It's best to reserve in advance.

Pizzeria Da Franco (☎ 699 69; Agidius-Pegger-Strasse; pizzas €6-9; ☎ lunch & dinner) This hole-in-the-wall pizzeria isn't plush, but the thin, crisp pizzas baked in a brick oven do Italy proud. Top that with cheery staff and pocket-pleasing prices and you're onto a winner.

Adlerstüberl Restaurant (☎ 625 50; Andrä-Kranz-Gasse 7; mains €7.50-13.50; ☎ lunch & dinner) Adlerstüberl is the granddaddy of Lienz, where grizzled locals put the world to rights over beer, humungous schnitzels and plates of piping goulash. Find a cosy nook in one of the vaulted rooms and join them.

Spice Tapas Bar (☎ 634 73; Südtirolerplatz 2; mixed tapas plate €8-10; ☎ dinner Wed-Mon) A slither of Seville in the Dolomites, this funky tapas bar

has a menu full of the usual suspects (Serrano ham and chewy chorizo), plus a few wild cards such as kangaroo fillets and wild salmon in champagne froth. Grab a table outside to soak up the atmosphere.

La Taverna (☎ 647 85; Hauptplatz 14; mains €8.50-16; ☎ lunch & dinner, closed Mon) A staircase twists down to this wood-panelled taverna in the bowels of Hotel Traube. Chefs whip up Italian and Tyrolean flavours in the show kitchen (try the rocket tagliatelle). The resident Bacchus gives an indication of the mind-boggling wine list – there are 800 bottles to choose from.

For self-caterers, supermarkets include an **ADEG** (Hauptplatz 12) and a **Spar** (Tiroler Strasse 23).

Drinking

Lienz tempts the night-active with a pick'n'mix of relaxed drinking holes and quirky lounge bars; most places huddle around the pedestrianised square.

Petrocelli's (☎ 643 64-44; Hauptplatz 9; ☎ 8am-midnight) The bustling terrace on the square is the crowd-puller at this ice-cream parlour, which doubles as a trendy bar in the evenings. Tuned-in locals come to sip caipirinhas and indulge in people-watching.

Joy (Hauptplatz 9; ☎ 672 22; ☎ 10pm-4am Thu-Sat) Venture downstairs from Petrocelli's to Joy, a party haunt where DJs spin dance music till the wee hours.

s'Stöckl (☎ 640 70; Zwergergasse 2; ☎ 6pm-2am Mon-Fri, 8pm-2am Sat) There are no airs and graces about this spit-and-sawdust watering hole – a fine spot for Gösseer brews and long chats at the bar. Cocktails are a bargain €3.50 during happy hour (8pm to 11pm).

our pick Deep Blue (☎ 644 440; Hauptplatz 14; ☎ 5pm-2am) Stepping down to this wacky lounge bar is like plunging to the bottom of the ocean. It houses the kind of aquarium (apparently it's Tyrol's biggest) that even Nemo would gladly sacrifice the sea for. Dangling fish and lanterns continue the aquatic theme. The cocktail-master also knows how to shake 'em (for something with a kick, try a Moscow Mule) but beware – one too many and you'll almost certainly see the room swim.

Getting There & Away

Regional transport in Tyrol comes under the wing of the **Verkehrsverbund Tirol** (VVT; www.vvt.at). For information on VVT transport tickets,

valid for travel between Tyrol and East Tyrol, see p331.

BUS

Buses pull up in front of the train station, where the **Postbus information office** (☎ 8am-noon & 2-4pm Mon-Fri) is located. There are bus connections to the East Tyrol ski resorts of St Jakob, Sillian and Obertilliach, as well as northwards to the Hohe Tauern National Park. Buses to Kitzbühel (€13.20, 1½ hours) are quicker and more direct than the train, but they only go one to three times a day.

TRAIN

Most trains to the rest of Austria, including Salzburg (€30.20, 3½ hours), go east via Spittal-Millstättersee, where you usually have to change. The quickest and easiest route to Innsbruck (€20, 3¼ hours) is to go west via Sillian and Italy.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

To head south, you must first divert west or east along Hwy 100, as the Dolomites are an impregnable barrier. For details of road routes to the north, see p312.

Tyrol



If you could bottle everything that sums up Austria surely Tyrol would be it: from the woodsy log chalets and wholesome food to the thigh-slapping tradition and alpine peaks rising like shark fins in a frothy white ocean. Few places can match it on a winter's day, with a big sky above, dazzling snow crunching underfoot and bracing mountain air filling your lungs. No wonder the locals are notoriously proud and independent. Who wouldn't be with all that?

There are plenty of reasons to fall for Tyrol: the people are down-to-earth, sincere and marvellously eccentric; the cities such as Innsbruck and Kufstein are gems (overshadowed by frosty mountains and complete with precipitous castles and medieval backstreets); the schnapps is potent; the powder deep; and the culture a happy marriage of old and new – shifting from rural farms and cobbled alleyways to Zen-like spas and crystalline edifices.

But it's the Alps that steal the show in a 'wow I'm in Austria' kind of way and nowhere else are they more prominent or accessible. Tyrol is a beauty with bumps and curves in all the right places, with resorts like Kitzbühel where you can find your ski legs, Mayrhofen where they'll turn to jelly on black runs, and St Anton where you can get legless in après-ski bars before wobbling down the valley. When sunshine spills across the green vales in summer, walks stretch from gentle strolls to week-long tramps over windswept passes where, with any luck, you might spot an eagle: Tyrol's most famous yet elusive high-flyer.

Tyrol's eastern region, Osttirol (East Tyrol), is cut off from the rest of the province by Salzburg and is covered in the Hohe Tauern National Park Region chapter (p323).

HIGHLIGHTS

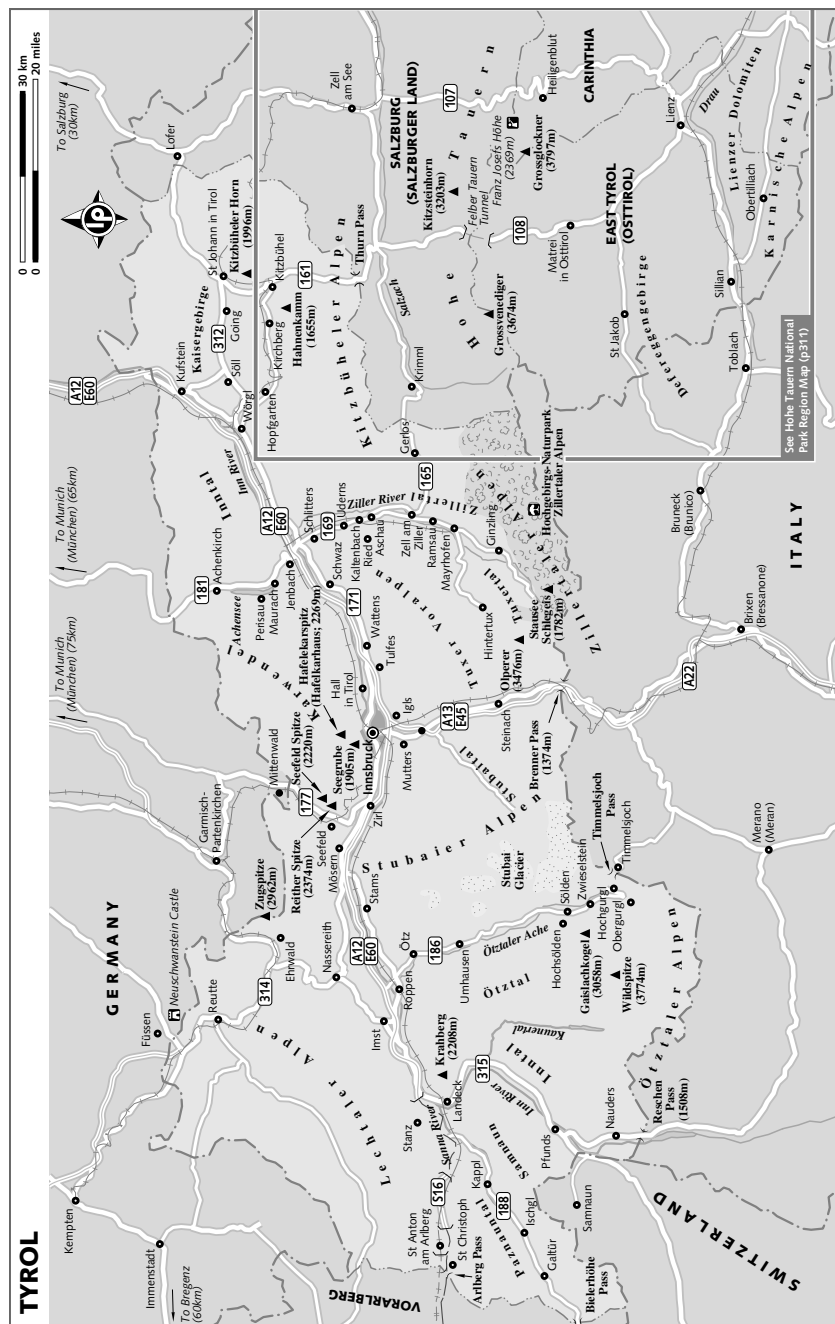
- Strolling cobbled lanes to gaze upon the shimmering **Goldenes Dachl** (p337) in Innsbruck
- Quaking in your boots before hurtling down Austria's steepest slope, the **Harakiri** (p348) in Mayrhofen
- Rising above **Kufstein** (p354) in a rickety chairlift for awesome Wilder Kaiser views
- Revisiting the Neolithic world of Ötzi and soaking in Aqua Dome's flying saucers in the **Ötztal** (p356)
- Bopping in your snow boots to Europop with the après-ski crowd in **St Anton am Arlberg** (p362)



■ POPULATION: 685,000

■ AREA: 10,626 SQ KM

■ HIGHEST ELEVATION: WILDSPITZE 3774M



History

Despite its difficult alpine terrain, Tyrol has experienced influxes of tribes and travellers since the Iron Age, verified by the discovery of a 5500-year-old body of a man preserved in ice in the Ötztal Alps in 1991 (see boxed text, p357). The high Brenner Pass (1374m), crossing into Italy, allowed the region to develop as a north-south trade route early in its history.

Tyrol fell to the Habsburgs in 1363, but it wasn't until the rule of Emperor Maximilian I (r 1490–1519) that the province truly forged ahead. His soft spot for Innsbruck boosted the region's status and transformed the town into the administrative capital and a cultural centre. He also drew up the Landibell legislation in 1511 that passed the border defence over to the Tyroleans themselves, thus creating the celebrated *Schützen* (marksman militia) which still exists today. When the last Tyrolean Habsburg, Archduke Sigmund Franz, died in 1665 the duchy of Tyrol was directly ruled from Vienna.

In 1703 the Bavarians attempted to capture Tyrol in the War of the Spanish Succession. In alliance with the French, they reached the Brenner Pass before being beaten back by the *Schützen*. But just a century later Tyrol passed into Bavarian hands under Napoleon. Bavarian rule of the province was short-lived and troublesome; in 1809 local innkeeper Andreas Hofer led a successful fight for independence, winning a famous victory at Bergisel (p336). The Habsburg monarchy unfortunately did not support his heroic stance and Tyrol was returned to Bavaria later that year. Hofer continued the struggle, and was shot by firing squad on Napoleon's orders on 20 February 1810.

The Treaty of St Germain (1919) dealt a further blow to the strong Tyrolean identity; prosperous South Tyrol was ceded to Italy and East Tyrol was isolated from the rest of the province.

A staunch ally of Mussolini, Hitler did not claim back South Tyrol when his troops invaded Austria in 1938. In the aftermath of WWII, Tyrol was divided into zones occupied by Allied forces until the country proclaimed its neutrality in 1955. Since then, Tyrol has enjoyed peace and prosperity; tourism (particularly the ski industry) has flourished and Innsbruck has twice hosted the Winter Olympics.

In 2008, all eyes are once again focused on the Tyrolean capital, as it gears up for the UEFA Euro Championships.

Climate

With almost 90% of Tyrol given over to mountains, the Alps rule much of the province's climate, with short summers, long cold winters and changeable weather. In the valleys the temperatures are surprisingly mild, helped no end by the *Föhn*, a warm south wind that sweeps down from the mountains.

Getting There & Away

Frequent international and national flights operate to Innsbruck. The main road and rail route in and out of Tyrol follows the Inn (Inn River), with the east-west A12 autobahn cutting the province into almost equal halves, entering from Germany near Kufstein and exiting west of St Anton in Vorarlberg. The A13 connects Tyrol with Italy, crossing the Brenner Pass directly south of Innsbruck.

Getting Around

Regional transport comes under the wing of the **Verkehrsverbund Tirol** (☎ 0512-561 616; www.vvt.at; Innrain 25, Innsbruck; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Thu, 8am-noon Fri). Ticket prices depend on the number of zones you travel through; a single ticket costs €1.70 and it's €3.40 for a day pass. There are reductions for children, senior citizens and families. Tickets cover journeys on buses, trams and ÖBB (Austrian federal railway) trains.

Additionally, Tyrol is divided into 12 overlapping transport regions, which are individually covered by *Regio Ticket* (regional passes). A pass for individual regions costs €29/91.80 per week/month or €61/196.10 for all 12 regions. Innsbruck is an exception; see p343.

INNSBRUCK

☎ 0512 / pop 117,000

Tyrol's capital is a chameleon-like city: a place where you can spend the morning roaming medieval lanes and Habsburg palaces, and the afternoon ogling Zaha Hadid's spacey creations and sipping sundowners in riverside lounge bars. With its low-slung skyline, quietly confident air and the towering Alps as a backdrop, Innsbruck successfully blends past and present, urban and natural. Despite its prosperity and world-class museums,

the city remains refreshingly unpretentious and friendly.

Suspended above the deep-green Inn River, the Alps are Innsbruck's monumental attractions: creeping up on street corners, reflecting in glass façades and sneaking into every snapshot. And this old man of the mountain still knows how to rock; home to Austria's third-largest student population, Innsbruck is a youthful city that pulsates in brewpubs, beer gardens and funky bars after dark. Providing you don't overindulge on the *Nachtleben* (nightlife), you'll have energy to whoosh down Nordpark's slopes or pick up supersonic speeds on Igls' bobsled run.

History

Innsbruck dates from 1180, when the little market settlement on the north bank of the Inn River spread to the south bank via a new bridge that gave the settlement its name – Ynsprugg.

In 1420 Innsbruck became the ducal seat of the Tyrolean Habsburgs, but it was under the reign of Emperor Maximilian I (r 1490–1519) that the city reached its zenith in power and prestige; many of the monuments, including the shimmering Goldenes Dachl (p337), are still visible today. Maximilian was not the only Habsburg to influence the city's architectural skyline: Archduke Ferdinand II reconstructed the Schloss Ambras (p335) and Empress Maria Theresia the Hofburg (p334).

Aside from the two world wars, Innsbruck has enjoyed a fairly peaceful existence over the centuries. More recently, its importance as a winter sports centre reached the international stage – it held the Winter Olympics in 1964 and 1976.

Orientation

Innsbruck sits in the Inn Valley, scenically squeezed between the northern Karwendel Alps and the southern Tuxer Vorberge mountains. Extensive mountain transport facilities radiating from the city provide superb walking and skiing opportunities. The centre is compact, with the *Hauptbahnhof* (main train station) just a 10-minute walk from the pedestrianised *Altstadt* (old town). The main artery in the *Altstadt*, Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse, connects with Maria-Theresien-Strasse, which is a major thoroughfare but is closed to private transport.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

The best source of international papers can be found at a handy newspaper stand on the corner of Riesengasse and Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse (Map p334).

Freytag & Berndt (Map p333; ☎ 572 430; Wilhelm-Grill-Strasse 15; ☎ 9am–1pm & 2–6pm Mon–Fri, 9am–noon Sat) Excellent source for maps and travel books.

Tyrolia (Map p334; ☎ 22 33-0; Maria-Theresien-Strasse 15) Stocks travel guidebooks and a decent selection of English literature.

Wagnerische Buchhandlung (Map p334; ☎ 595 05; Museumstrasse 4) University bookshop with a sizeable collection of English books.

INTERNET ACCESS

International Telephone Discount (Map p333; ☎ 562 921; Südtirolerplatz 1; per hr €2.50; ☎ 9am–11pm) Cheap phone calls as well.

Telesystem (Map p333; ☎ 931 093; Rathaus Galerien; ☎ 8am–6pm Mon–Fri, 8am–5pm Sat) Eight terminals with free internet access.

LAUNDRY

Bubble Point (☎ 56500-0750; soap & wash €4; ☎ 8am–10pm Mon–Fri, 8am–8pm Sat & Sun; ☎) Andreas Hofer (Map p333; Andreas-Hofer-Strasse 37); Brixner (Map p333; Brixner Strasse 1) Self-service laundries with internet access for €6 per hour.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Landeskrankenhaus (Map p333; ☎ 50 40; Anichstrasse 35) The *Universitätsklinik* (University Clinic) at the city's main hospital has emergency services.

MONEY

The *Hauptbahnhof* and Innsbruck Information have exchange facilities and *Bankomaten* (ATMs) are ubiquitous in the *Altstadt*.

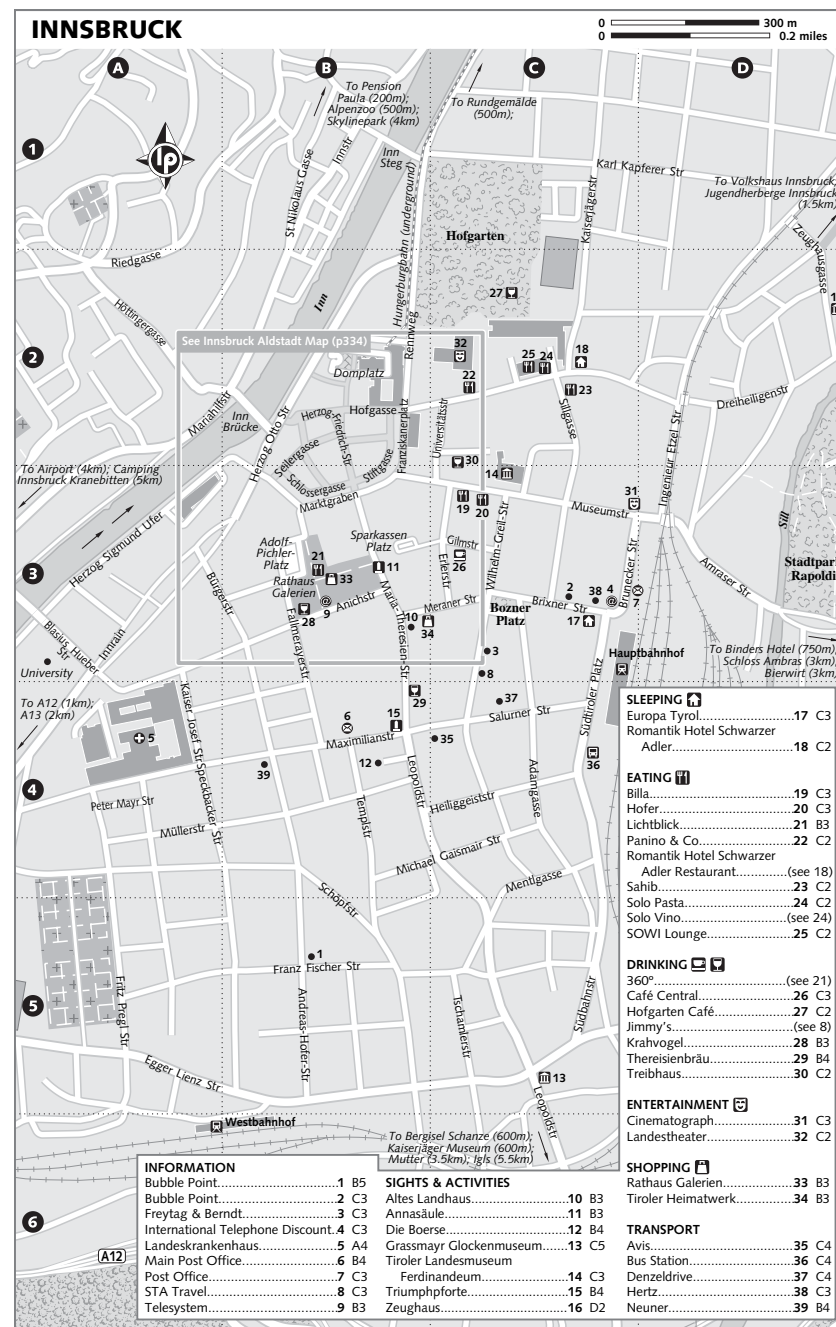
POST

Main post office (Map p333; Maximilianstrasse 2; ☎ 7am–9pm Mon–Fri, 7am–3pm Sat, 10am–7.30pm Sun)
Post office (Map p333; Brunecker Strasse 1; ☎ 7am–5pm Mon–Fri) This second post office is handy to the *Hauptbahnhof*.

TOURIST INFORMATION

City Tourist Board (Map p334; ☎ 59 85-0; www.innsbruck.info; Burggraben 3; ☎ 8am–6pm Mon–Fri) Above Innsbruck Information, it mostly fields telephone inquiries.

Hauptbahnhof (Map p333; ☎ 583 766; ☎ 9am–7pm) Smaller office in the main train station.



Innsbruck Information (Map p334; ☎ 53 56; www.innsbruck.info; Burggraben 3; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Oct, 8am-6pm Nov-Mar) Main tourist office with truckloads of info on the city and surrounds, including skiing and walking. Sells ski passes, public-transport tickets and city maps (€1); will book accommodation (€3 commission); has an attached ticketing service (open 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to noon Saturday); and has internet access (€1 for 10 minutes).

TRAVEL AGENCIES

STA Travel (Map p333; ☎ 588 997; innsbruck@statravel.at; Wilhelm-Greif-Strasse 17; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri) Friendly student-focused travel agency with occasional specials.

Sights

HOFBURG

Demanding attention with its lavish façade and cupolas, the **Hofburg** (Imperial Palace; Map p334; ☎ 587 186; Rennweg 1; adult/student/child €5.50/4/1.10; ☎ 9am-5pm) was one of Maria Theresia's favourites; though it's barely a rabbit hutch when compared with her other home, Schloss Schönbrunn in Vienna (p135). The state apartments are a rococo feast, adorned

with gold swirls and chandeliers, but the real eye-catcher is the 31m-long **Riesensaal** (Giant's Hall). The hall is embellished with frescoes and paintings of Maria Theresia and her 16 children (including Marie Antoinette), who look strangely identical – maybe the artist was intent on avoiding royal wrath arising from sibling rivalry in the beauty stakes.

HOFKIRCHE & VOLKSKUNST MUSEUM

Both the following attractions are accessed from Universitätstrasse 2, share the same opening times and can be visited with a combined ticket available from the **ticket office** (☎ 584 302; adult/child €6.50/3; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun).

Opposite the Hofburg is the majestic **Hofkirche** (Imperial Church; Map p334; adult/child €3/1.50), which shelters the empty sarcophagus of Emperor Maximilian I. Elaborately carved from marble, the tomb is one of the finest examples of German Renaissance sculpture. The twin rows of 28 giant bronze figures that flank the sarcophagus include Albrecht Dürer's statue of the legendary King Arthur,

INNSBRUCK CARD

To save on entry fees, invest in the Innsbruck Card, which allows one visit to most of the main attractions, a journey on the cable cars and free use of public transport including the Sightseer (see p338). It's available from Innsbruck Information (left) and costs €24/29/34 for 24/48/72 hours.

Free to those overnighing in town, the Club Innsbruck Card, available from your accommodation, gives discounts on transportation and admission fees. It also entitles you to join the free guided mountain walks from June to September; contact Innsbruck Information for details.

apparently Maximilian's biggest idol. Tyrolean hero Andreas Hofer (1767–1810) is also entombed in the church.

For an insight into Tyrolean craftwork, nip into the **Volkskunst Museum** (Folk Art Museum; Map p334; adult/child €5/1.50) next door. This rambling attic of a museum covers the entire spectrum of folk art, from handcarved sleighs and Christmas cribs to carnival masks and cow bells. On the 1st floor is the Gothic **Stube** (living room) complete with low-ceiling, wood panelling and antique tiled oven.

TIROLER LANDESMUSEUM FERDINANDEUM

A treasure-trove of Tyrolean history and art, this **museum** (Map p333; ☎ 594 89; www.tiroler-landesmuseum.at; in German; Museumstrasse 15; adult/child €8/4; ☎ 10am-6pm Jun-Sep, closed Mon Oct-May) showcases everything from Bronze Age finds to religious works and pewter creations. Highlights include brooding Dutch and Flemish masterpieces, Gothic altarpieces and famous paintings from the likes of Klimt and Kokoschka (see p52).

ZEUGHAUS

Emperor Maximilian's former arsenal, the **Zeughaus** (Map p333; ☎ 594 89-311; Zeughausgasse; adult/child €8/4; ☎ 10am-5pm Jun-Sep, closed Mon Oct-May) runs chronologically through Tyrol's cultural history. It kicks off with geological and mineral history, including the silver that made Hall and Schwaz medieval powerhouses, but mostly concentrates on Tyrol's much-loved historical figure, Andreas Hofer.

If you're a fan of Tyrolean music, check out the room housing over 100 CDs from the province's musical stars.

SCHLOSS AMBRAS

Perched dramatically above the centre, the city's biggest stunner is **Schloss Ambras** (off Map p333; ☎ 01-525 24-4802; Schlossstrasse 20; adult/student/family €4.50/3/6 Dec-Mar, €8/6/16 Apr-Oct, guided tours €2; ☎ 10am-5pm Dec-Jul, Sep & Oct, 10am-7pm Aug, closed Nov). Archduke Ferdinand II acquired the castle in 1564, the year he became ruler of Tyrol, and transformed it from a fortress into a palace. He was the mastermind behind the **Spanische Saal** (Spanish Hall), a 43m-long banquet hall with a wooden inlaid ceiling and Tyrolean nobles gazing from the walls. Also note the *grisaille* (grey relief) around the courtyard and the sunken bathtub where his beloved Philippine used to bathe.

Ferdinand instigated the magnificent Ambras Collection, encompassing three main elements. The **Rüstammer** (Armour Collection) features intriguing pieces such as the armour for the archduke's second wedding – specially shaped to fit his protruding belly! – and the 2.60m suit created for giant Bartlmä Bon. The **Kunst und Wunderkammer** (Art and Wonders Collection) is crammed with fantastical objects, including a petrified shark, gravity-defying stilt shoes and the *Fangstuhl* – a chair designed to trap drunken guests at Ferdinand's raucous parties.

The **Portraitgalerie** features room upon room of Habsburg portraits. Portrait No 158 (Room 10) features a whiskered Charles VIII masquerading as a peasant while wearing a hat masquerading as an armchair. Maria Anna of Spain (No 126, Room 22) wins the prize for the most ludicrous hairstyle. When portraits of Habsburgs begin to pall, you can stroll or picnic in the extensive **castle gardens** (admission free; ☎ 6am-8pm), home to strutting peacocks.

Guided tours are available, but English tours must be reserved. Entry is cheaper in winter as some parts of the castle are closed. To get there take tram 6 or bus K.

GRASSMAYR GLOCKENMUSEUM

If you're heading for Bergisel, listen out for the bells at **Grassmayr Glockenmuseum** (Bell Museum; Map p333; ☎ 594 16-0; Leopoldstrasse 53; adult/child €4.50/2.50; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri), which explores 400 years of the Grassmayr family's bell-making tradition and exhibits some formidable Romanesque



and Gothic examples. It's a hands-on kind of place where kids can watch the casting process and make loads of noise ringing bells to achieve different notes.

BERGISEL

Rising above Innsbruck like a celestial staircase is the glass-and-steel **Bergisel Schanze** (Bergisel ski jump; off Map p333; ☎ 589 259-0; www.bergisel.info; adult/child €8.30/4; ⌚ 9.30am-5pm). The brainchild of Iraqi architect, Zaha Hadid, the futuristic landmark was unveiled in 2002 and cost a whopping €15 million. From May to July, fans pile in to see athletes train, while preparations step up a gear in January for the biggest event on the ski jumping calendar, the *Vierschanzen-Tournee* (Four Hills Tournament).

It is 455 steps or a two-minute funicular ride to the top. From the 50m-high viewing platform, the panorama of the Nordkette range, Inn Valley and Innsbruck is breathtaking; though the cemetery at the bottom has undoubtedly made a few ski jumping pros quiver in their boots, not least plucky Brit Eddie 'the Eagle' Edwards, who broke his jaw and collarbone here in a spectacular missed jump.

Next to the stadium at the bottom, the **museum** is a small but fascinating hall of fame, crammed with black-and-white photos of death-defying daredevils that used to jump in leather shoes and without helmets.

Also worthwhile and included in the entry price is the nearby **Kaiserjäger Museum** (off Map p333; ☎ 582 312; Bergisel 1; ⌚ 9am-5pm Apr-Oct), the site of the famous battle in 1809 at which heroic Andreas Hofer defeated the Bavarians. On display are memorials to Tyrolean freedom fighters from this and other battles, and a handful of paintings from WWI by Albin Egger-Lienz.

ALPENZOO & AROUND

North of the centre, the **Alpenzoo** (off Map p333; ☎ 292 323; Weiherburggasse 37; adult/child €7/3.50; ⌚ 9am-6pm) is home to cuddly alpine animals including bears, chamois and ibex. To get there, walk up the hill from Rennweg or take bus W from the Marktplatz.

Almost directly south across the cold Inn River is the **Rundgemälde** (off Map p333; ☎ 584 434; Rennweg 39; adult/child €3/1.50; ⌚ 9am-5pm Apr-Oct), a 1000-sq-metre panorama painting depicting the Battle of Bergisel. The circular building that houses the painting also features an ex-

tremely evocative exhibition detailing epic overland trips by Austrian travel writer Max Reisch (1912-85) in the days before long-distance travel became so easy.

Activities

With 2000m peaks on its doorstep, Innsbruck is among Austria's top cities for indulging in outdoor pursuits and one of the few places in Europe where you can whiz from the city centre to the slopes in a matter of minutes. Aside from skiing and walking, rafting, mountain biking, paragliding and bobsledding (see boxed text, opposite) are all available to the daring. Also see the Outdoor Activities chapter (p74).

SKIING & SNOWBOARDING

Innsbruck is the gateway to an excellent ski arena that has hosted world-class competitions, such as the Winter Olympics in 1964 and 1976. The brand-new **Hungerburgbahn** (Map p333; www.nordpark.at) is great news for powder freaks. Designed by Zaha Hadid of Bergisel fame, the sleek cable railway looks like something out of a sci-fi film and links the Congress Centre to Hafelekar (2300m) in just 25 minutes.

At the top, snowboarding dudes can pick up speed on the half-pipe and practise jumps at the **Skylinepark** (off Map p333), while skiers can take their pick of runs which include several reds and one black. Heading south or west of Innsbruck, there is plenty of variety: Axamer Lizum, Patscherkofel, Kühtai, Rangger Köpfl, Glungezer, Schlick 2000 and Stubai Glacier. Most of the region's 270km of slopes are geared to intermediates.

A three-/seven-day Innsbruck Glacier Ski Pass to all areas costs €96/182 and all are connected by ski buses, free to anyone with the Innsbruck Card. Alternatively, the Innsbruck Super Ski Pass is available, covering the above ski areas plus Kitzbühel and Arlberg. Passes covering four out of six days cost €155.50; five out of six days costs €206.

Note that skiing is not only restricted to the winter months – the Stubai Glacier offers year-round skiing (p345).

WALKING

Crisscrossed with well-marked trails, the mountains surrounding Innsbruck are perfect for walking. The easiest way to reach any kind of altitude from the city is to hitch a ride on

COOL RUNNINGS

The fast and furious **Olympia Bobbahn** (Olympic bob run; ☎ 37 71 60; ⌚ Tue & Thu Dec-Mar, Thu & Fri Jul-Sep) in Innsbruck-Igls was built especially for the 1976 Winter Olympics. Taking in 14 curves, a loop and a vertical drop of 124m, the bob run is 1.2km of pure hair-raising action. Thrill seekers can join a professional bobsled driver to give it a whirl; ice makes the run slippery smooth in winter, but it's also possible to race down in summer if you don't mind a bumpy ride. At €30 a pop, the minute of madness doesn't come cheap, but the buzz of whooshing down at speeds of 100km/h (miss a bend and you'll bounce like a pinball) is worth every cent. To reach Igls, take bus J from the Landesmuseum.

the Hungerburgbahn funicular to **Hafelekar**, where paths head off in all directions. You'll need a head for heights to tackle the **Klettersteig** (climbing trail); the ascent is not for the faint-hearted, traversing seven peaks and affording tremendous vistas of the Stubai, Zillertaler and Ötztaler Alps. Fixed ropes ensure safety on the high alpine route that takes around seven hours to complete.

In summer, the funicular runs from 8.30am to 5.30pm and costs €10.80/18 one way/return to Seegrube and €11.50/19.10 to Hafelekar.

From June to October, Innsbruck Information arranges daily hiking tours with a professional mountain guide, free to those with a Club Innsbruck Card and suitable for those eight years and older. Pop into the tourist office to register and browse the programme, which includes highlights such as sunrise walks to Rangger Köpfl and lantern-lit strolls.

ADVENTURE SPORTS

Die Boerse (Map p333; ☎ 581 742; Leopoldstrasse 7; ⌚ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) rents skis, snowboards and mountain bikes (€14 to €30 per day), and offers a free pick-up service from the airport, **Hauptbahnhof** or your hotel. For adrenaline-based thrills, check out the activities at **Inntour** (www.inntour.com) at the same address. This is the place to come if you want to white-water raft down the Inn River, bungee jump from the 192m Europabrücke (Europe Bridge) or ski on the Stubai Glacier.

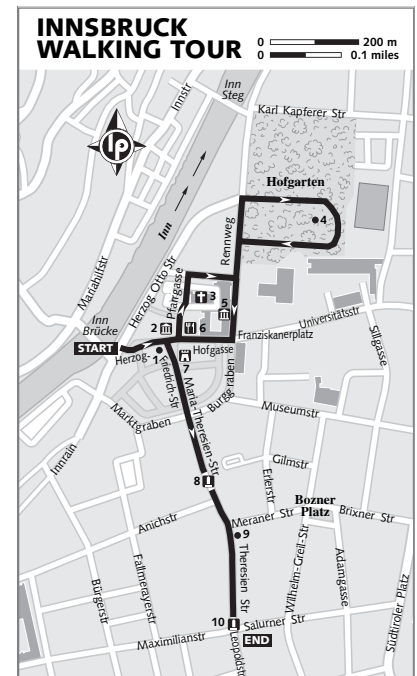
Walking Tour

Innsbruck is a compact, walkable city and this 1½-hour amble covers the blockbuster sights.

Kick off your tour by gazing up at the baroque façades along Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse; most of these buildings were built in the 15th and 16th centuries and still ooze medieval charm. Particularly outstanding is

the 18th-century **Helblinghaus** (1), with its fussy rococo ornamentation.

Almost directly opposite is the **Goldenes Dachl** (2; Golden Roof), the gem of Innsbruck's rich architectural collection. Its 2657 gilded copper tiles shimmer atop a Gothic oriel window; Emperor Maximilian used to observe street performers from the 2nd-floor balcony, which has a series of scenes depicted in relief (including the emperor himself with his two wives). Note the balustrade on the 1st floor, which bears eight coats of arms. Inside the building is a small but intriguing museum retelling the history of Maximilian, the **Maximilianeum**



(☎ 581 111; Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse 15; adult/child €4/2; ☎ 10am-5pm May-Sep, closed Mon Oct-Apr).

From the Goldenes Dachl, turn left up Pfarrgasse and then head towards Domplatz and **Dom St Jakob** (3; St James' Cathedral; Domplatz; ☎ 7.30am-9.30pm Mon-Sat, 8am-7.30pm Sun), where over-the-top baroque is everywhere to be admired. The Asam brothers from Munich completed much of the sumptuous art and stucco work, though the Madonna above the high altar is by the German painter Lukas Cranach the Elder.

Not far northeast of St Jakob is the **Hofgarten** (4), a peaceful pocket of greenery with manicured lawns, a palm house and a wonderful Indian Bean Tree.

From the park, follow Rennweg to the **Hofburg** (5; p334), Innsbruck's imperial palace, before nipping down Hofgasse for strudel and zingy juices at **Kröll** (6), and back onto Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse.

Turn left and bear south, stopping at the 51m-high **Stadtturm** (7; city tower; ☎ 561 15 00; Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse 21; adult/child €2.50/1; ☎ 10am-8pm Jun-Sep, 10am-5pm Oct-May); climb its 148 steps for 360-degree views of the city's rooftops, spires and surrounding mountains.

Once again on Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse, continue south until the street becomes bustling Maria-Theresien-Strasse. Rising in front of you is the slender **Annasäule** (8; St Anne's Column), erected in 1706 to mark the repulsing of a Bavarian attack and topped by a statue of the Virgin Mary. After the next intersection, the fine baroque façade of the **Altes Landhaus** (9) sails into view; built in 1728, it is now the seat of the provincial government. Walk another 200m and you'll spy the marble **Triumphforte** (10; Triumphal Arch), commemorating the marriage of the then emperor-to-be Leopold II.

Tours

Innsbruck Information (p334) organise guided city walks, which meander through the historical city centre for an hour or so. Tours leave at 11am and 2pm May to October and over Christmas, and cost €8 (€5 with an Innsbruck Card).

To capture more than the *Altstadt* in a tour, jump on a bright-red **Sightseer** (www.sightseer.at) bus, running between Alpenzoo and Schloss Ambras. Buses depart from Maria-Theresien-Strasse every 30 minutes between 9am and 5.30pm May to October, and every hour

from 10am to 6pm November to April. A day pass costs €8.80/6.20 for adults/children. Innsbruck Information sells tickets.

Festivals & Events

For three decades Innsbruck has been celebrating the **Festival of Early Music** (Festwochen der Alten Musik; ☎ 571 032; www.altemusik.at), a series of baroque concerts staged in July and August at venues such as Schloss Ambras (p334), the Landestheater (p342) and Dom St Jakob (left).

Other big bashes in this city include the **Innsbruck Summer Dance Festival** (www.tanzsommer.at, in German), held in June and July; **Eastern Celebrations**, which include concerts, markets and processions; and the ever-popular **Advent Christmas Markets**, which spring to life in mid-November and run until 24 December.

Sleeping

Most of Innsbruck's budget digs, guesthouses and boutique hotels cluster in the *Altstadt* within staggering distance of the star attractions and bars. Aside from the options below, Innsbruck and the villages of Igls and Mutters offer private rooms that cost between €20 and €40; Innsbruck Information (p334) can make the bookings for you.

BUDGET

Camping Innsbruck Kranebitten (off Map p333; ☎ 284 180; www.campinginnsbruck.com; Kranebitter Allee 214; campsites per adult/child/car/tent €5.40/3.50/3.40/3.40; ☎ Apr-Oct; (P)) West of town and flanked by mountains, this tree-shaded campsite is far enough from Innsbruck to have a rural feel, but close enough to make reaching the centre a doddle. There's an onsite restaurant and playground.

Jugendherberge Innsbruck (off Map p333; ☎ 346 179; www.jugendherberge-innsbruck.at; Reichenauerstrasse 147; 6-/4-bed dm €15.50/18, s/d €33/50; (P) (Q)) It may not be a pretty face, but don't be put off by this hostel's '70s façade. Dorms are clean and comfy and the excellent amenities include a kitchen, laundry, TV room and bike rental. It's 2km northeast of the *Altstadt*; bus O from Museumstrasse pulls up outside.

Volkshaus Innsbruck (off Map p333; ☎ 395 882; www.volkshaus.at; Radetzkystrasse 47; dm €16.10-21.60) Overlooking sports fields, this HI hostel doesn't have as many facilities as the city's other hostels, but the rooms are decent and staff welcoming. Take bus R from

DEVIL IN DISGUISE

The goat-horned and hairy *Krampus* runs riot through the village of Igls each year on 5th December, the eve of St Nicholas. But if ol' St Nick is the goodie, the mean and menacing *Krampus* is definitely the baddie; instead of dishing out sweets, this devilish character in a shaggy costume and grotesquely carved mask is out there to scare kids silly – growling and cracking his whip as he flits through the streets in the Krampuslaufen parade.

As if one weren't enough, around 70 ghoulish *Krampusse* turn out to menace anyone who dares cross their path (the smaller, the better...). The little 'uns get to let out all that pre-Christmas excitement screaming at the top of their lungs and the grown-ups see the event as a village-wide excuse for a booze-up, so everyone is happy. By nightfall, it's not unusual to see *Krampus* slurring after one too many schnapps; after all, the devil is allowed to misbehave and leave the good-guy stuff to Santa.

the *Hauptbahnhof*. It's 2km northeast of the *Altstadt*.

our pick **Nepomuks** (Map p334; ☎ 584 118; Kiebachgasse 16; www.nepomuks.at; dm/d €21/52) Could this be backpacker heaven? Nepomuks comes pretty darn close. The smiley sisters that run these central digs welcome you with homy extras like free cocoa in the kitchen. The high-ceilinged dorms have bags of charm with little touches from pot plants to books and CD players. Wake up to a delicious breakfast in Café Munding (p342) next door with homemade bread, jam, pastries and freshly roasted coffee.

Pension Paula (off Map p333; ☎ 292 262; www.pensionpaula.at; Weihenburgergasse 15; s/d €36/58; (P)) Perched above Innsbruck in the quiet St Nikolaus district, this family-run pension occupies an alpine chalet and has super-clean, homely rooms (most with balcony). It's up the hill towards the zoo and has great vistas across the city.

MIDRANGE

Innbrücke (Map p334; ☎ 281 934; www.gasthofinnbruecke.at; Innstrasse 1; s/d €39/67; (P)) This 15th-century townhouse is Tyrol's answer to Fawlty Towers with rather dated rooms, eccentric staff and an old-fashioned air. But you can't argue with the price and superb riverfront location.

Binders Hotel (Map p333; ☎ 334 36; www.binders.at; Dr Glatzstrasse 20; s €59-130 d €78-150; (P) (Q) (R)) Just east of the *Altstadt*, a nondescript exterior hides this sleeping beauty with wi-fi and loads of snazzy art features. The individually designed rooms range from Smartie shades to all-white with teak floors; the spacious loft suite has a trampoline-sized waterbed. Spa access costs €9.

Hotel Weisses Kreuz (Map p334; ☎ 594 79; www.weisseskreuz.at; Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse 31; s/d €62/108; (P) (Q)) Beneath the arcades, this atmospheric *Altstadt* hotel has played host to guests for 500 years, including a 13-year-old Mozart. Creaking stairs pass a trickling fountain up to the antique-filled reception. The spotless rooms are country-style with chunky pine-wood and floral trimmings.

Weinhaus Happ (Map p334; ☎ 582 980; www.weinhaus-happ.at; Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse 14; s/d €72/88; (P)) Happ exudes old-world atmosphere. The '70s-style rooms could do with a lick of paint, but its plus points are many: prime views of the Goldenes Dachl, a cavernous wine cellar and a rustic restaurant (mains €9.50 to €22.50).

Mondschein (Map p334; ☎ 227 84; www.mondschein.at; Mariahilfstrasse 6; s €75-95, d €115-140; (P)) The moon beams down as you enter this riverside hotel, housed in a 15th-century fisherman's hut. Rooms painted in blues and sunny yellows give way to Swarovski crystal-studded bathrooms glittering like a night sky.

Bierwirt (off Map p333; ☎ 342 143; www.bierwirt.com; Bichlweg 2; s/d €80/123; (P) (Q)) In a tranquil enclave 10 minutes' walk from Schloss Ambras, this chalet-style hotel has a country feel and comes complete with a wood-panelled restaurant and mosaic-tiled spa. Three of the spotless rooms are fully wheelchair accessible.

Weisses Rössl (Map p334; ☎ 583 057; www.roessl.at; Kiebachgasse 8; s/d €90/130; (Q)) An antique rocking horse greets you at this 600-year-old guesthouse. The vaulted entrance leads up to spacious rooms recently revamped with blonde wood, fresh hues and crisp white linen. The owner is a keen hunter, so it's no surprise that the restaurant (mains €7 to €18) has a meaty menu.

TOP END

Goldener Adler (Map p334; ☎ 571 111; www.goldener-adler.com; Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse 6; s/d €87/128; (P)) Since opening in 1390, the grand Goldener Adler has welcomed kings, queens and Salzburg's two biggest exports: Mozart and Mrs Von Trapp. Rooms are elegant with gold drapes and squeaky-clean marble bathrooms.

Romantik Hotel Schwarzer Adler (Map p333; ☎ 587 109; www.deradler.com; Kaiserjägerstrasse 2; s €103-162, d €145-220, ste €260-480; (P) (Q) (L)) Calling all loved-up honeymooners... This romantic boutique hotel is arguably the top dog in town, particularly if your bank balance stretches to a spin in the white limo featured in Madonna's *Material Girl*. The fabulously OTT suites glitter with Swarovski crystals; the black-and-gold one is where Versace once snoozed in a solid marble bed! The spa is stunning with crystal fountains and Qigong treatments.

The Penz Hotel (Map p334; ☎ 575 657; www.thepenz.com; in German; Adolf-Pichler-Platz 3; s €135-190, d €180-240; (P)) Behind a sheer wall of glass, the Penz is a contemporary design hotel next to the Rathaus Galerien. The minimalist rooms in muted hues are glammed up with iridescent screens, flat-screen TVs and shiny chrome fittings. At breakfast, a whole table is piled high with exotic fruits.

Europa Tyrol (Map p333; ☎ 59 31; www.europatyrol.com; Südtiroler Platz 2; s €145-185, d €204-264, ste €324-424; (P) (Q) (L)) Facing the *Hauptbahnhof*, this five-star hotel's marble lobby gleams as though elves spent the entire night polishing it. The Biedermeier rooms are decorated with stripy wallpaper and ruby-red carpets. Mick Jagger and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II top the list of famous past guests.

Eating

Innsbruck's *Altstadt* is crammed with restaurants, trattorias and pavement cafés, dishing up everything from steaming plates of Tyrolean *Gröstl* (potatoes and bacon topped with a fried egg) to fiery curries and cheap snack-bar grub. There are gourmet haunts if you want them, but eating out here needn't bust the budget.

RESTAURANTS

Mamma Mia (Map p334; ☎ 562 902; Kiebachgasse 2; mains €5-8; ☎ lunch & dinner) This no-frills Italian bistro has a great buzz, alongside huge pizzas, fresh salads and healthy pasta dishes. The sunny terrace is a favourite spot in summer.

Lichtblick (Map p333; ☎ 566 550; Rathaus Galerien; lunch €6.50-12, set menu €32-42; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Elegant simplicity sums up Lichtblick on the 7th floor of the Rathaus Galerien. The panoramic views over Innsbruck through glass walls are as appetising as flavours like duck breast on artichokes and nectarines.

Lotos (Map p334; ☎ 578 663; Seilergasse 5; lunch buffet Mon-Fri €7, mains about €9; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) You'll need both chopsticks to tackle the generous portions of chop suey and *Verrücktes Huhn* (crazy chicken) at this Chinese haunt, tucked down an *Altstadt* alleyway.

Solo Pasta (Map p333; ☎ 587 206; Universitätsstrasse 15b; mains €7-18; ☎ 10am-1am Tue-Sat) This high-ceilinged spaghetteria draws a young crowd with its hip vibe and yummy pasta. Next door, Solo Vino has a more upmarket feel with Italian wines, antipasti and fresh fish on the menu.

Gasthaus Goldenes Dachl (Map p334; ☎ 58 93 70; Hofgasse 1; mains €7-18; ☎ lunch & dinner) Near the Goldenes Dachl, this snug tavern uses locally sourced produce to rustle up classic Tyrolean fare – try tender veal with sauerkraut or hearty lamb stew and dumplings.

Sahib (Map p333; ☎ 571 468; Sillgasse 3; mains €8-17; ☎ lunch & dinner) The aroma of Indian spices wafting from Sahib's humble doorway should tempt you in for scrummy tandoori and vegetarian dishes.

Tapabar (Map p334; ☎ 586 398; Innrain 2; mixed tapas €8.40-12.60; ☎ 8.30am-1am) Popular for its chilled vibe and late-night nibbles, this riverside Spanish bar is the place to order a plate of tasty tapas and a glass of Rioja. Catch free flamenco concerts every second Wednesday.

Cammerlander (Map p334; ☎ 586 398; Innrain 2; mains €8-17; ☎ 9am-1am) Tapabar's twin, this buzzy restaurant has a huge terrace on the banks of the Inn. The menu is a mixed bag of Austrian and world flavours, from schnitzel to chilli.

Thai-Li-Ba (Map p333; ☎ 567 888; Rathaus Galerien; mains €10-20; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Thai chefs cook up a storm in the show kitchen at this open-plan restaurant with pillar-box red walls and teak floors. The noodle and curry dishes are garnished with delicate orchids.

Papa Joe's (Map p334; ☎ 583 046; Seilergasse 12; mains €11-16; ☎ 4pm-1am Sun-Wed, 4pm-2am Thu-Sat) Toucans, waterfalls, palms, sharks... you name it, Papa Joe's is a snippet of Mexico. This wacky party haunt has a menu packed with jumbo steaks and jambalaya, and a Caribbean bar for after-dinner caipirinhas.

Romantik Hotel Schwarzer Adler Restaurant (Map p333; ☎ 587 109; Kaiserjägerstrasse 2; mains €12-20; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Zebra stripes and cow prints give this wood-panelled restaurant a groovy twist. Expect seasonal flavours, attentive service and eye-catching presentation.

QUICK EATS

Kröll (Map p334; ☎ 574 347; Hofgasse 6; snacks €2-3; ☎ 6am-midnight) Forget plain old apple, this hole-in-the-wall café has plenty of strudel varieties, including rhubarb, poppy, feta and plum. The fresh juices pack a vitamin punch.

Panino & Co (Map p333; Universitätsstrasse 3; paninis €3; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri) Blink and you'll miss this Italian deli, where you can create your own panini with Parma ham, cheese and olives. It's a good place to stock up on picnic supplies and the cheery owner makes a mean espresso.

SOWI Lounge (Map p333; ☎ 507 799-5; Universitätsstrasse 15; 2-course menu €4-5; ☎ lunch Mon-Fri) Brimming with students, this *Mensa* (university restaurant) has quick, cheap menus and outdoor seating on a grassy quarter.

SELF-CATERING

Pick up groceries at the large indoor food and flower **market** (Map p334; Herzog-Sigmund-Ufer; ☎ 7am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 7am-1pm Sat) by the river in Markthalle, or at Billa (Map p333) and Hofer (Map p333) supermarkets, close together on Museumstrasse.

Drinking

BARS

Innsbruck's healthy student population keeps the bar and clubbing scene upbeat. Aside from the gaggle of bars in and around the *Altstadt*, numerous drinking dens huddle beneath the railway arches on Ingenieur-Etzel-Strasse, an area known as the Viaduktbögen.

Treibhaus (Map p333; ☎ 572 000; www.treibhaus.at; in German; Angerzellgasse 8; ☎ 10am-1am) This cultural complex draws a boho crowd with its big terrace, regular DJs and live music (salsa libre Monday, jam session Tuesday, alternative Wednesday). In August, it hosts an open-air cinema.

360° (Map p333; ☎ 0664-84 06 570; Rathaus Galerien; ☎ 10am-1am Mon-Sat) Clean lines, cream leather and lounge music create a relaxed mood in this sphere-shaped bar beside Lichtblick. Grab a cushion and drink in 360-degree views of the city and Alps from the balcony skirting the bar.

Hofgarten Café (Map p333; ☎ 588 871; Rennweg 6a; ☎ 11am-4am) DJ sessions and a tree-shaded beer garden are crowd-pullers at this trendy café-cum-bar set in the greenery of Hofgarten. Sip cocktails beneath the stars or gaze up at the star-studded ceiling in the pavilion.

Krahvogel (Map p333; ☎ 580 149; Anichstrasse 12; ☎ 10am-2am Mon-Sat, 5pm-1am Sun) A big black crow guards the bar at this industrial-style pub. It doesn't make much noise, but the punters do after one too many Mind Sweeper cocktails. There are regular live bands and big-screen sports.

Elferhaus (Map p334; ☎ 582 875; Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse 11; ☎ 10am-2am) Eleven is the magic number at Elferhaus, where you can nurse a beer beside Gothic gargoyles at the bar or take a church-like pew to hear live rock bands play. The haunt attracts a 20-something crowd that spills out onto Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse.

La Copa (Map p334; Badgasse 4-6; ☎ 6pm-3am Mon-Thu, 6pm-4am Fri & Sat) Every Thursday, flamenco fans squeeze into this vaulted bodega to see José Márquez and amigos. Guitars, tapas and copious amounts of sangria keep the tone strictly Spanish. Even Mr lightning footwork himself, Paco Peña, has performed here.

La Habana (Map p334; ☎ 570 888; Rathaus Galerien; ☎ 8am-1am Mon-Sat) Che Guevara and Fidel Castro grace the walls of this so-smooth Cuban bar. Join the locals to sip cuba libres and puff fat cigars.

Dom Cafe-Bar (Map p334; ☎ 238 551; Pfarrgasse 3; ☎ 11am-2am Jun-Sep, 5pm-2am Oct-May) Flickering candles, vaulted ceilings and an HMV gramophone set the scene in this Gothic-style bar. Sink into a squishy sofa for a glass of red or a hot *Waldbeerpunsch* (wild berry punch) in winter.

Theresienbräu (Map p333; ☎ 587 580; Maria-Theresien-Strasse 53; ☎ 10am-1am Mon-Wed, 10am-2am Thu-Sat, 10am-midnight Sun) Copper vats gleam and rock plays at this lively microbrewery, which opens onto a garden seating 120 beer guzzlers and pretzel munchers. The ceiling is studded with 10,000 dried roses.

Jimmy's (Map p333; ☎ 57 04 73; Wilhelm-Greif-Strasse 19; ☎ 6pm-1.30am Mon-Thu, 8pm-2.30am Fri & Sat) Buddha enlightens this party-hearty bar in a courtyard near STA. Vodka shots are the tipples of choice and the music is a blend of hip-hop and funk.

CAFÉS

Café Katzung (Map p334; ☎ 586 183; Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse 16; snacks €4-8; ☎ 8am-midnight Mon-Sat, 9am-midnight Sun) Expect lounge music, a lively vibe and the best hot chocolate in town at this cool café. Menu favourites include all-day breakfasts and warming carrot-mango soup.

Café Central (Map p333; ☎ 59 20; Gilmstrasse 5; coffee €2-4; ☎ 7.30am-11pm) The piano tinkles and newspapers rustle in this Viennese-style coffee house with chandeliers, high ceilings and naughty-but-very-nice cakes.

Café Munding (Map p334; ☎ 584 118; Kiebachgasse 16; |coffee €2-4; ☎ 8am-8pm) Modern art gives this 200-year-old café a contemporary kick. As well as whipping up delicious cakes – try the *Mundingzopf* – the family roast their own coffee and make preserves with fruit freshly picked from local farms.

Entertainment

Innsbruck Information (p334) produces a helpful monthly guide to the city's key events and exhibitions; it's mostly in German but is easy to navigate. The city has its own symphony orchestra that performs regularly in various venues. Schloss Ambras hosts a series of classical concerts in summer.

Landestheater (Map p333; ☎ 520 744; www.landestheater.at, in German; Rennweg 2; tickets €3-38; ☎ ticket office 8.30am-8.30pm Mon-Sat, 5.30-8.30pm Sun) Tyrol's seminal theatre stages year-round performances ranging from opera and ballet to drama and comedy.

Cinemas around town offer a special deal on Monday, when all seats are sold at the cheapest rate. For independent films shown in their original language head to **Cinematograph** (Map p333; ☎ 578 500; www.cinematograph.at, in German; Museumstrasse 31; tickets €6-8).

Shopping

Maria-Theresien-Strasse, the narrow cobblestone streets of the *Altstadt* and the Rathaus Galerien provide a quick shopping fix; here you can spend on handmade Tyrolean crafts, glitzy crystal jewellery and tasty local specialities.

Spezialitäten aus der Stiftsgasse (Map p334; ☎ 576 580; Stiftsgasse 3; ☎ 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat) An Aladdin's cave of homemade goodies, this vine-clad shop stocks honeys, oils, preserves and – if something more potent appeals – 600 types of liqueur.

Tiroler Heimatwerk (Map p333; ☎ 582 320; Meraner Strasse 2; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) If you're looking for high-quality crafts, this place sells everything from *Dirndl* to hand-carved nativity figurines, stained glass and Tyrolean puppets.

Speckeria (Map p334; ☎ 562 068; Hofgasse 3; ☎ 9am-7pm) Carnivores are in their element at this vaulted deli in the *Altstadt*, where the shelves are stacked with smoked ham, sausage and *Hirschschinken* (venison ham).

Christmas & Easter in Innsbruck (Map p334; ☎ 579 580; Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse 30; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 9am-6pm Sun) This marvellously kitsch shop brims with spangly decorations, painted eggs, crib figurines and nutcrackers.

Swarovski Crystal Gallery (Map p334; ☎ 573 100; Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse 39; ☎ 8am-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 8am-6pm Sun Apr-Oct, 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar) Part of the sparkling Swarovski empire, there's no room for clumsy shoppers in this gallery crammed with crystal trinkets and jewels.

Rathaus Galerien (Map p333; Maria-Theresien-Strasse 18; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) High-street shops, boutiques and cafés line this glass-roofed mall.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Innsbruck's **airport** (off Map p333; ☎ 225 25-0; www.innsbruck-airport.com; Fürstenweg 180), 4km to the west of the city centre, caters to a handful of national (Vienna and Graz) and international flights (London, Amsterdam, Antwerp, Bern, Frankfurt and Hannover), handled mostly by Austrian Airlines, BA, Lufthansa and Welcome Air.

BUS

The bus station (Map p333) is at the southern end of the *Hauptbahnhof*; its ticket office is located within the station.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

The A12 and the parallel Hwy 171 are the main roads heading west and east. Highway 177, to the west of Innsbruck, continues north to Germany and Munich. The A13 is a toll road (€8) running south through the Brenner Pass to Italy. En route you'll cross the 192m Europabrücke (Europe Bridge), spanning the Sill River. Toll-free Hwy 182 follows the same route, passing under the bridge.

TRAIN

The *Hauptbahnhof* is Innsbruck's most convenient station, though some local trains also pull up at the Westbahnhof (actually to the south) and at Hötting (to the west).

Fast trains daily depart every two hours for Bregenz (€28, 2¼ hours) and Salzburg (€33.80, two hours). From Innsbruck to the Arlberg, the best views are on the right-hand side of the train. Two-hourly express trains serve Munich (€33.80, two hours) and Verona (€40, 3½ hours). Direct services to Kitzbühel also run every two hours (€13.20, one hour) while six daily trains head for Lienz (€20, three to five hours); some pass through Italy while others take the long way round via Salzburgerland.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

The airport is served by bus F. Buses depart every 15 or 20 minutes from Maria-Theresien-Strasse (€1.70); taxis charge about €8 to €10 for the same trip.

CAR & BICYCLE

Most of central Innsbruck has restricted parking, indicated by a blue line. You can park within these areas for a maximum of 1½ or three hours during set times (approximately shop hours). The charge is €0.50/1/1.50 for 30/60/90 minutes; tickets are available from pavement dispensers. Parking garages (such as the one under the *Altstadt*) will set you back about €15 per day.

Innsbruck's major car rental agencies and bike hire shops:

Avis (Map p333; ☎ 571 754; Salurner Strasse 15;

☎ 7.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat)

Denzeldrive (Map p333; ☎ 582 060; Salurner Strasse 8;

☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri)

Hertz (Map p333; ☎ 580 901; Südtiroler Platz 1;

☎ 7.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat)

Neuner (Map p333; ☎ 561 501; Maximilianstrasse 23;

☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) Rents mountain bikes for €16/20 per half/full day.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Single tickets on buses and trams cost €1.60 (from the driver; valid upon issue), but if you plan to use the city's public transport frequently you're better off buying a 24-hour ticket (€3.40). Weekly and monthly tickets are also available (€10.70 and €36.20, respectively). Tickets bought in advance, which are available from *Tabak* (tobacconist) shops,

Information Innsbruck (p334) and the **IVB Kundenbüro** (Map p334; ☎ 53 07-500; Stainerstrasse 2; ☎ 7.30am-6pm Mon-Fri), must be stamped in the machines at the start of the journey.

TAXI

For a taxi call ☎ 0800 222 22 55 or 53 11.

AROUND INNSBRUCK

HALL IN TIROL

☎ 05223 / pop 12,000

Nestled beneath the Alps, just 9km east of Innsbruck, Hall is caught in a medieval time-warp: slim townhouses and cobblestoned lanes lit by lanterns reveal that not an awful lot has changed since the 15th century when this small town grew fat on the riches of salt and silver. If you're in town for the *Weinherbst* festival in September, watch as the water in the Wilden Mannes fountain miraculously turns to wine...

Information

Staff at the **tourist office** (☎ 455 44; www.regionhall.at, in German; Wallpachgasse 5; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) can point you in the direction of the town's attractions. They also organise daily **guided tours** (adult/child €6/3.50; ☎ 10am Apr-Sep).

Sights & Activities

All streets lead to the Oberer Stadtplatz. Bordering this square is the 15th-century **Rathaus**, with its distinctive courtyard, complete with crenated edges and mosaic crests. Directly across the square, the spire of the 13th-century **Pfarrkirche** (parish church; admission free; ☎ daylight hr) rises skywards. The highlight is the **Waldaufkapelle**, home to Florian Waldauf's grisly collection of 45 skulls and 12 bones, picked from the remains of minor saints. Each rests on embroidered cushions, capped with veils and elaborate headdresses, reminiscent of spiked haloes; the whole effect is both repulsive and enthralling.

A few paces away is the **Damenstift**, a convent founded in 1557 and graced by a baroque tower; unfortunately the convent's church is often locked. Not far from the Damenstift is the small **Bergbau Museum** (Fürstengasse; adult/child €3.50/2; ☎ tours 11.30am Apr-Sep), which delves into the town's history of salt mining and can only be visited on a tour.

Stepping south of the medieval centre, you reach the ivy-clad **Burg Hasegg** (☎ 442 45;

Burg Hasegg 6; adult/child €4/3; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Tue-Sat Nov-Mar), where a spiral staircase coils up to the 5th floor for far-reaching views over Hall. The castle had a 300-year career as a mint for silver *Thalers* (coins, the root of the modern word 'dollar'), and this history is unravelled in the **Münze Hall** (☎ 585 5165; Burg Hasegg 6; adult/child €6/4; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Tue-Sat Nov-Mar), displaying water-driven and hammer-striking techniques. Audio guides are included in the price and kids can mint their own coin.

Sleeping & Eating

Gasthof Badl (☎ 567 84; Innbrücke 4; s/d €41/68; ☐) A short dash across the Inn River, this gem of a guesthouse has immaculate rooms (most with river view) and a tavern that knocks up a great strudel. Little 'uns will love the playground and docile St Bernard, Max. Rent a bike here to pedal along the banks to Innsbruck.

Parkhotel (☎ 537 69; www.parkhotel-hall.com; Thurnfeldgasse 1; s/d €92/146; ☐) It's a surprise to find such an avant-garde design statement in little Hall. This cylindrical hotel's curvaceous glass-walled rooms are decorated in earthy hues and feature free internet access and stunning mountain views.

Wurstkultur (☎ 527 45; Krippgasse 8; sausages €2-4; ☎ 11.30am-2.30pm & 4.30-9pm Tue-Fri, 11.30am-2.30pm Sat) This hole-in-the-wall place excels in *Wiirsl* (sausages). The arm-long list includes paprika, curry and vegetarian bangers. Picking mustard to slather on them is also an adventure – try the beer, honey and orange varieties.

Getting There & Away

Hwy 171 goes almost through the town centre, unlike the A12/E45, which is over the Inn River to the south. The train station is about 1km southwest of the centre; it is on the main Innsbruck-Wörgl train line, but only regional trains stop here. Buses take longer but they stop in the town centre. From Innsbruck (€2.80, 30 minutes), buses leave every 15 minutes.

WATTENS

The quaint village of Wattens has one claim to fame: it's the glittering heart of the Swarovski crystal empire. This unique brand of bling certainly reels in the tourists and **Swarovski Kristallwelten** (Swarovski Crystal Worlds; ☎ 05224-510 80; Kristallweltenstrasse 1; adult/child €8/free; ☎ 9am-6pm)

tops the list of Austria's most-visited attractions. Call them kitsch or classy, there is no doubting the popularity of these crystals, displayed in all their glory at this fantastical playground. A giant's head spewing water into a pond greets you in the park. Inside you'll find Alexander McQueen's crystal tree, zebras drifting past on ruby slippers in a twinkling theatre, and the world's biggest crystal, weighing in at 62kg. Terence Conran's shop by the exit is where, depending on your budget, you can buy a bejewelled pen for €1.30 or splurge on a €14,800 crystal-studded iguana. Decisions, decisions...

Swarovski Kristallwelten is best visited by bus (€3.80, 20 minutes). Leaving every half-hour (fewer on Sundays) from Innsbruck's *Busbahnhof* (bus station) heading for Schwaz, they stop at Swarovski Kristallwelten.

SCHWAZ

☎ 05242 / pop 12,400

Schwaz wielded clout in the Middle Ages when its eyes shone brightly with silver. In the 15th century it was, believe it or not, Austria's second-largest city after Vienna. For a taste of that past glory, go underground to the show silver mine or take a wander through the winding streets of this laid-back little town.

Information

The helpful **tourist office** (☎ 632 40; www.silberregionkarwendel.at; Franz-Josef-Strasse 2; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat May-mid-Oct; 9am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat mid-Oct-Apr) provides information on sights and accommodation in Schwaz.

Sights & Activities

Schwaz' biggest draw is its labyrinth of cobble streets in the medieval centre. Taking pride of place on pedestrianised Franz-Josef-Strasse, the Gothic **Pfarrkirche** (parish church; admission free; ☎ daylight hr) immediately catches your eye with its steep roof bearing 14,000 copper tiles.

Not far south is the **Franziskanerkirche** (Gilmstrasse; admission free; ☎ daylight hr), blending Gothic and baroque styles. The church cloisters next door are a calm spot; Gothic windows and unfinished frescoes line its inner courtyard.

It's worth peeking inside the **Haus der Völker** (Ethnography Museum; ☎ 660 90; St Martin; adult/child €6/4; ☎ 10am-6pm), just north of town, which presents the rich collection of local photographer Gert Chesi. Curiosities on dis-

play include Nigerian masks, Burmese gongs and voodoo ceremonial tools.

You almost feel like breaking out into a rendition of Hi-Ho at **Silberbergwerk Schwaz** (Silver Mine; ☎ 723 72; Alte Landstrasse 3a; adult/student/child €15/10/8; ☎ 9am-5pm May-Sep, 10am-4pm Apr & Oct, 10am-4pm Wed-Sun Nov-Mar), as you board a mini-train and venture deep into the bowels of the silver mine for a 90-minute trundle through Schwaz's illustrious past. The mine is about 1.5km east of the centre.

Sleeping & Eating

Pension Clara (☎ 639 11; Winterstellergasse 20; s/d €28/52) A peaceful garden, mountain views and old-fashioned hospitality define this charming guesthouse, five minutes' stroll from the centre. The large, well-equipped rooms are real value for money.

Café Luce (☎ 653 60; Burggasse 1; lunch €4.50; mains €6-7; ☎ lunch & dinner) This lively café is a local favourite for cheap lunches and post-work drinks in the courtyard. The simple menu features various takes on pasta, bruschetta and salads.

Hellas (☎ 677 04; Burggasse 4; lunch €6; mains €7-18; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) Hellas is a classy little Greek place with vaulted ceilings, exposed brick and bold colours. The terrace is quite something: waiters have to cross the road to get there and perform a balancing act to ensure your tasty moussaka doesn't land on someone's bonnet.

Getting There & Away

Only 18km east of Innsbruck, Schwaz is an easy day trip. The train to Schwaz (€5, 20 minutes) is the quickest option.

STUBAI GLACIER

It's a bizarre feeling to slip out of sandals and into skis at the height of summer, but that's precisely what draws people to the Stubai Glacier. Just 40km from Innsbruck, the glacier is a year-round skiing magnet with great snow, no trees to dodge and around 100km of pistes catering to all levels. Summer skiing is limited to between 2900m and 3300m. Walkers are attracted to the network of trails lower down in the valley; a good hiking map for the area is *Kompass' Stubai Alpen Serleskamm* (scale 1:50,000). The Stubaital branches off from the Brenner Pass route (A13/E45) a little south of the Europabrücke and runs southwest.

Stubaitalbahn (STB) buses from Innsbruck journey to the foot of the glacier (one way/return €7.70/13.80, one hour) on an hourly basis; one-way tickets can be bought from the driver, return tickets need to be purchased in advance.

If you're based in Innsbruck and want to go skiing for the day on the glacier, consider the package tour offered by Innsbruck Information (p334). For €49.50, you'll receive a return bus journey, ski or snowboard rental and a ski pass.

SEEFELD

☎ 05212 / pop 3000

The pointy peaks are there, but Seefeld isn't just about the downhill rush. This alpine resort's first love is *Langlauf* (cross-country skiing) and there are 262km of groomed trails to prove it. When the white stuff turns to slush, locals limber up on the region's superb network of hiking trails or brave the chilly green waters of Wildsee.

The central **tourist office** (☎ 05-088 00; www.seefeld.at; Klosterstrasse 43; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-noon Sun mid-Jul-mid-Sep, 8.30am-6pm Mon-Sat rest of year) has stacks of info on accommodation and outdoor activities.

Sights & Activities

A must-see if you believe in miracles is 15th-century **Pfarrkirche St Oswald** (admission free; ☎ daylight hr). It was here that Oswald Milser gobbled a wafer reserved for the clergy at Easter communion in 1384. After almost being swallowed up by the floor, the greedy layman repented, but the wafer was streaked with blood – not from foolish Oswald but from Christ, naturally. Climb the stairway to view the **Blutskapelle** (Chapel of the Holy Blood), which held the original wafer.

It's a short stroll south of the centre to **Wildsee**, a bottle-green, pine-fringed lake that anchors **Reither Moor** conservation area; a 45-minute trail rings the lake and you can stop off for a refreshing dip at the *Strandbad* (bathing area). For longer, more challenging walks, cable cars ascend nearby **Seefeld Spitze** (2220m) and **Reither Spitze** (2374m); consult the tourist office for more information or join one of its regular guided walks.

Seefeld's raison d'être is **cross-country skiing**. Prepared *Loipe* (trails) crisscross the plateau to **Mösern**, 5km away, where there are fine views of the Inn River and the peaks beyond.

Downhill skiing here is geared towards intermediates and beginners. Seefeld is linked to other ski resorts, including Ehrwald (p358), Reith and Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Germany, all of which are covered by the **Happy Ski Card** (3 days adult/child €88/53). The two main areas are Gschwandtkopf (1500m) and Rosshütte (1800m); the latter connects to higher lifts and slopes on the Karwendel range.

Sleeping & Eating

For a resort of its size, Seefeld has a substantial choice of accommodation. The main drag around Dorfplatz is more low-key than après-ski, with a smattering of restaurants and bars vying for custom. Private rooms offer the best value, but expect rates to be a third higher during the winter season.

Landhaus Seeblick (☎ 23 89; Innsbrucker Strasse 165; s/d €28/56) Landhaus Seeblick is prettily situated opposite Wildsee. The warm, welcoming rooms open onto balconies – perfect for lounging and enjoying those lake views.

Hotel Garni Dorothea (☎ 25 27; hotel.dorothea@aon.at; Kirchwald 391; s/d €35/70; (P) ♿) Sweeping vistas over Seefeld unfold as you trudge uphill to this three-star hotel. The rooms in natural colours are spacious and modern. After carving up the slopes, the indoor pool and sauna are just the ticket.

Gruggerhof (☎ 32 54; Leutascherstrasse 64; apt €45-83; (P)) This alpine chalet oozes charm, with a blooming garden in summer and easy access to the slopes in winter. Natural light pours into the spruced-up apartments that come complete with kitchenettes and balconies.

Putzi's (☎ 49 55; Bahnhofstrasse 33; snacks €3-8; ☺ lunch & dinner) For a beer and bite to eat, Putzi's is a safe bet, churning out good-value schnitzels, pizzas and burgers.

Strandperle (☎ 24 36; Innsbruckerstrasse 500; mains €8-15; ☺ lunch & dinner, closed Apr & Nov) Overlooking the calm waters of Wildsee, Strandperle is a funky granite-and-glass place. The menu delivers fresh flavours such as jumbo green mussels and alpine beef filets. The decked terrace has the finest views of the Alps anywhere in Seefeld.

Restaurant Südtiroler Stube (☎ 504 46; Reitherspitze 17; mains €10-21; ☺ lunch & dinner) This low-beamed South Tyrolean restaurant pips the competition with delicious specialities such as rosemary-infused rack of lamb and tender venison medallions.

Getting There & Away

Seefeld is 25km northwest of Innsbruck, just off the Germany-bound Hwy 177. The road follows the Inntal until it rises sharply near Zirl. The track starts climbing soon after departing Innsbruck, providing spectacular views across the whole valley, especially if you sit on the left of a bus (€4.50, 35 minutes, 13 daily). Trains run to Mittenwald (€3.80, 20 minutes) every two hours and Garmisch-Partenkirchen (€11.80, 55 minutes), both in Germany.

NORTHEASTERN TYROL

THE ZILLERTAL

Sandwiched between the Tuxer Voralpen and the Kitzbüheler Alpen, the Zillertal (Ziller Valley) epitomises picture-postcard Tyrol. A steam train chugs through the broad valley, passing fertile farmland and limestone spires, affording glimpsed vistas of snowy peaks and the meandering Ziller River. As well as skis or walking boots, this is one place you'll be glad you packed that extra pair of lederhosen. It's an extremely traditional place, where down-to-earth locals still tune into *Alpen Rock* (alpine rock) and celebrate their heritage with gusto.

Practically every resort has its own tourist office, but the main **tourist office** (☎ 05288-871 87; www.zillertal.at; ☺ 8.30am-noon & 1-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-noon Sat) covering the whole valley is in Schlitters, 6km from Jenbach. It stocks plenty of information on outdoor activities, along with the *Zillertaler Gästezeitung* (partially in English) magazine.

Four camping grounds are situated in the valley and there is a year-round **HI hostel** (☎ 05288-620 10; www.hihostels.com/dba/hostel004079.de.htm; Finsingerhof, Finsing 73; dm €17; (P)) at Uderns, 12km south of Jenbach. Most beds are in chalet-style pensions, private rooms, holiday apartments or farmhouses. Ask staff at the tourist offices for help in finding somewhere (they usually won't charge), as there are dozens of options in each resort. Wherever you stay, inquire about the resort's *Gästekarte* (guest card).

Note that many places close between seasons, usually early April to late June and early November to mid-December. This includes many of the hotels, restaurants and bars mentioned below.

Activities

Mayrhofen is a prime spot for serious **skiing**, but there is downhill and cross-country skiing elsewhere. The Zillertaler Superskipass covers all 150-odd lifts in the valley; it starts at €126 for the minimum four days, or €139.50 for four out of six days. Ski buses connect the resorts.

In summer, the alpine valley morphs into excellent **walking** territory. A famous network of trails is the Zillertaler Höhenstrasse in the Tuxer Voralpen, but paths also fan out from the resorts of Ried, Kaltenbach, Aschau, Zell and Ramsau. Mountain huts at elevations of around 1800m beckon weary hikers; the handy *Hütten-, Ausflugs- & Erlebnisführer* booklet (German only) lists all the huts in the valley. A detailed walking map covering the entire region is the *Kompass Zillertaler Alpen & Tuxer Voralpen* (scale 1:50,000). If you're planning on spending a week or more in the valley between June and October, the value-for-money **Zillertal Card** (6/9/12 days €39.80/54.80/68.80) covers public transport, one journey per day on any of the Zillertal cable cars and entry to swimming pools.

Other adrenaline-based activities include rafting, rock climbing, paragliding and cycling. The Ziller and its tributaries are also good for fishing, but permits are only valid for certain stretches.

Festivals & Events

From late September, the Zillertal celebrates the **Almabtrieb**, where cows are led down from the high pastures adorned with elaborate floral headdresses, garlands and tinkling bells. The parade takes place on the first Sunday in October in Zell am Ziller and on the first and second Saturdays in October in Mayrhofen. The locals see the event as an excuse for a bit of a party; merrymaking involves food markets, bands blasting out folk music and plenty of schnapps for farmers that want to drown their sorrows at the prospect of another harsh winter shovelling cow dung.

Getting There & Away

The Zillertal is serviced by a private train line, the **Zillertalbahn** (☎ 05244-606-0; www.zillertalbahn.at), which travels the 32km from Jenbach to Mayrhofen.

Those with a thirst for nostalgia can take a *Dampfzug* (steam train) along the valley; it runs twice daily year-round (10.47am and

3.16pm). It takes about 85 minutes to reach the last stop, Mayrhofen, and costs €10.70 one way to either Zell or Mayrhofen. If you just want to get from A to B, it's better to take the *Triebwagen* (train) or bus as it costs €5.90.

ZELL AM ZILLER

☎ 05282 / pop 1840

Scenically located at the foot of knife-edge Reichenspitze (3303m), Zell am Ziller is a former gold-mining centre. There's now less sparkle and more swoosh about this rural and deeply traditional little village, home to 160km of pistes and a thrilling 7.5km flood-lit toboggan run. Warm weather lures active types, who come to hike in the hills or pedal up the Gerlos Pass to Krimml in the Hohe Tauern National Park (p317).

Orientation & Information

The **tourist office** (☎ 22 81; www.zell.at; Dorfplatz 3a; ☺ 8.30am-12.30pm & 2.30-6pm Mon-Fri) near the train tracks is a mine of information on walking, skiing and adventure activities in the area. At the other end of Dorfplatz is the post office, with bus stops at the rear.

Sights & Activities

The slender spire of the pink-and-white **Pfarrkirche** (parish church; admission free; ☺ daily) rises above the village and is surrounded by a sea of filigree crosses. You can peek inside the church, but you do so at your own risk – a sign on the door issues a warning that it is *not* a museum!

Abenteuer Goldbergbau (☎ 48 20; www.goldschaubergwerk.com, in German; Hainzenberg 73; adult/child €10/5; ☺ 9am-5pm) is a two-hour tour of a gold mine 2km east of Zell on the Gerlos road. The entry price covers a cheese-making demonstration and a visit to the animal enclosure, where kids can come face-to-face with deer, emus and llamas.

Aside from trekking and skiing, the mountains around Zell are ideal for **paragliding**. Paragliding specialist **Fly Zillertal** (☎ 0664-87 25 913; www.fly-zillertal.com, in German; Freizeitpark Zell) offers piloted trips descending 500m to 2300m (€55 to €130). Several rival firms offer similar deals; ask for details at the tourist office.

Bicycles (half/full day €8/12) can be rented from the train station.

Festivals & Events

Wafting around on hot-air currents is not recommended after a bellyful of super-strong Gauderbier (reputedly over 10% alcohol) brewed specially for the **Gauderfest** (www.gauderfest.at, in German). The festival takes place on the first weekend in May, and participants show off long-established rural skills: playing music, dancing and drinking heavily. The lavish main procession (participants wear historical costumes) and wrestling take place on Sunday.

Sleeping & Eating

Zell is dotted with chalets offering accommodation, with many west of the river in Zellbergeben. Rates are around 30% higher in the winter season.

Camping Hofer (☎ 22 48; www.campinghofer.at; Gerlosstrasse 33; campsites per adult/child/tent €6.60/4.20/6.80, guesthouse s/d €21/42; (P) (Q)) Full of happy campers, this tree-shaded site offers first-rate facilities including a playground, grill area and heated pool. If you don't fancy roughing it, check out the well-kept rooms in the guesthouse.

our pick Enzianhof (☎ 22 87; www.enzianhof.eu, in German; Gerlosberg 23; s/d €23/40) High on a hill, this chocolate-box chalet is the place to slip under the skin of the Zillertal: the farmer makes his own gentian schnapps, smokes his own ham and will even give you a lift from the village (call ahead). Open year-round, the farmhouse is perfectly located for hiking and skiing. Kids love the resident potbellied pigs and donkey, Julius.

Gästehaus Brindlinger (☎ 26 71; brindlinger.zell@aon.at; Gaudergasse 4; s/d €26/52; (P)) Tucked down a quiet lane, this chalet has bright rooms with plenty of pine, rag rugs and balconies affording mountain views. The sauna is popular after a day on the slopes and Mrs Brindlinger will let you borrow bikes free of charge.

Café Reiter im Park (☎ 22 89-0; Freizeitpark Zell; pizzas €7-10; (M) dinner) Reiter serves up enormous pizzas and après-ski during the ski season. In summer, the garden is a favourite spot to eat fresh mussels and enjoy a few drinks.

Self-caterers can head to the **Billa** (Bahnhofstrasse 3) supermarket

Getting There & Away

Normal trains to Mayrhofen (€2.20, 12 minutes) and Jenbach (€5.20, 45 minutes) are cheaper than the steam train. Zell am Ziller is the start of the Gerlos Pass route to the

Krimml Falls; buses tackle the pass from July to September up to four times daily (€4.50, one to 1½ hours).

Trains to and from Innsbruck (€10.20, 1½ hours, hourly) require a change at Jenbach.

MAYRHOFEN

☎ 05285 / pop 3900

Mayrhofen can feel like a sleepy village in summer with its alpine dairies, glass-clear lakes and trails twisting high into the mountains. But it dances to a different tune in winter. The skiing at Ahorn and Penken is some of Austria's finest: a double whammy of cruising and kamikaze in the shadow of the frosted Zillertal Alps. And when it comes to après-ski, this resort can strut in its snow boots with the best of them in slick bars and an incredibly cool igloo.

Orientation & Information

The **tourist office** (☎ 676 00; www.mayrhofen.at; Europahaus; (M) 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 9am-noon Sun) stocks loads of information and maps on the resort; look for the comprehensive *Info von A-Z*; it's free and written in English. There is a handy topographic model of the surrounding Alps and a 24-hour accommodation board.

Sights

For a fly-on-the-wall tour of a working dairy, head to the **Erlebnis Sennerei** (☎ 639 06-0; Hollenzen 116; admission with/without tasting €10.90/5.80, under 12yr free; (M) 10-11.30am & 12.30-3pm, closed Nov-mid-Dec). A glass-walled walkway reveals cheese-making processes, stepping from copper vats full of creamy milk to cheese ripening in salt baths. The final products are huge wheels of Tilsiter, Bergkäse and Graukäse, a mouldy grey cheese that is virtually fat-free. The dairy leaves the best till last: the **restaurant** (mains €7-14; (M) 10am-6pm) where you can savour local cheese-rich specialities like *Graukasrahmsuppe* (Graukäse cream soup).

Activities

Mayrhofen's ski region offers some fearsome runs including the mogul-free **Harakiri**, Austria's steepest piste with a knee-trembling 78% gradient. Snowboarders, meanwhile, are in their element on the kickers, boxes and half-pipe at **Burton Park** in the Penken area. A local ski pass, valid for ski lifts on Ahorn and Penken-Horberg (157km of piste), costs €36 for one day. A welcome newcomer for skiers

is the speedy **Ahorn** cable car, accommodating 160 passengers in each gondola.

The resort provides easy access to year-round skiing on the **Hintertux Glacier**. The Hintertuxer Gletscher cable car is an attraction in itself, gliding above sheer cliff faces and a spine of peaks to the tip of the ice-blue glacier. The sundeck at 3250m affords phenomenal views of the Tuxer Alps and, on clear days, Grossglockner, the Dolomites and Zugspitze. Day passes cost €36. From Christmas till early May a free bus shuttles skiers from Mayrhofen to the glacier (included in the ski pass).

From late May to mid-October, the tourist office organises regular **guided walks** (free with a guest card), which include night ambles, herb trails and mountain hikes. If you prefer to go it alone, it also produces a list (in English) of popular walks heading out of the village. A detailed map of the region is the *Kompass Mayrhofen-Tuxertal-Zillergrund* (scale 1:25,000). From the village itself two cable cars give walkers a great head start; one-way/return fares on both the Ahorn (1965m) and Penken (1800m) are €9.50/14.50 in summer.

Action Club Zillertal (☎ 629 77; www.action-dub-zillertal.com; Hauptstrasse 458) is the place to go for adventure sports from hydrospeeding the raging waters of the Ziller River (€33) to canyoning (€24 to €79), paragliding (€80 to €160) and skydiving from Radfeld/Kundl (€190). Next door, **Ski School Mount Everest** (☎ 628 29; www.habeler.com; Hauptstrasse 458) is run by famous Austrian mountaineer, Peter Habeler (see boxed text, p89), who offers day tours in the Zillertal Alps including the ascent of the 3476m Olperer (€79).

The stunning alpine scenery and mountain passes around the Zillertal encourage cyclists to grab a bike and get pedalling. The routes zigzagging up to Ginzling and Hintertux can be tough going, but the views are exhilarating. Inquire at the tourist office about tours. Bicycles can be rented from the **train station** (half/full day €8/12) and **Hervis Sports** (☎ 640 45; Einfahrt Mitte 433; half/full day €8/12).

Festivals & Events

Mayrhofen's hottest event is **Snowbombing** in early April when the masses descend on the resort for a week-long knees-up. Some of the world's top boarders battle it out on the slopes, but many just come for the crazy après-ski. Expect 24-hour bars, club nights,

a top line-up of DJs and wild inebriation. More details and tickets are available at www.snowbombing.com.

Sleeping

The tourist office can help you trawl through the mountain of sleeping options in the village; rates are roughly 20% higher in winter.

Gästehaus Emberger (☎ 644 37; Neu-Burgstall 303; www.gastehaus-emberger.at, in German; s/d €19/36 (P)) It's worth the 20-minute walk out of town to this hilltop guesthouse. Pinewood, rag rugs and flower-strewn balconies give the rooms a homy touch. Other draws are the panoramic vistas of the Alps, a small sauna and gym.

Kumbichlhof (☎ 624 58; www.kumbichlhof.com; Kumbichl 874; s/d €27/46; (P)) This family-run farmhouse is a great budget choice. The décor teeters on the old-fashioned, but rooms are immaculate and have own balconies.

Hotel Central Garni (☎ 623 17; Hauptstrasse 449; s/d €40/52; (P)) You'll feel as snug as a bug in this friendly hotel, run by the same family since the 1930s. The rooms are simple and clean, and open onto balconies overlooking the mountains.

Hotel Kramerwirt (☎ 67 00; www.kramerwirt.at; Am Marienbrunnen 346; s/d €89/154; (P) (Q) (Q)) Ablaze with geraniums in summer, this rambling 500-year-old chalet has corridors full of family heirlooms, spacious rooms and an outside whirlpool. Get your tongue in a twist at the restaurant (mains €8 to €21) asking for the tasty *Zillertaler Bauernschmaus* (farmers' platter with meat, dumplings and sauerkraut).

Eating

Mayrhofen dishes up everything from rustic chalets churning out cheese-heavy dishes to cheap-and-cheerful pizzerias.

Metzgerei Kröll (☎ 623 64; Scheulingstrasse 382; snacks €2.50-7; (M) 7.30am-12.30pm & 2.30-6pm Mon-Fri, 7am-noon Sat) This family-run butchery is famed for its unique *Schleigeis-Speck* ham, cured in a hut at 1800m for three months to achieve its aroma. There are a handful of tables where you can sample this speciality and the delicious homemade sausages.

China-Restaurant Singapore (☎ 639 12; Scheulingstrasse 371; mains €7-12; (M) lunch & dinner) A potbellied Buddha greets you at Singapore, which spices up the village with its tasty Asian fare. Fill up on Sichuan beef or shark fin soup before crossing the street for drinks in Scotland Yard.

Mamma Mia (☎ 67 68; Einfahrt Mitte 432; mains €7-9; ☺ lunch & dinner) Outside the plush Hotel Elisabeth, this vibrant pizzeria recreates Italy with its terracotta floor, bold colours and murals of Florence. The wood-fired pizzas and salads are unrivalled in Mayrhofen.

Wirtshaus zum Griena (☎ 67 67; Dorfhaus 768; mains €7-15; ☺ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) Set in high pastures, this woody 400-year-old chalet is the kind of place where you pray for a snow blizzard, so you can huddle around the fire and tuck into *Schlutzkropfn* (fresh pasta filled with cheese).

Supermarkets include a **Billa** (Am Marienplatz) and **Spar** (Hauptstrasse).

Drinking

Ourpick White Lounge (☎ 622 77; Ahorn; ☺ Dec-Apr) Kick your skis off and chill at this 2000m-high igloo bar, sculpted entirely from ice. Squeeze into the Eskimo-style haunt for frozen cocktails or catch rays on the lounges at the snow bar outside. Things heat up at Tuesday's igloo party when partygoers race (or roll) downhill on sledges.

Mo's (☎ 634 35; Hauptstrasse 417; ☺ noon-1am) This popular American-themed bar attracts a young crowd with its chirpy staff, moreish finger food (try the nachos and mozzarella sticks) and live music at weekends.

Scotland Yard (☎ 623 39; Scheulingstrasse 372; ☺ 7pm-late) A snippet of Old Blighty in rural Austria, Scotland Yard is a British pub with all the trimmings: Guinness, darts and a red phone box where expats can pour their hearts out to folk back home after a pint or three.

For more après-ski action, head to the Schirm Bar at the top of the Penken gondola, where fired-up skiers and boarders shake their booties after downing €1 shots. Equally loud and lively at the bottom is the **Ice Bar** (☎ 67 05; Hauptstrasse 470), where go-go polar bears (we kid you not!) lure you onto the dance floor. Both stay open until around 8pm.

Getting There & Away

By normal train, it's €5.90 each way to Jenbach (55 minutes).

GINZLING

☎ 05286 / pop 400

Arriving in Ginzling, an adorable little village 8km south of Mayrhofen, is like travelling 100 years back in time. Silent, rural and

lacking any obvious tourist infrastructure, this place is pure escapism.

The **tourist office** (☎ 52 18; www.ginzling.at; ☺ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri) is well set up for walking enthusiasts keen to explore the nearby Hochgebirgs-Naturpark Zillertaler Alpen. The park is an untouched alpine wilderness with a smattering of huts. Skiing is almost nonexistent; touring for experienced skiers is the only option.

In former lives, **Gasthof Alt-Ginzling** (☎ 52 01; www.altginzling.at; s/d €28/56; ☐) was a stable and a wayside inn for smugglers travelling to Italy. Today the 18th-century farmhouse oozes history from every creaking floorboard. The low-ceilinged, pine-panelled rooms are supremely comfortable and the restaurant (mains €7 to €16) serves locally fished rainbow trout.

During winter, buses to Mayrhofen are free for those with ski passes; outside the ski season it costs €2.80. A winding road (toll €10) continues on from Ginzling up the valley to the **Schlegeisspeicher** (1782m) reservoir, the trailhead for the stunning Zillertal Circuit (p87).

ACHENSEE

North of Jenbach, flanked by wooded slopes and ringed with beaches, the turquoise Achensee is Tyrol's largest lake at 9km. The **Achenseebahn** (www.achenseebahn.at; one way/return €18/22), a private cogwheel steam train, trundles to the lake from Jenbach between May and October, connecting with two-hour **boat tours** (www.tirol-schiffahrt.at; in German; adult/child €13/6.50) of the lake. Far-reaching views over the lake and the surrounding mountains can be had from Erfurter (1831m), which is easily reached by the **Rofanseilbahn** (adult/child return €15/9; ☺ 8.30am-5pm) from Maurach.

KITZBÜHEL

☎ 05356 / pop 8500

Ask an Austrian to rattle off the top ski resorts in the country, and Kitzbühel will invariably make the grade. This resort has a winning formula: fine intermediate terrain and a few black runs to challenge veteran skiers. Kitz, as locals nickname it, rounds that off with a labyrinthine medieval centre and enough Porsches and Prada to rival St Moritz in the glamour stakes. It's a slalom playground, a magnet to the golf-club-toting rich and a postcard Tyrolean village.

Orientation & Information

The main train station is 1km north of the resort's hub, centred on Vorderstadt and Hinterstadt. The central **tourist office** (☎ 777; www.kitzbuehel.com; Hinterstadt 18; ☺ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 10am-6pm Sun Jul-Sep & Christmas-Easter, 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat rest of year) has loads of info in English and a 24-hour accommodation board.

Banks and ATMs are everywhere and the **post office** (Josef-Pirchl-Strasse 11) is midway between the train station and tourist office. Internet access is available at **Kitz Video** (Schlossergasse 10; per hr €5; ☺ 10am-9pm Mon-Sat, 2-8pm Sun).

Sights

Kitzbühel's medieval core is a tangle of cobbled streets lined with gabled houses in candy colours. Perched above the town, the 15th-century **Pfarrkirche St Andreas** (☎ 666 59; Pfarrauweg 2; ☺ daylight hr) fuses Gothic and baroque elements. Next door the **Liebfrauenkirche** (Pfarrauweg 4; ☺ daylight hr) is a rococo church with a chunky 48m belfry and an interior adorned with gold swirls and frescoes.

Museum Kitzbühel (☎ 672 74; Hinterstadt 32; adult/child €5/2; ☺ 10am-6pm mid-Jun-mid-Sep, 10am-1pm & 3-6pm early-Dec-mid-Mar, 10am-1pm Tue-Sat rest of year) traces Kitzbühel's heritage from its humble Bronze Age beginnings to the present day. The big emphasis is on winter sports and the town's famous son, champion skier Toni Sailer.

Ride to Kitzbüheler Horn to wander the serene **Alpine Flower Garden** (admission free; ☺ daylight hr summer), nurturing alpine blooms like arnica, edelweiss and purple bellflowers. It's best reached by **Kitzbüheler Horn cable car** (adult/child €15/8.50), but drivers can also wind their way up to the top of the mountain (road toll per car/motorcycle €4/2, plus €1.50 per person).

For a cooling dip in summer, venture 3km northwest of the centre to Kitzbühel's natural swimming hole, the tree-flanked **Schwarzsee**. There are two beach complexes, each costing about €3.50 per day.

Activities

Along with the activities listed below, Kitzbühel gets pulses racing with scenic flights, skydiving, ballooning, golf, water sports and even bungee jumping. **Element 3** (☎ 0664-1000 580; www.element3.at; Winklernfeld 1) is a one-stop shop for adventure sports, including rafting, climbing, canyoning and paragliding.

SKIING

The Kitzbühel region offers exceptional skiing on 150km of pistes geared mostly towards intermediates and accessed by 53 lifts and cable cars. Extending northeast, the **Kitzbüheler Horn** is much loved by snowboarders for its half-pipe and kickers, while beginners flock here for gentle cruising on sunny slopes.

Spreading southwest, the **Hahnenkamm** (1668m) connects with some heart-stopping black runs in the **Pengelstein** (1938m) area. A great way to find your ski legs is to tackle the red-and-blue runs that make up the scenic **Ski Safari**, linking the Hahnenkamm to Jochberg. The alpine tour is marked by elephant signs and is a good introduction to the entire ski area.

One-day/three-day and weekly passes (Christmas to mid-March) cost €38.50/101/202 in high season and €33.50/88/175.50 at all other times. Passes cover lifts, cable cars and ski buses as far south as Thurn Pass. For real powder freaks, the Kitzbüheler Alpen Skipass is ideal; it spans the whole region (including 243 lifts; Kitzbühel, Schneewinkel, Wilder Kaiser-Brixental, Alpbach and Wildschönau) and costs €196 for six consecutive days.

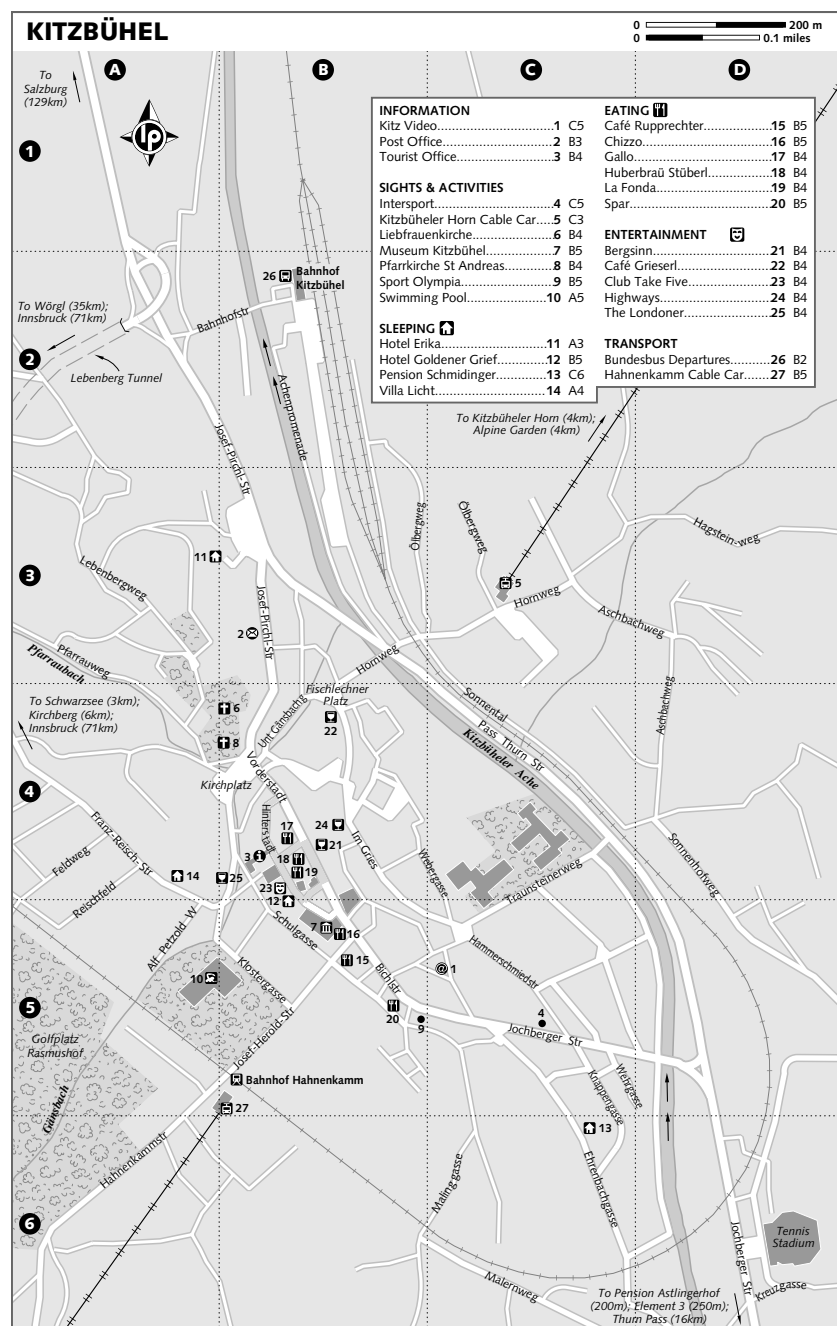
WALKING

Walking is Kitzbühel's main summer activity; zillions of walking trails head off in all directions from the town. The tourist office caters to walker's demands too, handing out a comprehensive *Wanderwegeplan* (hiking plan) free of charge. If you'd prefer some company on the trails, it also organises free guided walks daily at 8.45am for *Gästekarte* holders (mid-May to mid-October).

A cable-car pass also covering local buses will set you back €37.60 for three days' travel within seven days, or €51.50 for six days in 10. Individual ascent tickets cost €15.50/8.60 for adults/children (discounts available with *Gästekarte*) on either Hahnenkamm or Kitzbüheler Horn, the descent is free. Of the two peaks, vista vultures consider the view superior from Kitzbüheler Horn: the jagged Kaisergebirge range dominates to the north, and beyond the Kitzbüheler Alps, Grossglockner and Grossvenediger are visible in the south.

CYCLING

For those with a thirst for challenging but rewarding mountain biking, there are over 30



cycle paths in, around and over the Kitzbühel area. All are marked on the *Mountainbiken und Radwandern* map available from the tourist office.

Bikes can be rented from **Intersport** (☎ 625 04; Jochbergerstrasse 7) and **Sport Olympia** (☎ 716 07; Bichlstrasse 26) for around €9 per day and can be transported free of charge on the Hornbahn, Hahnenkammbahn and Fleckalmbahn gondolas.

Festivals & Events

The legendary **Hahnenkamm** is the mother of all downhill races and one of the highlights of the FIS Alpine World Cup. Professional skiers from across the globe vie for the title in this notoriously tough race held in January. Late July sees tennis stars compete in the **Austrian Open** at the tennis stadium just off Jochberger Strasse.

Sleeping

Kitzbühel isn't the easiest place to find budget digs, but the *Gästekarte* (available from pensions and hotels) offers discounts to visitors and there are some good-value guesthouses outside of the centre. Expect a price hike of up to 50% during the high winter season.

Pension Schmidinger (☎ 631 34; Ehrenbachgasse 13; s/d €32/64; (P)) Five minutes from the main drag, this friendly pension has quiet, light-filled rooms with pine beds topped by fluffy duvets. The owners are clued up on skiing in Kitzbühel. Breakfast is a treat with local cheeses, hams and crusty bread.

Pension Astlingerhof (☎ 627 75; Bichlweg 11; d €60; (P)) This wooden chalet has oodles of country charm with a mountain backdrop, home-grown produce and a garden where kids can run around. It's 15 minutes' walk from the centre.

Hotel Goldener Greif (☎ 643 11; www.hotel-goldener-greif.at; Hinterstadt 24; s/d €85/114; (P)) With its painted façade and walls festooned with hunting trophies, the Goldener Greif is a work of folk art. The cosy rooms are full of wood panelling, as is its rustic restaurant (mains €8 to €18).

Villa Licht (☎ 622 93; www.villa-licht.at; in German; Franz-Reich-Strasse 8; s/d €85/150; (P)) Surrounded by shady gardens, this green-shuttered Tyrolean chalet features recently revamped rooms in warm hues. A children's tree house, an outdoor pool and free wi-fi are other bonuses.

Hotel Erika (☎ 648 85; www.erika-kitz.at; Josef-Pirchl-Strasse 21; s/d €105/190; (P)) Turrets, towers and high ceilings define this Art Nouveau villa with luxurious rooms and polished service. The spa pamperers with treatments from thalassotherapy to hay baths, and the manicured garden centres on a vine-clad pagoda and pond that are illuminated by night.

Eating

Aside from these options, the square is a safe bet for snacks and al-fresco dining. Many of the big hotels also have restaurants serving posh Austrian nosh.

Café Rupprechter (☎ 624 26; Josef-Herold-Strasse 3; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) Kitzbühel's best hazelnut ice cream, homemade strudel and pralines make the sweet-toothed locals squeal with pleasure at this family-run café.

Huberbräu Stüberl (☎ 656 77; Vorderstadt 18; mains €7-13; ☎ 8am-midnight Mon-Sat, 9am-midnight Sun) This vaulted tavern ditches the diet in favour of large portions of Austrian classics, such as schnitzel and liver dumplings, cooked to perfection.

Gallo (☎ 658 62; Vorderstadt 12; mains €7-16; ☎ 9am-midnight Tue-Sat, 2pm-midnight Sun) This trendy bistro-cum-bar jazzes up its minimalist interior with zebra stripes and mosaics. When the sun shines, diners spill out onto the terrace for antipasti, juicy steaks and wood-fired pizza.

La Fonda (☎ 736 73; Hinterstadt 13; mains €8-13; ☎ dinner) Bedecked with sombreros, copper pans and colourful throws, this cave-like Mexican haunt rolls out favourites like fiery jalapeno peppers, nachos and enchiladas.

Chizzo (☎ 624 75; Josef-Herold-Strasse 2; mains €10-25; ☎ lunch & dinner) A grandfather clock, white linen and fresh flowers create a refined ambience in Chizzo. The menu mixes Austrian and world flavours, from sander fillet on red wine risotto to Thai curry.

For self-caterers there's a **Spar supermarket** (Bichlstrasse 22).

Drinking & Entertainment

Kitzbühel rocks with fun-seeking skiers during the winter season. If you can muster up the energy after a day on the slopes, check out the following places.

The Londoner (☎ 714 28; Franz-Reich-Strasse 4; ☎ 6pm-late Wed-Sat) This raucous British den has great beer, crazy events and plenty of slapstick fun.

Bergsinn (☎ 668 18; Vorderstadt 21; ☎ 9am-2am Mon-Sat, 11am-2am Sun) Pop art and sphere-shaped lights glam up this funky bar with a cocktail happy hour (8pm to 9pm) and free wi-fi access for customers.

Café Grieserl (☎ 727 52; Im Gries 6; ☎ 3pm-4am) There's Newcastle Brown Ale on tap at this barn-style watering hole with big-screen sports, live music and DJs at weekends.

Highways (☎ 753 50; Im Gries 19; ☎ 8pm-late) This wacky American-themed bar is the place to chill in a 1958 Buick, get bumper to bumper on the dance floor and munch a hot dog. When midnight strikes, the Jägermeister shots are €1 a pop. There are events nearly every night, from live bands on Fridays to electro on Saturdays.

Club Take Five (☎ 713 00; Hinterstadt 22; ☎ 10pm-late) Bright young things pack the dance floor at this see-and-be-seen club with a trio of bars and a VIP area. DJs pump out house, soul and funk.

Getting There & Away

Direct train services from Kitzbühel to Innsbruck (€13.20, one hour) run every two hours, while most trains to Salzburg require a change at Wörgl (€23.30, 2½ hours). For Kufstein (€8.30, one hour), change at Wörgl.

Getting to Lienz by train is tricky, as one or two changes are required (€34.80, four hours). Bus is a better option as it takes two hours (€13.20, twice daily). Heading south to Lienz, you pass through some marvellous scenery. Highway 108 (the Felber Tauern Tunnel) and Hwy 107 (the Grossglockner Road, which is closed in winter) both have toll sections; see p318.

KUFSTEIN

☎ 05372 / pop 16,000

In the 1970s, Karl Ganzner waxed lyrical about Kufstein in the hit song *Perle Tirols*. His yodelling melody may be cheesier than Camembert but the lyrics ring true: this town squatting beneath the towering limestone pinnacles of the Kaisergebirge and hugging the banks of the Inn River is indeed a gem. Little wonder control of the town was hotly contested by Tyrol and Bavaria through the ages until it finally became Austrian property in 1814.

Orientation & Information

Kufstein is the northernmost town in the Inntal, just 4km from Germany. The

train station is on the west bank of river, a three-minute stroll from the main square, Stadtplatz. This is where you'll find the **tourist office** (☎ 622 07; www.kufstein.com; Unterer Stadtplatz 8; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat). Staff will hunt down accommodation without charging commission. If you stay overnight, ask for the *Gästekarte*, which has different benefits in summer and winter.

Sights

The big draw in the centre is the gingerbread **Römerhofgasse**, a medieval lane that looks like a Disney film set with overhanging arches, lanterns and frescoed façades. Even the obligatory shops full of tourist kitsch detract little from this fairytale-like alleyway.

For an insight into Kufstein's turbulent past, head up to the cliff-top **Festung Kufstein** (Kufstein Fortress; ☎ 602 350; Oberer Stadtplatz 6; adult/child summer €8.90/4.90, winter €8/4.40; ☎ 9am-5pm summer, 10am-4pm winter). The castle dates from 1205 (when Kufstein was part of Bavaria) and was a pivotal point of defence for both Bavaria and Tyrol during the struggles. The round **Kaiserturm** (Emperor's Tower) was added in 1522.

The lift to the top affords sweeping views over Kufstein and the surrounding peaks. Inside is the small but imaginatively presented **Heimatmuseum**, showcasing everything from Bronze Age urns to folk costumes and – drum roll please – Andreas Hofer's shoe. Below the Kaiserturm is the **Heldenorgel** (Heroes Organ) with 4307 pipes, 46 organ stops and a 100m gap between the keyboard and the tip of the pipes; the delay in the sounding of the notes makes playing it a tricky business. Catch recitals at noon and, in July and August, 5pm.

When the fortress is closed in the evening you can walk up the path in under 15 minutes and roam the ramparts and grounds free of charge. Dusk is also the best time to photograph the castle silhouetted against the mountains.

Activities

The **Kaisergebirge** range is a sheer wall of limestone to the east of Kufstein, rising to 2300m and stretching as far as St Johann in Tirol. It attracts walkers, mountaineers and skiers alike. The Kaisergebirge is actually two ranges, split by the east-west Kaisertal valley. The northern range is the Zahmer Kaiser (Tame Emperor) and the southern is the Wilder

Kaiser (Wild Emperor) – no medals for guessing which has the smoother slopes! Pick up a free *Wanderkarte* (walking map) from the tourist office.

A real blast from the past, the 1970s **chairlift** (one way/return €8/11; ☎ 9am-4pm May-Oct) to Wilder Kaiser has become a cult attraction. A sign says 'bouncing not permitted' and it soon becomes clear why: only itty-bitty bars prevent you from plummeting to the valley floor on this precipitous ride, which traverses ravines and cuts a path through dense forest home to deer and red squirrels. The magnificent Wilder Kaiser slides into view at the top station, which is the trailhead for the **Kaisergebirge Circuit** (see p89).

The tree-fringed **lakes** around Kufstein are best explored on foot or by bike; the closest are in the wooded area west of the Inn River, where there's a network of walking trails. Hechtsee, 3km to the northwest, and Stimmersee, 2.5km to the southwest, both have swimming areas that cost about €4. A free city bus goes to Hechtsee in summer during fine weather (ask at the tourist office).

Sleeping & Eating

Camping Maier (☎ 583 52; www.camping-maier.com, in German; Egerbach 54, Schwoich; campsites per adult/child/tent €4/2.70/6; ☎) Bordering woodland, this friendly campsite 5km south of Kufstein has tree-shaded pitches, plus a playground and outdoor pool to keep kids amused.

Gasthof-Pension Felsenkeller (☎ 627 84; www.felsenkeller.at, in German; Kienbergstrasse 35; s/d €38/72; ☎) In the foothills of the Kaisergebirge, this guesthouse is a calm haven hidden among tree-covered rocky crags. The country-style rooms are bright, spacious and have balconies. The cosy, wood-panelled restaurant serves freshly caught trout.

our pick **Auracher Löchl** (☎ 621 38; www.auracher-loechl.at; Römerhofgasse 3-5; s/d €56/98) Squeezed between Römerhofgasse and the Inn River, this hotel marries medieval charm with 21st-century comfort. The contemporary rooms are kitted out with chunky pinewood beds and flat-screen TVs (river or fortress views cost a little extra). Cross the footbridge to the low-beamed restaurant (mains €8 to €15), the one-time haunt of Andreas Hofer, where creaking floors and grinning badgers create a rustic feel. Enormous portions of Austrian classics like *Schweinshaxe* (basically half a pig) mean you'll roll out of the door fit to burst.

Inn-Café Hell (☎ 645 23; Unterer Stadtplatz 3; snacks & sweets €3-7; ☎ 8.30am-8pm summer, 9am-6pm winter) Facing the fast-flowing Inn, this central café opens onto a sunny terrace and whips up scrummy homemade strudel and walnut ice cream.

Batzenhäusl (☎ 624 33; Römerhofgasse 1; mains €7-14; ☎ lunch & dinner) Murals of merry wine-guzzlers reel you into Batzenhäusl, Tyrol's oldest wine tavern, which burrows into cliffs below the fortress. This eccentric, 500-year-old haunt is packed with curios from nativity scenes to 16th-century canon balls. The cuisine is seasonally inspired and the fluffy *Salzburger Nockerl* (Austrian soufflé) comes recommended.

Villa Masianco (☎ 636 33; Unterer Stadtplatz 18; mains €7-19; ☎ lunch & dinner) This sassy bistro on the square satisfies Kufstein's Italian cravings with risotto, fresh fish and tender veal fillets. Chandeliers, wooden floors and leather stools give the vaulted restaurant a modern kick. The chestnut tree-shaded terrace hums with life in summer.

Self caterers can stock up on supplies at the central **Spar** (Unterer Stadtplatz 27).

Getting There & Away

The hourly train to Kitzbühel (€8.30, one hour) requires a change at Wörgl. The easiest road route is also via Wörgl.

Kufstein is on the main Innsbruck–Salzburg train route; direct trains to Salzburg (€27.90, 1¼ hours) run every two hours; those to Innsbruck (€12.90, 45 to 70 minutes) are half-hourly, as some trains funnel down from Germany (Munich), which is on a direct line a little over an hour away. Buses leave from outside the train station.

SÖLL

☎ 05333 / pop 3450

Söll is a well-known ski resort 10km south of Kufstein. Once a favourite of boozy, boisterous visitors in the 1980s, the resort has successfully reinvented itself and is now a family-oriented place with myriad outdoor activities in summer and winter.

The helpful staff at the **tourist office** (☎ 52 16; www.soeil.com; Dorf 84; ☎ 8am-noon & 1.30-6pm Mon-Fri, 3-6pm Sat, 9am-noon Sun), in the centre of the village, provides information on activities and will help you find accommodation.

The highest skiing area overlooking the resort is Hohe Salve at 1828m, though Söll has also combined with neighbouring resorts Itter,

Hopfarten, Kelchsau, Westendorf and Brixen to form the mammoth **Skiwelt** (www.skiwelt.at) area, comprising 250km of pistes. Passes are €35.50 for a day in the high season. Cross-country skiing is also a popular winter pastime, with trails running as far as St Johann in Tirol.

In summer, walkers are drawn to **Hohe Salve** (cable car one way/return €10/12). At the first stage of the cable car climbing the mountain is **Hexenwasser**, a walking trail dotted with fun family activities. Along the route are water obstacles, sundials, playgrounds, a working mill and bakery and an apiary. Throughout the summer you can see (and sample) bread, schnapps and cheese made the traditional way.

Getting There & Away

Söll is on Hwy 312 between Wörgl and St Johann in Tirol. It's not on a train line, but there are plenty of buses Monday to Saturday from Kufstein (€3.80, 50 minutes); only three run on Sunday.

WESTERN TYROL

STAMS

☎ 05263 / pop 1300

One of Tyrol's true architectural highlights is the ochre-and-white **Zisterzienstift** (Cistercian abbey; ☎ 62 42; Stiftshof 1; tours adult/child €4/2.50) in Stams, founded in 1273 by Elizabeth of Bavaria, the mother of Conradin, the last of the Hohenstaufens. Set in pristine grounds, the monumental façade stretches 80m and is easily recognised by its pair of silver cupolas at the front, which were added as a final flourish when the abbey was revamped in baroque style in the 17th century. The exuberant church interior is dominated by the high altar: the intertwining branches of this version of the 'tree of life' support 84 saintly figures surrounding an image of the Virgin. Near the entrance is the **Rose Grille**, an exquisite iron screen made in 1716. Crane your neck to admire the ceiling adorned with rich stucco work, gold swirls and elaborate frescoes by Georg Wolkner.

The abbey can only be visited by guided tour, from 9am to 11am and 1pm to 5pm (afternoon hours are shorter in May and from October to April). Tours leave every hour on the hour, except in July when they're available every half-hour. Marmalade and schnapps made on the premises can be bought from the **Kloster shop** (☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm).

Stams is on the train route between Innsbruck and Landeck, but only (frequent) regional trains stop here (€7, 35 minutes). Both the A12/E60 and Hwy 171 pass near the abbey.

THE ÖTZTAL

pop 12,000

The Ötztal (Ötz Valley) is a place of raw elemental forces: rugged mountains and wooded slopes, shimmering snowfields and blue glaciers shape this corner of Tyrol. Guarding the border to Italy, this is one of three river valleys running north from the **Ötztaler Alpen** to drain into the Inn River. Dwarfed by Tyrol's highest peak, **Wildspitze** (3774m), the region is a year-round magnet to skiers, hikers and mountaineers.

Most villages in the valley have supermarkets, banks, camping grounds and tourist offices. The latter can supply you with information on activities and accommodation; room rates are 30% to 50% higher in winter. If you're here in summer, ask about the **Ötztal Card** (7/10 days €56/74), which covers public transport, cable cars and numerous swimming pools in the valley.

Sights & Activities

After Ötz, the first village of any size along the valley is **Umhausen**, home to **Ötzi Dorf** (☎ 05255-500 22; adult/child €5.90/2.80; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm May-Oct), a fascinating open-air museum recreating the Neolithic world of Ötzi the ice man (see boxed text, opposite). A visit takes in traditional thatched huts, herb gardens, craft displays and enclosures where wild boar and oxen roam. From here, it's a pleasant 40-minute amble along a forest trail to Tyrol's longest waterfall, **Stuibfall**, cascading 159m over slate cliffs and moss-covered boulders.

Just 10km down the valley is Längenfeld's futuristic spa, **Aqua Dome** (☎ 05253-64 00; www.aquadome.at; Oberlängenfeld 140; 3hr card adult/child Mon-Fri €14/7, Sat & Sun €16/9; ☎ 9am-11pm). Set against the backdrop of the Ötztaler Alps, the focal point is its trio of flying saucer-shaped pools, where thermal waters gurgle and pummel you into a blissful state of relaxation. It's particularly spacey at night when a fluorescent pyramid illuminates the tubs; pick a jet to gaze up at the stars and summits.

The thermal baths anchor the **sauna** (€7; ☎ 10am-11pm), a marvellously surreal experience for those who dare to bare. Abandon

ENTOMBED IN ICE

In September 1991 German hikers in the Ötztaler Alpen came across the body of a man preserved within the Similaun Glacier. Police and forensic scientists were summoned to the scene. The body had been found some 90m within Italy, but was appropriated by the Austrians and taken to Innsbruck University to be studied.

Experts initially decided it was about 500 years old. The ice man, nicknamed 'Ötzi' or 'Frozen Fritz', was thought to have been a soldier serving under Archduke Ferdinand. Carbon dating, however, revealed he was nearly 5400 years old, placing him in the late Stone Age and making him the oldest and best-preserved mummy in the world.

Ötzi became big news, more so because the state of preservation was remarkable; even the pores of the skin were visible. In addition, Ötzi had been found with 70 artefacts, including a copper axe, bow and arrows, charcoal and clothing. Physiologically he was found to be no different from modern humans. His face was reconstructed, right down to his dark hair and blue eyes. X-rays showed he had suffered from arthritis and frostbite, and his ribs had been broken.

For many years debate raged over how the Iceman met his end, but recent analysis has revealed Ötzi was involved in a violent struggle and died while trying to escape. Blood on his weapons and clothes were discovered to be from other persons, and an arrow wound to his back and knife gashes to his arms all pointed to a fight. His copper axe is still a matter of debate, however; while copper dating from the age of Ötzi has been found in other parts of Austria, Germany and Switzerland, it predates knowledge of the use of copper in the Ötztal area by 500 years.

Not everybody was worried about the finer points of his heritage, however. Several Austrian and Italian women contacted the university shortly after the discovery and requested that they be impregnated with Ötzi's frozen sperm, but the all-important part of his body was missing.

In 1998 Ötzi was relinquished to the Italians and became the centrepiece of a new museum in Bolzano.

modesty to swelter in barn-style saunas, hay rooms, honey-scented cabins and the vaulted **Dampf-Dom**, a steaming shrine where Gregorian chants play. For the ultimate chill-out, step inside the teeth-chattering ice chamber or the rain temple where you can choose to be drenched by a thunderstorm, a raging waterfall or fine morning mist.

Rolling 20km down the valley you hit **Sölden** (1377m), a ski resort with snow-sure slopes and pulsating nightlife. The resort's 150km of pistes include red and blue runs, glacier skiing at Rettenbach and Tiefenbach, plus the alpine rally on Big 3 – three summits over 3000m. The **tourist office** (☎ 05254-510-0; www.soelden.com; Gemeindefestrasse 4; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Sat, 9am-noon Sun) can arrange accommodation and has brochures on activities in the area. There are two ways to reach the surrounding rugged peaks from the village; a chairlift climbs to **Hochsölden** (2090m; one-way/return €5.50/7.50), while a cable car rises to **Gaislachkogel** (3058m; return €19.50) where there are sweeping views of the entire Ötztal Alps. Ski passes are €41.50 for a day in the high season.

Further south is **Obergurgl** (1930m), the highest parish in Austria. It's another well-known ski resort popular with families, as

pistes are mostly suitable for beginners and intermediates and continue right to the edge of the village. **Hohe Mut** (2659m) is a justly famous lookout, accessible by chairlift year-round. Obergurgl is actually at the head of the valley, but the road doubles back on itself and rises to **Hochgurgl** (2150m). Here the pistes are a little steeper and the views equally impressive. The Obergurgl **tourist office** (☎ 05256-6466; www.obergurgl.com; in German; Gurglerstrasse 18; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-4pm Sat, 9.30am-noon Sun summer, 9am-5.30pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-noon Sun winter) covers both resorts, as does one **ski pass** (day/week pass €41.50/228.50). A gondola provides easy access between Obergurgl's and Hochgurgl's pistes.

Just beyond Hochgurgl, where the road makes a sharp right-hand turn, is another viewing point, the **Windegg Belvedere** (2080m). The road continues into Italy over the **Timmelsjoch Pass** (2474m; car/motorbike €13/11) where it joins the course of the Timmelsbach River.

Getting There & Away

Arriving by train, get off at Ötztal Bahnhof, from where buses head south into the valley. In the summer and winter high seasons buses depart almost hourly (only every two hours

in the low season) and go as far as Oberurgl (one way/return €8.30/16.60, 1½ hours). From mid-July to mid-September two morning buses continue as far as Timmelsjoch, on the Italian border, but a change is required at Oberurgl.

If you have your own wheels, you should be able to get at least as far as Hochurgl all year, but the road beyond into Italy (via the Timmelsjoch Pass) is often blocked by snow in winter.

IMST

☎ 05412 / pop 9000

Beautifully situated in the wide Gurgltal (Gurgl Valley) and spreading towards a jagged range of peaks, Imst is one of the region's best-kept secrets. With its alpine-crisp air, undulating meadows and hidden ravines, this unassuming little town is a terrific base for silent uphill trudes. While skiers carve up the slopes in the nearby Ötztal, Haflinger horses graze on these hillsides – it's a taste of Tyrol before the tourists got there.

The **tourist office** (☎ 69 10-0; www.imst.at; Johannesplatz 4; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) is highly informed on accommodation and activities in Imst and its surrounds; there's also free internet access.

Sights & Activities

Every four years, Imst plays host to a Shrovetide festival, the **Schemenlaufen** (ghost dance); the next takes place on 15 February 2009. The highlight is the vibrant parade of ghost-like characters, from hunchback *Hexen* (witches) to impish *Spritzer* that squirt water at spectators. To learn more about this age-old tradition, visit the **Fasnachthaus** (☎ 69 10; Streleweg 6; adult/child €4/1; ☎ 4-6pm Fri), which exhibits many of the handcarved ghost masks.

In summer, Imst is ideal for easy rambling with 350km of well-marked hiking trails heading off into the hills. A favourite among families is the three-hour loop that leads up the glacier-carved **Rosengartenschlucht** ravine to Hoch-Imst, where walkers can admire vistas of the Lechtaler Alps, bathe in a clear mountain lake and race downhill in a rickety roller coaster (see p91).

Sleeping & Eating

Imst has a sprinkling of good-value places to stay and eat. Drop into the tourist office for a list of private rooms, guesthouses and farms in the area.

HEAVY ROCK

Fans of rude rocks should make the pilgrimage to the bizarrely named **Erdpyramiden** (earth columns) in the little village of Roppen, 10 minutes from Imst. An hour's trudge along a narrow trail and past trickling waterfalls brings you to this collection of hoodoos – thin rock spires that suddenly pop up as you're wandering through the shady woods. Remnants of the last Ice Age and formed by erosion over centuries, these geological wonders assume various shapes and sizes. Among them are a couple of strikingly phallic monoliths that seem like ancient Austrian fertility symbols lost and long forgotten in this beautiful forest.

Camping Imst-West (☎ 662 93; Langgasse 62; campsites per adult/child/site €6/3/7.50) Perched above Imst, this friendly camping ground surrounded by pastures is a peaceful spot to pitch your tent. The first-rate facilities include a kiosk, snack bar and playground.

Gasthof Hirschen (☎ 69 01; www.hirschen-imst.at; in German; Thomas-Walch-Strasse 3; s/d €48/74; ☎ ☎ ☎) This central family-run guesthouse has comfy rooms, a swimming pool and free wi-fi. A plate of venison ragout is never far away in the wood-panelled restaurant (mains €10 to €18), where stag heads grace the walls.

Getting There & Away

The town is slightly to the north of the main east-west roads (the A12/E60 and Hwy 171), and is served by frequent buses and trains (from Innsbruck €10.20, one hour).

EHRWALD

☎ 05673 / pop 2550

The crowning glory of the small resort of Ehrwald is **Zugspitze** (2962m), marking the border between Austria and Germany. A speedy cable car (summer one way/return €21/32) sails to the crest, where there's a magnificent panorama of the main Tyrolean mountain ranges, as well as the Bavarian Alps and Mt Säntis in Switzerland. North of Zugspitze is Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany's most popular ski resort, which also offers access to the summit.

Ehrwald is linked with other resorts in Austria (including Seefeld) and Germany (including Garmisch-Partenkirchen) under the

Happy Ski Card (adult/child for the minimum 3 days €88/53). For information on accommodation and activities, contact the **tourist office** (☎ 05673-23 95; ehrwald@zugspitze.tirol.at; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat) in the heart of the town. Staff will help find rooms free of charge.

Trains from Seefeld (€9.30, 1½ hours) and Innsbruck (€16.30, two hours) to Ehrwald pass through Germany; you must change at Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Austrian train tickets are valid for the whole trip.

LANDECK

☎ 05442 / pop 7500

Sitting pretty above the fast-flowing Inn and Sanna Rivers, Landeck receives just a trickle of tourists. Yet it has an awful lot going for it: a cliff-top medieval castle to act out Rapunzel fantasies, a precipitous gorge, and orchards in neighbouring Stanz that are perfect for summertime schnapps-guzzling. The Alps are the town's natural skyscrapers and provide a backdrop for high-altitude activities from skiing to hiking, cycling and white-water rafting.

Orientation & Information

Most of Landeck's restaurants and hotels cluster on Malserstrasse. Here you'll find the **tourist office** (☎ 656 00; www.tirolwest.at; Malserstrasse; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-noon Sat), where the friendly staff will help book accommodation. If you're staying overnight in summer, pick up the Tirol West Card for free access to the major sights, outdoor pools and the bus network.

The train station is 1.5km to the east; to get into town walk left on leaving the station and stay on the same side of the river. Local buses also make the trip (one way €1.60).

Sights & Activities

Your gaze is drawn upward to the turrets and vine-clad towers of 13th-century **Schloss Landeck** (☎ 632 02; Schlossberg; adult/student €6.50/4; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun mid-May-Sep, 2-5pm Tue-Sun Oct). The 1st-floor museum showcases everything from Celtic figurines to handcarved *Krampus* masks. The castle is especially lovely at Christmas when the mechanised nativity scene is in full swing. For enviable views over Landeck and the Lechtaler Alps, climb the dizzying staircase to the tower.

Landeck attracts the odd skier or two to its 22km of gentle slopes (a day ski pass in high season costs €25), but is better known

for its excellent hiking trails. In summer, the **Venet cable car** (one way/return €10.20/12.20) zooms up to Krahberg (2208m), where there is a web of marked footpaths. The 280km Adlerweg trail (p86) also stops off in Landeck on its journey through Tyrol. The tourist office arranges guided walks, which are free with a Tirol West Card.

Adventurous types make for **Sport Camp Tirol** (☎ 646 36; www.sportcampTirol.at; Mühlkanal 1), offering activities from canyoning and paragliding to glacier tours, rock climbing and rafting on the Inn River. You can also rent **mountain bikes** (half/full day €18/22) here to head off on one of the tourist office's free GPS tours or tackle the downhill Inn Trail (p78).

A rollercoaster of water thrashes limestone cliffs at **Zammer Lochputz** (☎ 656 00; Hauptstrasse 53, Zams; adult/child €3.50/2.50; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm May-Sep, 9.30am-4pm Oct), a fine specimen of a gorge just outside of Landeck. Cutting a path through pine forest, the trail passes viewpoints and some interesting rock formations – look out for the head of a bull and a nymph.

If the fresh air and activity have worked up a thirst, pop over to **Stanz** (4km away). Set on a sunny plateau dotted with apple and plum orchards, the village is home to 600 residents and a mind-boggling 65 schnapps distilleries. There are a number of rustic huts where you can kick back and taste the local firewater before rolling back down to the valley.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Sonne (☎ 625 19; www.hotel-sonne-landeck.at; Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse 10; s/d €28/56; ☎ ☎) It's hard to miss this dazzling canary-yellow hotel on the main drag. The décor is nondescript, but rooms are comfortable and reasonably priced.

Gasthof Greif (☎ 622 68; Marktplatz 6; s/d €34/56; ☎ ☎) Greif sits on a square above the main street just down from the castle. Its 1970s-style rooms are large and well kept, and its restaurant (mains €7 to €13) serves solid Tyrolean cuisine.

Tramserhof (☎ 622 46; www.tramserhof.at; in German; Tramserweg 51; s/d €62/104; ☎ ☎) Nestled among trees, this lodge is a calm retreat 20 minutes' walk from the centre. The rooms are country-style with loads of natural light and warm pine. The spa shelters a whirlpool and sauna. Tuck into organic produce at breakfast.

Café Haag (☎ 623 28-0; Maisengasse 19; coffee & snacks €3-6; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-7pm Sat, 10am-7pm

Sun) Locally picked plums are the key ingredient in this café's divine chocolates. Once you've sampled them, try the cakes – just the sugar kick needed for the uphill trudge to the castle.

Hotel Schrofenstein (☎ 623 95; Malserstrasse 31; mains €12-23; ☎ lunch & dinner) Schrofenstein's restaurant dishes up Austrian classics from veal goulash to spinach *Spätzle* (egg noodles) in wood-panelled surroundings. When the sun's out, pull up a chair on the chestnut tree-shaded terrace.

Getting There & Away

InterCity express trains operate hourly to Innsbruck (€11.90, 50 minutes) and every two hours to Bregenz (€19.90). Buses head in all directions, departing from outside the train station and/or from the bus station in the centre.

The A12/E60 into Vorarlberg passes by Landeck, burrowing into a tunnel as it approaches the town. Highway 315, the Inntal road, passes through the centre of town.

THE INNTAL

pop 11,250

Shadowing the turquoise Inn River, the Inntal (Inn Valley) extends for 230km within Tyrol. There are few major sights in this region but the scenery is beautiful, particularly around **Pfunds**, shifting from jagged pinnacles to gently rolling greenery. Many homes here are similar in design to those found in the Engadine in Graubünden, Switzerland, further up the Inn Valley.

South of Pfunds, you have the choice of routes. If you continue along the Inn you'll end up in Switzerland (infrequent buses). Alternatively, if you bear south to Nauders you'll soon reach South Tyrol (Italy) by way of the Reschen Pass (open year-round). Six buses daily run from Landeck to Nauders (€9.30, one hour), where it's possible to head on with public transport to Merano in Italy, but at least three changes are required.

THE PAZNAUNAL

pop 5950

Grazing the Swiss border and running west of the Inntal, the **Paznaunal** (Paznaun Valley) is a dramatic landscape overshadowed by the glaciated peaks of the Silvretta range. The villages are low-key in summer, but the lull is broken in winter when a deep carpet of

snow draws skiers to party-hearty resorts like **Ischgl** (below).

The valley is undoubtedly one of Austria's best ski areas, despite (or because of) its relative isolation. The **Silvretta Ski Pass** (2-day pass adult/child €80/45.50) covers Ischgl, Galtür, Kappl and Samnaun, a duty-free area in Switzerland. Its summer equivalent (3-day pass adult/child €32.50/19.50) comprises cable cars, lifts, public transport over the Bielerhöhe Pass into Vorarlberg, and a number of swimming pools in Ischgl and Galtür.

Around 10km from Ischgl is the uncrowded resort of **Galtür**. This unspoilt village suffered a major disaster in February 1999 when an avalanche all but swept it away. A museum documenting the event has been built on the spot, the **Alpinarium Galtür** (☎ 05443-200 00; www.alpinarium.at; in German; adult/child €8/4; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun). Inside you'll find many poignant reminders of the devastation in the shape of photos, newspaper reports and some incredible video footage.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Only a secondary road (Hwy 188) runs along the valley, crossing into Vorarlberg at Bielerhöhe Pass (p378), where there are excellent views. This pass (toll cars/motorcycles €11.50/10.50) is closed during winter and rejoins the main highway near Bludenz. Regular buses travel along the valley as far as Galtür (€7, 70 minutes) from Landeck.

Ischgl

☎ 05444 / pop 1500

When the first flakes fall, the alpine village of Ischgl becomes a quintessential powdersville with snow-sure slopes and a boisterous après-ski scene that gives St Anton am Arlberg a run for its money. The resort is a bizarre combination of rural meets raunchy; a place where log chalets and lap-dancing bars, folk music and techno coexist. Love it or lump it, this is no place for retiring wallflowers, especially during the season-closing Top of the Mountain Concert, which has welcomed a host of stars including Sting, Bon Jovi and Elton John in recent years.

ORIENTATION & INFORMATION

The **tourist office** (☎ 52 66-0; www.ischgl.com; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon & 4-6pm Sat, 10am-noon Sun) stocks heaps of literature on hiking, biking and skiing in the area. Ischgl is compact

and walkable, with most hotels, restaurants and bars huddling on Dorfstrasse, the main thoroughfare, which is just a short amble from the ski lifts.

ACTIVITIES

At the heart of the Silvretta Arena, Ischgl offers fabulous **skiing**, with ultramodern lifts and access to 230km of groomed slopes that are perfect for carving and cruising. The runs are mainly geared towards intermediates, but there are several black runs and off-piste opportunities to satisfy experts. The terrain is equally ideal for **snowboarding** with two half-pipes and a dedicated boarding park.

In winter, the 7km **toboggan track** (adult/child €10/4.50) offers a bumpy downhill dash through the snow from Idalp to Ischgl, which is particularly scenic when floodlit on Monday and Thursday nights.

There are few Austrian resorts that can match Ischgl for **mountain biking**. The mammoth Silvretta Mountain Bike Arena (p79) features 1000km of bikeable territory ranging from downhill tracks to circular trails and a technique park. Pick up a free map of the area at the tourist office. **Ischgl Bike** (☎ 52 62; www.ischgl-bike.at; in German; Ischgl 22) rents quality bikes for €23 per day.

Walking is another big draw in summer, ranging from gentle rambles alongside shimmering lakes to ambitious scrambling on the **Klettersteige** (fixed rope routes) at 2872m Greitspitz and 2929m Flimspitze. In total, the area comprises some 300km of trails interspersed with 18 mountain huts.

SLEEPING & EATING

The following accommodation is open year-round. Ischgl's best beds fill up quickly in winter, so booking ahead is recommended. Expect prices to be roughly double those quoted below in the high winter season. Aside from La Candela, the restaurants close in summer.

Designers from Laura Ashley to Philippe Starck have put their contemporary stamp on the rooms at boutiquey **Hotel Madlein** (☎ 52 26; Ischgl 144; www.ischglmadlein.com; s €127-210, d €150-280; (P) (A) (S)). A few paces from the ski lifts, this hip hotel lures with its Zen-style garden and slick cocktail bar. If you're seeking budget rather than blowout, centrally located **Eveline** (☎ 53 10; Ischgl 187; s/d €32/60; (P)) and **Vereina** (☎ 56 40; Ischgl 277; d €36; (P)) are

both cosy chalet-style pensions with a homy atmosphere and clean, comfy rooms.

There are loads of dining possibilities in the centre. A great choice for thin and crispy pizzas is **La Candela** (☎ 55 80; Ischgl 175; pizza €6-12; ☎ lunch & dinner) at Hotel Victoria. Housed in a dark-wood chalet, **Bauernküche Loba** (☎ 52 89; Ischgl 45; mains €8-17; ☎ dinner) rustles up huge portions of Tyrolean favourites like **Kaschnödel** (cheese dumplings). The new kid on the slopes is the stone-and-glass **Alpenhaus Restaurant** (☎ 52 70; Idalp; mains €6-15; ☎ 9am-4pm) next to the Silvretta lift, with charcoal grill specialities and a fabulous sun terrace.

DRINKING

Ischgl's après-ski is so hot it's a wonder the snow doesn't melt: a cocktail of oompah-playing alpine barns, saucy go-go bars and chichi clubs shake the resort. The following places, except for the Golden Eagle Pub, only open in winter.

There's nothing like a little slope-side socialising to gear up for a big night out in Ischgl; lively après-ski haunts include **Kuhstall** (☎ 52 23; Ischgl 80; ☎ 3pm-midnight) and **Feuer & Eis** (☎ 59 18; ☎ 4-7pm), both offering an electric vibe, ear-splitting music and plenty of bopping in moonboots.

For a pint of Kilkenny, a laid-back vibe and ZZ Top at full blast, make for the **Golden Eagle Pub** (☎ 56 71; Ischgl 6; ☎ 8pm-2am). Even party diva Paris Hilton has been spotted slurping prosecco at the legendary **Pacha** (☎ 52 26; Hotel Madlein; ☎ 10pm-5am), which brims with beautiful people and sidles up to the Coyote Ugly lap-dancing bar. Another celebrity favourite is the wild **Trofana Arena** (☎ 600-700; Ischgl 334; ☎ 9pm-5am) with frequent live music, laser shows and scantily-clad go-go dancers.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

An efficient bus service operates between Landeck (€5.90, 55 minutes) and Ischgl hourly from Monday to Friday and every two hours at weekends.

ARLBERG REGION

The Arlberg region, shared by Vorarlberg and Tyrol, comprises several linked resorts and offers some of Austria's finest skiing. Heralded as the cradle of alpine skiing, St Anton am Arlberg is undoubtedly the best known and

most popular resort. For other destinations in Arlberg, see p379.

The winter season is long, with snow reliable till about mid-April. Summer is less busy (and cheaper), though still popular with walkers. Even so, some of the restaurants, bars and discos that swing during the ski season are closed. Most others close between seasons, and open from late June to October. Many guesthouses and some hotels do likewise.

ST ANTON AM ARLBERG

☎ 05446 / pop 2600

In the beginning there was St Anton, a sleepy village in the rugged Arlberg. For centuries seasons were defined by the falling and melting of snow and the coming and going of cattle, until one day the locals beheld the virgin powder on their doorstep – and there was light! In 1901, the resort founded the first ski club in the Alps and downhill skiing was born. So if ever the ski bug is going to bite you, it will surely be here. Nestled at the foot of 2811m-high Valluga, St Anton am Arlberg is a cross between a ski bum's Shangri-La and Ibiza in fast-forward mode – the terrain is fierce and the nightlife hedonistic.

Orientation

St Anton is strung out along the northern bank of the Rosanna River. The modern train station is on the Rendl side, a few paces from the Dorfstrasse (pedestrian-only centre) and the ski lifts. A 10-minute stroll east is Nasserein, where novices can test out the nursery slopes. Further east still are the quieter slopes of St Jakob, easily accessed by the Nasserein gondola.

Information

The centrally located **tourist office** (☎ 226 90; www.stantonamarlberg.com; Arlberg Haus; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat & Sun summer, 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 9am-noon & 2-5pm Sun winter) has information on outdoor activities, maps and places to stay. There's an accommodation board and a free telephone outside.

The post office is near the Rosanna River, off the northern end of the pedestrian zone. **Mailbox** (Dorfstrasse 54; per hr €6; ☎ 8.30am-8.30pm winter, noon-5pm Mon-Fri summer) has internet access, but you can check emails for free in most ski shops.

Sights & Activities

The nostalgic **Ski & Heimat Museum** (☎ 24 75; Rudi-Matt-Weg 10; adult/child €3/1; 🕒 11am-5pm Tue-Sun Jul & Aug, 1-5pm Tue-Sun Sep-Jun) traces St Anton's tracks back to the good old days when skis were made of wood and men were as tough as hobnail boots.

St Anton is at the very pinnacle of Austria's alpine **skiing** and the spacey Galzigbahn gondola, launched in 2007, has further improved conditions. The terrain is vast and the skiing challenging, with exhilarating descents including the Kandahar run on Galzig and fantastic backcountry opportunities. Cable cars ascend to Valluga (2811m) from where experts can go off-piste all the way to Lech (with a ski guide only). For fledglings, there are nursery slopes on Gampen (1850m) and Kapall (2330m). Rendl is **snowboarding** territory with jump, rails and a half-pipe. A single **ski pass** (1-/3-/7-day high-season pass €41.50/114/224, discounts at other times of the year) covers the whole Arlberg region. It is valid for 83 ski lifts, giving access to 276km of prepared pistes.

Adding to this enormous winter playground is the 4km-long **Rodelbahn** (toboggan run), where sledding fans can hurtle and bounce past snowy trees down to the valley; the track is floodlit every Tuesday and Thursday night. With glowing faces and frosty fingers, most sledders stop at the halfway hut, **Rodelalm** (mains €10-16), to warm up with schnapps and a big plate of *Schweinshaxe* (pork knuckles).

In summer, **walking** in the mountains is the most popular activity and the meadows full of wildflowers and grazing cattle are pure Heidi. During this time, a handful of **cable cars and lifts** (one way €4-18, return €5-20) rise up to the major peaks. If you're planning on going hiking, pick up a detailed booklet and map from the tourist office and consider purchasing a **Wanderpass** (7-day €30), providing unlimited access to all lifts, or a **St Anton Card** (€45), which offers the same benefits plus entrance to the town's indoor and outdoor swimming pool.

Cyclists are also catered for: the tourist office produces a small booklet (in German only) with a number of suggested trails in the area.

Sleeping

Budget beds are as rare as the yeti in St Anton, so it's worth booking ahead. Prices tend to drop the further you move from the centre; Nasserein and St Jakob are safe bets, just a

ST ANTON AM ARLBERG

0 0 500 m
0 0.3 miles

A		B		C		D			
INFORMATION				EATING 🍴					
Mailbox.....	1	D4	Bobo's.....	10	D4	Bar Cuba.....	20	D4	
Post Office.....	2	D4	Bodega.....	11	D4	Fang House.....	21	C3	
Tourist Office.....	3	D4	Floriani.....	12	B4	Heustadl.....	22	A4	
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES				DRINKING 🍷					
Ski & Heimat Museum.....	4	B4	Fuhrmann Stube.....	13	D3	Krazy Kanguruh.....	23	B3	
				Moosewirt.....				24	B4
				Piccadilly.....				(see 8)	
				Sennhütte.....				25	A4
SLEEPING 🛏				ENTERTAINMENT 🎪					
Bergschloß.....	5	B4	Pomodoro.....	16	D4	Kandahar.....	26	D4	
Haus Moostal.....	7	D4	Rodelalm.....	17	B2				
Hotel Alte Post.....	7	D4	Spar.....	18	D4				
Hotel Post.....	8	D4					TRANSPORT		
Tiroler Frieden.....	9	C3	Albi.....	19	D3	Bus Station.....	27	B4	
				Intersport Alberg.....				28	C4
				Sport Alberg.....				(see 8)	

Map Details:

- Scale:** 0 to 500 meters / 0 to 0.3 miles.
- Compass Rose:** Shows North (N) and other directions.
- Inset Map:** Shows the town center with a scale of 0 to 100 meters / 0 to 0.1 miles.
- Key Locations:** Nasserein, Moos, Gastig, Oberdorf, Rendlbahn, Arlberg Str, Alte Arlbergstr, To Rendlbahn (2.2km), To St Christoph (6km), Lech (18km), To Galzig (1.3km), Moos, Valluga (4.4km), To Jakob (1km), Gästehaus Alpina (1km), Landeck (28km), Innsbruck (112km).
- Ski Lifts:** Nassereinerbahn, Arlbergbahn, Moosweg, Galzigbahn, Unterer Moosweg, Rudl-Matt-Weg, Rendlbahn.
- Landmarks:** Rodelbahn (Illuminated Bob Sled Run), Rosanna, Nassereinerstr, Nassereingasse, Dorfstr, Arlberg Str, Harkkirche, Kirchgasse, Bahnhof, Seilbahn, To Kapall (1.2km).

15- to 20-minute stroll away. There are hundreds of options in St Anton, but many of the smaller pensions only open in winter. The following places are open in summer (June to September) and winter (December to April). In the high winter season, rates can be as much as double as those given below.

Tiroler Frieden (☎ 22 47; tiroler.frieden@st-anton.at; Dorfstrasse 75; d €36; 📍) Backing onto the lower ski slopes, this quaint chalet is among St Anton's best budget digs. The no-frills rooms are old-style with heavy wood paneling and chintzy fabrics, but they're comfy and spotlessly clean.

Gästehaus Alpina (☎ 33 15; gaestehaus.alpina@st-anton.at; Gsörrerweg 26; s/d €23/40; 📍) This lovely wooden chalet in St Jakob is a 20-minute walk

from the centre. Opening onto balconies, the tidy rooms are kitted out with cable TV and broadband.

Haus Moostal (☎ 28 31; info@hausmoostal.at; Marktstrasse 14; s/d €29/52;  ) You'll receive a warm welcome at this little gem of a guesthouse. Dressed in blonde wood furnishings, the bright rooms have squishy beds and wi-fi. There's a tiny sauna onsite.

Hotel Post (☎ 221 30; www.hotel-post.co.at; Walter-Schuler-Weg 2; s/d €62/114; (P) (Q) (A)) This hotel's large, modern rooms are full of little extras such as bottled water, fruit and wi-fi. The meditation room, saunas and whirlpool are ideal for chilling out after a day on the slopes.

Bergschlössl (☎ 22 00; info@bergschloessl.at; Kandaharweg 13; s/d €69/125; 📍) Right next to the

Galgzbahn lift, you can't beat Berschlössl for easy access to the slopes and alpine appeal. The snug rooms have been decorated with a razor-sharp eye for detail, with fireplaces or tiled stoves and hand-painted tiles in the bathrooms.

Hotel Alte Post (☎ 54 46; www.hotel-alte-post.at, in German; Dorfstrasse 11; s/d €104/176; (P) (Q) (Q)) Centrally located, this 17th-century hotel exudes Tyrolean charm. Individually designed rooms feature four-star trimmings like fluffy bathrobes and internet access. The spa is a big draw with herbal saunas, a salt grotto and an arm-long list of treatments from hay baths to hot chocolate massages.

Eating

Because of the lopsidedness of St Anton's seasons, many restaurants only open in winter (high season times are given below). Quiet is not a word in St Anton's vocabulary and most places double as vibrant bars after dinner.

Bodega (☎ 427 88; Dorfstrasse 38; tapas €2.50-10; ☎ 3pm-1am) Tapas and *vino tinto* reel in crowds to this Spanish haunt, where live music creates a buzzy vibe.

Pomodoro (☎ 33 33; Dorfstrasse 5; mains €7-9; ☎ dinner) The homemade pasta and pizza at this lively bistro would make mamma proud. Prices are pocket-pleasing too.

Funky Chicken (☎ 302 01; Dorfstrasse 7; mains €7-11; ☎ 6pm-2am) St Anton's hottest chick, this livewire dishes up chicken in various guises, cheap beer and a pick'n'mix of DJs. The atmosphere is crazy, especially on Wednesday's so-called Swedish head-banging night when the place is packed to the gunnels.

Floriani (☎ 23 30; Alte Arlbergstrasse 13; mains €7-15; ☎ dinner Tue-Sun) This cheery family-run place rustles up a mix of Italian and Austrian grub

in wood-panelled surroundings; the pizzas are the stars of the menu.

Fuhrmann Stube (☎ 29 21; Dorfstrasse 74; mains €8-14; ☎ lunch & dinner) When snow blankets the rooftops, this cosy hideaway is a great spot to relax and tuck into a plate of steaming *Knödel* (dumplings).

Museum Restaurant (☎ 2475; Rudi-Matt-Weg 10; mains €15-25; ☎ dinner Tue-Sun) Under the Heimat Museum, this gorgeous Tyrolean restaurant cooks with locally sourced produce – you can even fish your own trout from the pond. Snuggle up by the open fire in winter or refresh with homemade ice cream in summer.

Bobo's (☎ 271 454; Dorfstrasse 60; ☎ 5pm-2am) Tex-Mex food and potent cocktails make Bobo's a perennial favourite. The party cranks up after fajitas and a fistful of nachos, with everything from karaoke to live bands and DJs.

Self-caterers have a choice of supermarkets. There's a centrally located **Spar** (Dorfstrasse 66), which houses the **Murr** (☎ 2202-0) deli, serving hot takeaway lunches from Monday to Saturday (€4 to €6).

Drinking & Entertainment

St Anton is Austria's Duracell Bunny: load the batteries in the form of several Jägermeister shots and watch it hop, bop and bounce off the walls till the wee hours. The après-ski is the wildest this side of the Alps and stamina is a prerequisite for completing (conscious) the infamous bar crawl.

Krazy Kanguruh (☎ 26 33; Mooserweg 19; ☎ 10am-8pm) Right next to the slopes, this drinking den is loud, fun and jam-packed after 5pm. Expect rounds of shots, an indoor snow machine and some serious ski stumbling back to the valley.

Bar Cuba (☎ 0664-6523 886; Dorfstrasse 33; ☎ 4pm-3am) This popular watering hole has big-screen

sports, chirpy staff and aptly named cocktails like Cuban Cocaine and Sex on the Piste.

Albi (☎ 31 72; Dorfstrasse 78; ☎ 4pm-1am) If a spit-and-sawdust pub is what you're seeking, this place delivers with local characters at the bar and Guinness on tap.

Mooserwirt (☎ 35 88; Unterer Mooserweg 2; ☎ 11am-8pm) St Anton's undisputed king of après-ski, Mooserwirt claims to sell more beer per square metre than anywhere else in Austria. By teatime, the hilltop terrace heaves with swinging steins and Europop. The challenge is to make it down to St Anton in one piece, which begs the question: how can you ski when you're legless?

Sennhütte (☎ 20 48; ☎ 11am-8pm) This snug alpine chalet scores points for its sunny terrace, burning schnapps and frolicsome crowd. The one-man band Didi Diesel regularly takes the stage by storm.

Heustadl (☎ 302 97; ☎ 9.30am-7am) Just north of Sennhütte, this woodsy slopeside chalet is always packed to the rafters with a post-ski crowd craving beer and live music. Check out the bizarre legged bar stools.

Fang House (☎ 0676-4091 010; Nassereinerstrasse 6; ☎ 10am-10pm) When in Nasserein, nip into this cheery watering hole for a chat with Maggie and Chris. The house wine is Jägermeister, chilled at a glacial -18°C. One too many and skiers show their fangs. Ravenous skiers should look out for Herman's Burgers, a nearby hut-on-wheels operation where you can sink your teeth into a humungous burger for around €5.

Piccadilly (☎ 2213-276; Walter-Schuler-Weg 2; ☎ 9.30pm-4am) Locals call this place pick a willy

(the mind boggles), but to everyone else this very British pub is loud, crowded and the best place in town for live gigs.

Kandahar (☎ 302 60; Dorfstrasse 50; ☎ 7pm-6am) The décor at St Anton's premier clubbing venue is full of Eastern promise. First-rate DJs keep the dance floor packed till dawn.

Getting There & Away

St Anton is the easiest access point to the region. It's on the train route between Bregenz (€16.20, 1½ hours) and Innsbruck (€14.20; 1¼ hours), with fast trains every one or two hours. St Anton and St Christoph are close to the eastern entrance of the Arlberg Tunnel, the toll road connecting Vorarlberg and Tyrol. The tunnel toll is €8.50 for cars and minibuses. You can avoid the toll by taking the B197, but no vehicles with trailers are allowed on this winding road.

Bus depart from stands southwest of the tourist office.

Getting Around

Free local buses go to outlying parts of the resort (such as St Jakob). Buses run to Lech and Zürs in Vorarlberg (one way €4.50); they are hourly (till about 6pm) in winter, reducing to four a day in summer. Taking a minibus taxi, which can be shared between up to eight people, is another option: the trip from St Anton to Lech costs €50.

Bicycles can be rented (half/full day €14/20) from **Sport Alber** (☎ 34 00; Dorfstrasse 15) and **Intersport Arlberg** (☎ 34 53; Dorfstrasse 1).

LOCAL'S FAVOURITE WATERING HOLES

Piccadilly (above) 'The live music is ideal for getting up on the bar to dance and the staff are super!' *Steffi, masseuse*

Funky Chicken (above) 'Because it's the craziest bar in St Anton. Cheap beer, lethal margaritas and insane staff – the perfect night out!' *Giles Dobson, student*

Heustadl (above) 'There's a very entertaining après-ski band where the waitresses are part of the show...' *Chris Ritson, powerline contractor*

Mooserwirt (above) 'You have to see this place to believe it – the lively crowd, DJs and lights make for a great après-ski experience. Bet your ski boots take you grooving...' *Jason, chalet worker*

Fang House (above) 'It's a good place to start your day with a coffee and finish it with a gluhwein. Great music, no Schlager! *Maggie Ritson, mum to be*

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Vorarlberg



Vorarlberg is Austria's red hot chilli pepper – tiny but feisty. It squeezes in between Switzerland and Germany, and shakes its bootie with that ol' devil St Anton am Arlberg in Tyrol. It may have the smallest slice of the country's pie, but it's got the filling sussed: tranquil lakes, thundering rivers, forest-clad hills, snowy crags, castles and more cheese than you'll ever need for your crackers are all squashed into this western wedge.

Most people take a bite out of Bregenz first, the big daddy of the Bodensee (Lake Constance), where locals board yachts for a quick spin and skinny dip after work, gazing up at the giddy heights of the Pfänder to ponder on whether life can get much better. From here, the only way is up to the Bregenzerwald; wiggling through a mysterious land of rolling velvet hills, granite spires and villages choc-a-bloc with dairies. But up on those hills, it's not only the cheese that comes in cubes. Nudging up against woodsy farmhouses are the Bauhaus offspring: eco-friendly modernist houses that are revamping the landscape with straight edges, pale wood and glass walls. Stick-in-the-muds who once dissed them as overgrown Rubik's creations now stand corrected, as the province has become an architectural trailblazer with environmental credentials.

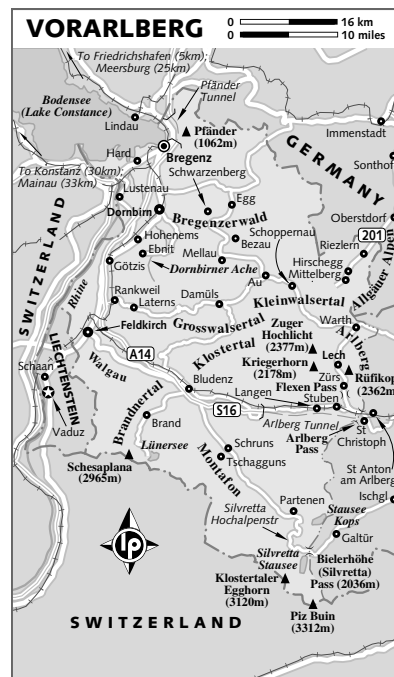
Vorarlberg also rocks in the outdoors department. To the south rise the 3000m-high giants of the Silvretta range, where a hike in the Alps affords vistas of the silver-white peak of Piz Buin. While further east, muddy boots are swapped for designer skis and salopettes in fashionable Lech and Zürs, where poseurs carve up the slopes, bask in five-star luxury and let their hair down with massive snowball fights.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Splashing in the Lake Constance and immersing yourself in modern art in **Bregenz** (p368)
- Pausing on the twisting road through the **Bregenzerwald** (p373) to nibble cheese in alpine dairies
- Swooshing down gentle slopes in **Montafon** (p378) to spy the iconic peak of Piz Buin
- Going back to the Middle Ages in the labyrinthine centre of **Feldkirch** (p374)
- Racing the filthy rich and famous on the pistes of **Lech** (p379)



■ POPULATION: 355,000 ■ AREA: 2601 SQ KM ■ HIGHEST ELEVATION: PIZ BUIN 3312M



History

Vorarlberg has been inhabited since the early Stone Age but it wasn't until the arrival of the Celts in 400 BC, followed by the Romans in around 15 BC, that lasting settlements were maintained. Brigantium, the forerunner of Bregenz, was a stronghold of the Romans until around the 5th and 6th centuries, when the raiding Germanic Alemanni tribes increased their influence and effectively took over.

The province enjoyed a peaceful existence until the early 15th century, when it suffered substantial damage during the Appenzell War with the Swiss Confederation. Relations with its neighbour later improved to such an extent that in 1918 Vorarlberg declared independence from Austria and sought union with Switzerland. The move was blocked by the Allied powers in the post-war reorganisation of Europe; fears that an even-further reduced Austria would be easily assimilated into a recovering Germany were certainly founded. Today, Vorarlberg still looks first towards its westerly neighbours, and then to the Austrian capital, Vienna, 600km to the east.

Climate

Vorarlberg is a predominantly mountainous region with an Atlantic climate, plenty of snow in winter and an above average amount of precipitation (around 2000mm per year). Its weather can differ greatly from the east of Austria; quite often it can be sunny and warm in Vorarlberg and miserable in Vienna, or the other way around.

Language

Locals speak an Alemannic dialect of German which is closer to Schwyzerdütsch (Swiss-German) than to Hochdeutsch (standard German), a lingering legacy of the Germanic Alemanni tribes who settled in Vorarlberg, Switzerland and parts of southern Germany. This strong dialect is often quite hard for native German speakers to understand; the regional tourist office has even gone so far as to produce a *Vorarlbergisch für den Urlaub* (Vorarlberg dialect for the holiday) guide which translates common words and phrases into Hochdeutsch.

Getting There & Away

Vorarlberg has no international airport; the closest is Friedrichshafen in Germany. The province is connected by rail and A14 autobahn to the rest of Austria via the 14km Arlberg tunnel which runs under the Arlberg mountains. To the west, there are plenty of border crossings into Liechtenstein and Switzerland and the main access to Germany is the A14 heading north from Bregenz.

Bodensee ferries (p370) connect Bregenz to various towns and cities in Switzerland and Germany.

Getting Around

Vorarlberg is broken down into *Domino* (individual zones) which are in turn grouped into nine transport regions; a *Regio* travel pass covering one region costs €5.60/€13.60 for one day/week while a *Maximo* pass, costing €12.20/26.10, covers the entire province. Single *Domino* tickets cost €1.20 and a day pass €2.20 – these cover city transport in Bregenz, Dornbirn, Götzis, Feldkirch, Bludenz, Lech and Schruns/Tschagguns.

Children travel for half price and seniors, people with disabilities and students receive a 30% discount. Further information, including a handy timetable booklet, is available from the **Verkehrsverbund Vorarlberg** (☎ 05522-835

77, www.vmobil.at, in German; Herrengasse 12, Feldkirch;
☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri).

BREGENZ

☎ 05574 / pop 27,000

The beauty of Bregenz is its ability to travel in space and time; it's a place where you can wake up to breakfast on the beach at Bodensee and within minutes survey the Austrian Alps from the 1064m-high Pfänder; roam the twisting cobblestone streets of the *Oberstadt* (upper town) then hit the crystalline waterfront for an avant-garde art fix; pedal through orchards hugging the shore and sample homegrown flavours in a boho café. From summertime playground to futuristic innovator, this city has a split personality. An instantly loveable one.

History

Bregenz takes its name from a Celtic tribe, the Brigantes, who settled the area before the Romans arrived. Bregenz was first documented as Brigancia in 802 and became the seat of the counts of the area. The city enjoyed a fairly peaceful life through the centuries (apart from being part of Bavaria during the Napoleonic Wars) and was crowned capital of Vorarlberg in the 20th century.

Orientation

Bregenz is spread out on the eastern shore of Bodensee with the Pfänder mountain (1064m) as a backdrop. The newer part of the city is near the waterfront, while its historical heart is 10 minutes' walk further inland. The *Bahnhof*

(train station) is a 10-minute amble east of the centre, the ferry terminal only a couple of minutes north across the railway tracks.

Information

Bregenz's new centre has a handful of banks and *Bankomat* (ATM) machines; the train station and post office also have a *Bankomat*. The tourist office has free internet access, and hands out a simple, free map of the city.

Cockpit-Café ☎ 0650-262 57 48; www.cockpit-cafe.com; Bahnhofstrasse 10; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm Sat) High-speed internet access, wi-fi, scanning and printing facilities.

Main post office (Seestrasse 5; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat)

Tourist office ☎ 49 59-0; www.bregenz.ws, in German; Rathausstrasse 35a; ☎ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Sat mid-Jul-mid-Aug, 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri & 9am-noon Sat mid-Aug-early Sep, 9am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat early Sep-Nov, 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat Dec-mid-Jul) Information on the city and the surrounding area and can help with accommodation. Outside opening hours, brochures are stacked in front of the office.

Unfallkrankenhaus ☎ 4901; Josef Huter Strasse 12) Provincial hospital with emergency ward.

Sights

Set high above the lake is the *Oberstadt*, the oldest and most charming part of Bregenz with its maze of winding streets, candy-coloured houses and overgrown gardens. It is still guarded by defensive walls and the sturdy *Martinstor* (St Martin's Gate) festooned with a grotesque mummified shark. Not far past the gate is the bulbous, baroque *Martinsturm* (St Martin's Tower; ☎ 466 32; Martinsgasse; adult/child €1/0.50; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Tue-Sun Easter-mid-Oct), topped by the largest onion dome in central Europe. Take a peek at the 14th-century frescoes in the church on the ground floor before climbing up to the

small Vorarlberger Militärmuseum (military museum) for fine views over the town.

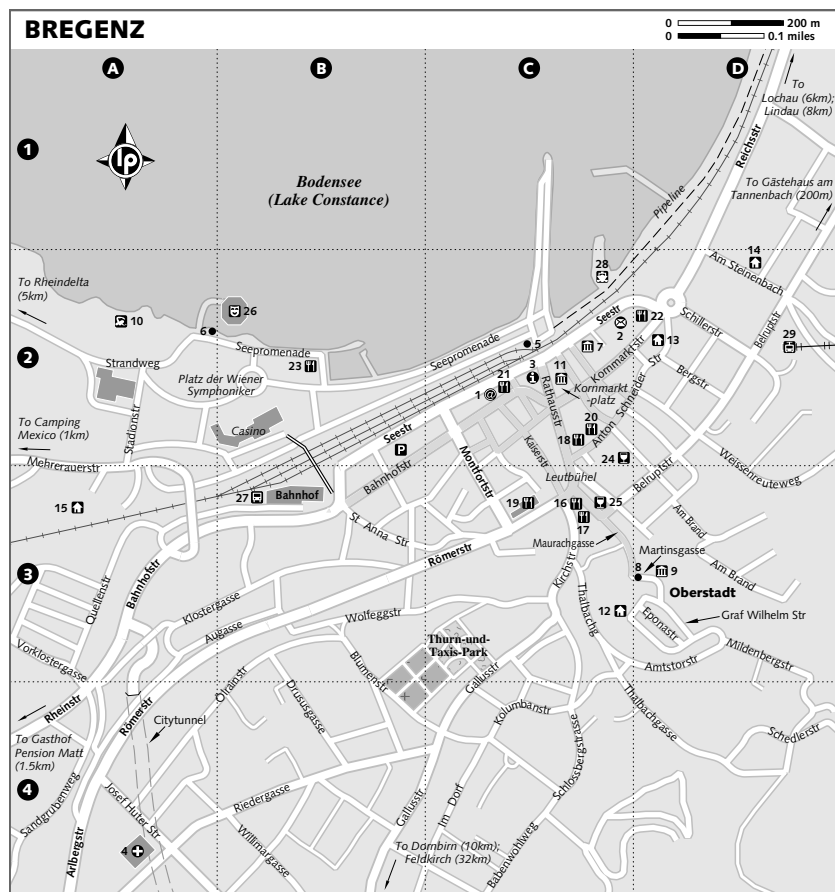
The new face of Bregenz is the *Unterstadt*, home to the **Vorarlberger Landesmuseum** ☎ 460 50; www.vlm.at, in German; Kornmarktplatz 1; adult/student €2/1; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-5pm Tue-Sun, daily during Bregenz Festival). This museum delves into the region's history, art and architecture with curiosities from Stone Age artefacts to a model Roman fort and an intricately carved *Tragorgel* (portable organ). The top floor showcases a superb collection of works by Swiss-born neoclassical artist Angelika Kauffmann (1741-1807).

Just across the way, the geometric *Kunsthau*s ☎ 485 94-0; www.kunsthau-bregenz.at; Karl-Tizian-Platz; adult/concession €10/6; ☎ 10am-8pm) pops into view. With its soaring glass-and-steel exterior and concrete interior, this is a cube that would inspire Picasso to paint. Its cutting edge design is supposed to look like a lamp (use your imagination!). Flooded with natural light, the inside is stark, open-plan and perfect for rotating exhibitions of contemporary art.

Even if you can't bag tickets for the Bregenz Festival, the lakefront *Festspielhaus* ☎ 413-0; www.festspielhausbregenz.at; Platz der Wiener Symphoniker 1) is another must-see monolith. Blending concrete, tinted glass and clean lines, the striking edifice proves that creativity also comes in boxes. Jutting out onto the lake, the semi-circular Seebühne is where festival performances take place.

Activities

Everybody who arrives in Bregenz is bewitched by the *Bodensee*, Europe's third-largest lake, straddling Austria, Switzerland and Germany. In summer, the lake attracts *cycling* enthusiasts to the beautiful and blissfully flat trails lining its banks (see boxed text, p370). **Fahrradverleih Bregenz** ☎ 0650-541 3000;



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BIKING BODENSEE

Perfectly suited for two-wheel adventures, the Lake Constance is ringed by the well-marked **Bodensee Radweg**. Itineraries, maps and distances are given online (www.bodensee-radweg.com). Depending on how fast you pedal, it takes around eight days to cover the entire 243km loop. Grab a bike in Bregenz and you'll soon be freewheeling through Austria, Germany and Switzerland, where landscapes change abruptly from willow-lined promenades to apple orchards, vineyards and half-moon bays framed against the backdrop of the Alps. High points of the cycling trail include:

- Refreshing with ice cream on **Lindau's** palm-fringed promenade
- Watching bullet-shaped Zeppelins fly overhead in **Friedrichshafen**
- Steaming and (legally) skinny dipping at the lakefront spa at **Meersburg**
- Wandering narrow medieval streets in **Stein-am-Rhein**
- Exploring the monastic island of **Reichenau**, a Unesco World Heritage site
- Gazing up at the Münster's filigree spires in Roman-rooted **Konstanz**
- Sniffing beautiful blooms in the botanical gardens in **Mainau**
- Watching grey herons wade in the marshes at **Rheindelta** nature reserve

am Blumenmolo; ☎ 8am-9pm May-Sep) rents quality bikes for €16.50 per day.

Other activities on the lake include **sailing** and **diving** at Lochau, 5km north of town, and **swimming**. The best place for a quick dip or a barbecue is the **Pipeline**, a stretch of pebbly beach north of Bregenz so named for the large pipeline running parallel to the lake. If you fancy sunbathing and splashing around in the buff, there is a secluded naturist beach at Hard, 5km southwest of Bregenz. Alternatively, check out the open-air pools and volleyball court at the lakeside **Strandbad** (☎ 442 42; Strandweg; adult/child €3.50/2.80; ☎ 9am-8pm mid-May-Sep).

For those who would prefer to kick back and enjoy the view, there are numerous boat companies that ferry passengers across the lake from April to mid-October. **ÖBB-Bodenseeschiffahrt Bregenz** (☎ 428 68; www.bodenseeschiffahrt.at; in German; Seestrasse 4) should be your first port of call for information on timetables and prices. Services to Konstanz peak at eight departures per day from early July to mid-September (one-way €12.40, 3¼ hours) and usually call in at Lindau, Friedrichshafen, Meersburg and Mainau.

Back on dry land, the **Pfänder** rises sharply above Bregenz and affords a breathtaking panorama of the lake and the pointy peaks of the Alps. A **cable car** (☎ 421 60-0; Steinbruchgasse 4; one-way adult/student/child €5.90/4.80/3, return €10.20/8.20/5.10; ☎ 8am-7pm) whizzes to the top.

At the summit, kids and fans of furry critters will love the **Wildpark**, a 30-minute circular trail bringing you close to deer, ibex and marmots in their near-to-natural habitat. There's also a **Greifvogelflugschau** (bird of prey show; adult/child €4.60/2.30; ☎ 11am & 2.30pm May-Sep), where feathered performers amaze with aerial feats.

Just 5km southwest of Bregenz lies the **Rheindelta** (☎ 05578-74478; Hard; www.rheindelta.com), where the River Rhine flows into the Bodensee. Comprising mossy marshes, reeds and mixed woodlands, this nature reserve is an unspoiled wilderness and a haven to more than 300 bird species including curlews, grey herons and rare black-tailed godwits.

Festivals & Events

The **Bregenz Festival**, running from late July to late August, is the city's premier cultural event. World-class operas, orchestral works and theatrical productions are performed on the Seebühne, a vast, open-air floating stage. Information and tickets (€26 to €125) are available from the **ticket centre** (☎ 407-6; www.bregenzerfestspiele.com; Postfach 311, A-6901 Bregenz) about nine months before the festival.

Sleeping

On the Austrian Monopoly board, two Bregenz streets (Römerstrasse and Rhein-strasse) occupy the most expensive property squares; this is reflected in the price of accommodation. Private rooms usually offer

the best value (expect to pay around €30 per person).

If everything is fully booked, consider crossing the border to Lindau in Germany (8km away), where beds are plentiful and slightly cheaper. Lindau's **tourist office** (☎ 260 030; www.lindau.de; Ludwigstrasse 68; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-7pm Mon-Fri, 2-7pm Sat & Sun May-Sep, 9am-1pm & 2-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr) may be able to help.

Camping Mexico (☎ 732 60; www.camping-mexico.at; Hechtweg 4; campsites per adult/car/tent €5/4/4.50; ☎ May-Sep; ☎) It's hardly Acapulco, but this eco-labelled campsite by the lake is hot on environmental issues; it uses solar energy, recycles waste and serves locally sourced, organic food in the restaurant. The tree-shaded pitches are pleasant and the affable owners rent canoes from €25 per day.

Jugendgästehaus (☎ 428 67; www.jgh.at/bregenz; Mehrenerstrasse 5; dm €19.20; ☎) Housed in a former needle factory near the lake, this HI hostel now reels backpackers in with its spacious, super-clean dorms. The excellent facilities include a café, common room and restaurant.

Gästehaus am Tannenbach (☎ 441 74; Im Gehren 1; s/d €22/44; ☎) Just north of the centre, Tannenbach is a basic but homy guesthouse with well-kept, sizeable rooms and a pretty flower garden.

Gasthof Pension Matt (☎ 717 77; www.gasthofmatt.at; Wuhraumweg 36; s/d €45/90; ☎) This family-run guesthouse 20 minutes' walk from the centre is a real find. The serene rooms, painted in zesty lemon and lime shades, have cushy beds, squeaky-clean bathrooms and wi-fi. Enjoy breakfast on the leafy terrace.

Hotel Bodensee (☎ 423 00; www.hotel-bodensee.at; Kornmarktstrasse 22; s/d €66/120; ☎) The red-brick Hotel Bodensee is as central as they come. Its comfy rooms have an old-fashioned feel with warm tones and flouncy fabrics.

Hotel Germania (☎ 427 66-0; www.hotel-germania.at; Am Steinenbach 9; s/d €98/179; ☎) On a quiet side street, this corporate hotel doesn't exactly ooze local character, but it has perks like a sauna, gym and wi-fi. Its contemporary rooms contrast chalk-white walls with parquet floors and bold prints.

our pick Deuring-Schlössle (☎ 478 00; www.deuring-schloesse.at; Ehre-Guta-Platz 4; s €95-155, d €210-294; ☎) Ivy creeps up the tower of this stunningly renovated castle in the *Oberstadt*. Rooms exude medieval charm with antiques and low beams, while marble bathrooms, de-

signer furnishings and wi-fi catapult you back to the 21st century. Pull up a chair beside the fire in the atmospheric restaurant (mains €20 to €30) to sample Heino Huber's cuisine using local organic ingredients like Bregenzerwald beef and Bodensee whitefish.

Eating

Many restaurants and cafés cluster along the lakefront or the narrow streets of the *Oberstadt*. In summer, little beats a picnic on the banks of the Bodensee; stock up on fresh bread, smoked fish, cheese and fruit at the **farmers' market** (Kornmarktplatz; ☎ 8am-1pm Tue & Fri).

our pick Cafesito (Maurachgasse 6; bagels €3-4; ☎ 7.45am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4.30pm Sat) Squeeze into this tiny café for the freshest bagels and smoothies in town. Lilac-yellow walls and modern art create a funky backdrop for a light lunch or cup of fair-trade coffee. Try the famous bikini bagel or chilli hot chocolate.

Pizzeria San Giuseppe (☎ 541 68; Bahnhofstrasse 2; mains €5-9; ☎ lunch & dinner) This great little place rolls out reasonably priced pizzas that are thin and crisp. On Friday and Saturday nights, San Giuseppe doubles as a popular bar.

Gösserbrau (☎ 424 67; Anton Schneider Strasse 1; mains €5-16; ☎ 9am-1am Mon-Thu, 9am-2am Fri & Sat) Gösserbrau is an optical illusion: one side is a wood-panelled tavern serving Austrian fare and the other an ubercool bar. Both have Gösserbrau brews on tap.

Bistro Duygu (☎ 544 55; Kirchstrasse 1; mains €6-8; ☎ 10am-1am Mon-Sat, noon-9pm Sun) Locals pile into this cheery Turkish place for late-night munchies such as lentil soup, falafels and honey-drenched baklava.

Viva Cantina (☎ 422 88; Seestrasse 7; mains €8-20; ☎ 5pm-3am Tue-Sun) Not only the chillis are lively at this Mexican cantina. The hip haunt doubles as a party place after shrimp fajitas and one too many tequilas. Retreat to the palm garden in summer.

Neubeck (☎ 436 09; Anton Schneider Strasse 5; lunch €9.50, mains €20-25; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat) Crisp white linen and red leather set the scene in this sleek bistro, opening onto a shady patio. Expect fusion cuisine, from scallops with ricotta-lemon ravioli to Thai crayfish curry. The two-course menu du jour is good value.

Wirtshaus am See (☎ 422 10; Seepromenade; mains €10-20; ☎ lunch & dinner) Loved-up couples grab

a table on the lantern-lit terrace at this half-timbered villa overlooking the lake. Local specialties like Bodensee *sander filet* land on your plate.

The **GWL Shopping Centre** (Römerstrasse 2) has a Spar supermarket for self-caterers.

Drinking

A bunch of lively bars vie for your attention in Bregenz, including these favourites packed to the gunnels at weekends.

Wunderbar (☎ 477 58; Bahnhofstrasse 4; ☎ 10am-4am Mon-Sat, 2pm-1am Sun) Smooth funk plays in this boho bar with free internet access and neo-baroque touches from red velvet sofas to flickering candles. Browse the papers or sip cocktails beneath the cherubs.

Cuba (☎ 470 52; Bahnhofstrasse 9; ☎ 11am-4am Sat, 2pm-4am Sun) Glammed up with chandeliers and a sweeping staircase, this gallery-style bar attracts trendy types with Latin tunes and a top line-up of DJs.

KFL (☎ 439 71; Bergmannstrasse 6) KFL is the place to catch live jazz and jam sessions (many are free). Opening hours vary depending on the performance.

Wohnzimmer (Maurachgasse 3; ☎ 9pm-2am Wed-Sat) Clued-up locals head to this intimate den for everything from indie concerts to DJs spinning electro and punk.

Getting There & Around

Austrian Airlines fly to Altenrhein in Switzerland, the nearest airport. Friedrichshafen, in Germany, is the closest major airport served by a couple of no-frill airlines including Ryanair.

Four direct trains daily head for Munich (€39, 3½ hours) via Lindau, while trains for Konstanz (€45, 1½ to two hours) go via the Swiss shore of the lake and may be frequent, but require between one and four changes. There are four daily departures for Zürich (€30, 1¾ hours), all of which call in at St Gallen (€15, 45 minutes).

Nine trains daily depart for Innsbruck (€28, 2¾ hours), calling en route at Dornbirn (€2.30, 15 minutes), Feldkirch (€5.10, 30 minutes) and Bludenz (€10.90, one hour).

A daily bus service runs to Dornbirn (€2.30, 30 minutes) at least four times an hour; buses to Feldkirch (€5.10, two hours) depart twice hourly from Monday to Friday and hourly at weekends.

DORNBIRN & AROUND

Set against an alpine backdrop, **Dornbirn** is Vorarlberg's largest city. While its sights can't rival those in Bregenz, there's a refreshing lack of tourists. Wandering around the **Marktplatz**, you'll spot the crooked, 17th-century **Rotes Haus** (red house), which owes its beautiful blush to an unappetising mix of ox blood and bile. Next door, the slender Doric columns and free-standing Gothic belfry of **Pfarrkirche St Martin** catch your eye.

Dornbirn's biggest draw, though, are the creepy-crawlies at **Inatura** (☎ 05572-232 35; www.inatura.at; Jahngasse 9; adult/child/family €9.50/4.80/11.40; ☎ 10am-6pm). This hands-on museum is a great place for kids, who can pet (stuffed) foxes and handle (real) spiders, peer into bee and hornet nests, ogle at snakes and fish from behind glass and generally interact with nature. There's also a climbing wall and 3-D cinema.

Just 4km southeast of Dornbirn is the **Rappenlochschlucht** (Rappenloch Gorge), a dramatic ravine gouged out by the thundering Dornbirner Ache. Wooden walkways lead up to a viewpoint (10 minutes) and the turquoise Staufensee (30 minutes). If you're into posh motors, nip into the world's biggest **Rolls-Royce Museum** (☎ 05572-526 52; adult/child €8/4; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Mar), situated at the bottom of the gorge. The hall of fame showcases royal Rollers that once belonged to the likes of Queen Elizabeth and George V.

Hohenems, 6km south of Dornbirn, was a haven for a large community of Jews in the 17th century. Their numbers dwindled in the 1860s, when Jews were eligible to live anywhere under Habsburg rule. Their legacy is explored in **Jüdisches Museum Hohenems** (☎ 739 89-0; Schweizer Strasse 5; adult/child €7/4; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun), housed in the Rosenthal villa. The Rosenthals built up a considerable textile business in the town, and part of their wealth – especially gorgeous period furniture – is on show, alongside photos, documents and religious artefacts from the long-defunct Jewish community. Huddled against a tree-lined hill just outside the town on the road to Götzis is the **Jewish cemetery**; get the key from the museum.

Getting There & Away

Dornbirn (€2.30, 15 minutes) and Hohenems (€3, 25 minutes) are on the Bregenz–Innsbruck railway line. Bus 47 departs from Dornbirn train station and passes by the Rappenloch Gorge (€1.60, 25 minutes, six daily).

VORARLBERG'S ARCHITECTURAL VISION

It's hard to believe that such a traditional province, with its cud-chewing cows, yellow cheese, stark mountains and wooden chalets, is among the most progressive places on the planet when it comes to architecture.

It all started back in the mid-1980s when a group of architects, constrained by the Austrian trade association of architects because of their ideas, split away from the pack and began calling themselves *Baukünstler* (building artists) rather than architects. They managed to gain support from the local authorities and create an environment where anything – as long as it was of high quality and cultivated craftsmanship – was possible.

Much of Vorarlberg's contemporary architecture is denoted by clean lines, sharp angles and plenty of glass and wood. And it's everywhere; private homes, bus stops, supermarkets and kindergartens all compete with hotels, restaurants and office buildings for your undivided attention. Arrive in a non-descript hamlet in the Bregenzerwald and you'll be confronted with not one but half a dozen architecturally sublime houses, or turn a corner in Bregenz or Dornbirn and out pops a building at the cutting edge of design.

Prominent buildings to look out for include Kunsthau Bregenz (p369), Inatura Dornbirn (opposite), Dornbirn's Hotel Martinspark, Lauterach's Terminal V, Silvrettahaus (p378) and Lustenau's SIE-Zentrale. For more information, pick up a copy of *architektur land vorarlberg – zeitgenössische baukunst* (modern architecture) from the provincial tourist office; it's in both German and English and has a list of architecturally modern hotels.

BREGENZERWALD

In summer, the jangle of cow bells breaks the silence in the Bregenzerwald; in winter, it's the shuffle of snowshoes and swoosh of skis. Bregenz's glorious backyard is a finely woven tapestry of velvet-green pastures, pretty villages and limestone pinnacles. After filling your lungs with fresh air in the hills and stomach with cheese in alpine dairies, snug log chalets invite you to put your feet up by the fire and relax.

The **Bregenzerwald tourist office** (☎ 05512-23 65; www.bregenzerwald.at; Impulszentrum 1135, Egg; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm weekends) provides details on the region's top attractions, including skiing (downhill and cross-country) and hiking. The **3 Täler Pass** (3-/7-day pass €93/178) covers the skiing regions of Bregenzerwald, Grosses Walsertal and Lechtal. After working up an appetite on the slopes, you can dairy-hop your way along the *Käsestrasse* (see the boxed text, p374) that winds through the region.

Around 13km east of Dornbirn is the rural idyll of **Schwarzenberg** and its collection of chocolate-box chalets. The village springs to life from mid-May to September during the **Schubertiade** music festival. This celebration of Schubert's work is hugely popular, so book tickets months in advance from **Schubertiade GmbH** (☎ 05576-720 91; www.schubertiade.at; Schweizer Strasse 1, A-6845 Hohenems) and the local **tourist office** (☎ 05512-35 70; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Fri,

10am-noon weekends during festival). The village is also home to the small but rewarding **Heimat Museum** (☎ 05512-29 88; adult/child €3/1; ☎ 2-4pm Tue, Thu, Sat & Sun May-Sep, 2-4pm Tue & Sat Oct, 2-4pm during Schubertiade); this 300-year-old house displays regional arts and crafts and a handful of works by Angelika Kauffmann who had strong ties to the village.

Considering its size, Schwarzenberg has some wonderful places to sleep and eat. **Gasthof Hirschen** (☎ 05512-29 44; www.hirschen-schwarzenberg.at; s/d €125/240; ☎) is an archetypal alpine chalet complete with crackling open fire, award-winning restaurant and antique-filled rooms. **Messnerstüble** (☎ 05512-20 02; Hof 19; mains €8-15; ☎ lunch & dinner) serves a fine schnitzel alongside Swiss-inspired dishes like *Rösti* (fried potatoes) in a countrified chalet.

A zigzagging road links Schwarzenberg to **Bezaus**. This village makes an excellent base for exploring the area, with plenty of accommodation and a rural atmosphere. The **tourist office** (☎ 05514-22 95; Platz 39; ☎ 9am-noon & 1.30-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) provides information on walking, paragliding and skiing. In nearby **Bizau**, test-drive the thrilling **Sommerrodelbahn** (adult/child €9.50/6.80; ☎ 9am-5pm Jun-Sep), a 1850m-long toboggan run comprising 80 hairpin bends. Further east, **Mellau** offers winter skiing and summer hiking; a **gondola** (summer one-way/return €6.80/9.40, winter day pass €29.50) rises to 1390m Alpe Rossstelle year-round.

The precipitous road continues east towards the Arlberg, passing through the peaceful villages of **Au** and **Schoppernau**. Halfway between the two is the **Diedamskopf cable car** (www.diedamskopf.at; one-way/return €10.50/14.30), which climbs to 2090m. From the summit, paragliders launch themselves into the air and walkers trundle back down the side of the mountain. Both places have tourist offices – see www.au-schoppernau.at for more details.

From Au, you have two choices: continue east to fashionable west Arlberg, or turn south and head for Bludenz. Scenically, both journeys are rewarding, passing through rugged alpine country on narrow, winding roads. About 9km along the southern route is **Damüls**, a high-alpine resort whose conical peaks attract skiers, walkers and tobogganers (the 3.5km sled run is floodlit twice weekly). Its **tourist office** (☎ 05510-62 00; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1.30-6pm Mon-Fri) can help arrange accommodation. While you're here, climb up to the Gothic **Pfarrkirche** (admission free; ☎ daylight), with beautiful frescoes in good condition considering their age.

Getting There & Away

There are eight direct bus services daily to Bezau (€4.40, one hour) from Bregenz, but for most other destinations a change at Egg is required. A more direct travel option is from Dornbirn; Schwarzenberg (€3, 25 minutes), Bezau (€3.70, 50 minutes), Mellau (€4.40, one hour), Au (€5.80, 70 minutes) and Schoppernau (€5.80, 80 minutes) can all be reached a couple of times daily (times vary from season to season). For Damüls (€7.50, 1¼ hours), a change at Au is required.

PASS THE CHEESE

All those cows grazing on the Bregenzerwald's hillsides aren't there for nothing. Every year, their creamy silo-free milk goes into producing 4500 tons of cheese. The region's 40 cheeses include flavoursome Vorarlberger Bergkäse, nutty-sweet Emmentaler, walnuty Nussknacker and Weinkäse (ripened in red wine for three months). While you're here, try the cheesiest local speciality, *Käsknöpfle*, a take on gnocchi mixed with tangy Raskäse and topped with fried onions.

Serious fromage-ophiles should head for the Bregenzerwald **Käsestrasse** (Cheese Road), which zigzags past alpine dairy farms and independent artisans whose doors are open to hungry travellers. En route you can stop off at the Käsehaus in Andelsbuch to sample and buy cheese, the Sennschule Ingo Metzler in Egg to discover the secrets of cheesemaking, and the Bergkäserei in Schoppernau for a peek in the cheese cellar, tastings and free guided tours (5pm on Mondays). More details to help plan your dairy-hopping itinerary are available online at www.kaesestrasse.at.

FELDKIRCH

☎ 05522 / pop 29,300

Feldkirch whisks visitors back to the Middle Ages with its appealing jumble of gabled houses, chunky towers and cobbled streets that tumble down to the fast-flowing Ill River. While the town still has a firm grip on its medieval roots, a growing crop of avant-garde bars, kooky boutiques and pavement cafés give it a youthful twist.

Orientation & Information

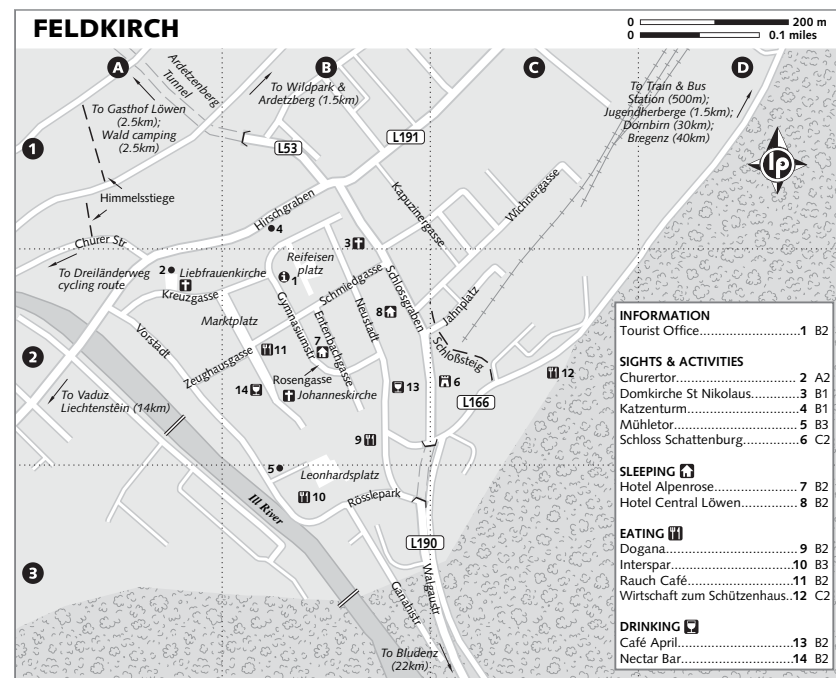
The town centre is a few minutes' walk south of the train station (turn left upon exiting); here you'll find the helpful **tourist office** (☎ 734 67; www.feldkirch.at; Schlossergasse 8; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1.30-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat), with lots of information and maps. The post office is opposite the train station.

Sights & Activities

Part of the pleasure in Feldkirch is strolling through its narrow alleyways dotted with half-timbered houses and arcades. Patrician houses and street cafés frame the town's main artery, the cobbled **Marktplatz**, which fills with the hum of chatter in summer.

Keep an eye out for the towers surviving from the old fortifications. These include the 40m-high **Katzenturm** (Hirschgraben), where Vorarlberg's biggest bell (weighing 7500kg) still tolls; the **Mühletor** (Mühletorplatz), also known as the Sauter, where the pig market was held in the Middle Ages; and the step-gabled **Churertor** (Heiligkreuzbrücke), once the gateway to the bridge that was used to transport salt across the Ill River to Switzerland.

Domkirche St Nikolaus (Schlossgraben; admission free; ☎ daylight) has a large, forbidding interior complemented by late-Gothic features and



vibrantly coloured stained glass. The painting on the side altar is by local boy Wolf Huber (1480–1539), a leading member of the Danube school.

Rising above the town, 13th-century **Schloss Schattenburg** is classic fairytale stuff with its red turrets and creeping vines. It's a steep climb up to the ramparts, but you'll be rewarded with far-reaching views over Feldkirch's rooftops. Once the seat of the counts of Montfort, it now houses a small **museum** (☎ 71982; Burggasse 1; adult/child €3/1; ☎ 9am-noon & 1.30-6pm May-Oct, 1-4pm Jan-Apr, closed Nov & Dec) displaying religious art, costumes and weaponry.

Facing the castle across the town is **Ardenzenberg** (631m), a heavily forested hill. At its northern end is the **Wildpark** (☎ 741 05; admission free; ☎ daylight), with a woodland trail and animal-friendly enclosures home to alpine fauna such as marmots, ibex and wild boar.

The Feldkirch region is crisscrossed with cycling trails, including the 30km **Dreiländerweg** (Three Country Trail), taking in beautiful scenery in Austria, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Pick up the free *Feldkircher Radwegkarte* map from the tourist office. Bike

hire is available at **Gasthof Löwen** (Kohlgrasse 1) for €12 per day.

Festivals & Events

In late May, Feldkirch revisits the Middle Ages with troubadours, knights and non-stop feasting at the **Montfortmarkt**. The **Feldkirch Festival** in June draws classical music lovers to historic venues. Other festivals include the **Gauklerfestival** in July, an enormous street party welcoming jugglers, fire eaters and clowns. Mulled wine warms up subzero temperatures at December's **Weihnachtsmarkt** (Christmas market).

Sleeping

Feldkirch offers a small but characterful selection of accommodation, including a smattering of good-value private rooms outside the centre.

Waldcamping (☎ 76001-3190; www.waldcamping.at; Stadionstrasse 9; campsites per adult/car/tent €5.60/3.90/4.80; ☎ Apr-Oct; ☎ P) Pine trees shade this quiet campsite. The first-rate facilities include a barbecue area, playground and free entry to the Waldbad pool with waterslides and

a volleyball court. Take bus 2 from the train station to the last stop (3.5km).

Jugendherberge (☎ 731 81; Reichsstrasse 111; dm/s/d €15.50/25.50/39;) Set in a half-timbered barn, this is a cut above the average HI hostel, with creaking beams, a vaulted lounge and an ivy-clad courtyard. A spiral staircase twists up to light-filled dorms with pine bunks. Bus 60 trundles past.

Hotel Central Löwen (☎ 720 70; www.central-hotel-loewen.at; Schlossgraben 13; s/d €89/120;) Modern art cheers up the spacious rooms at this centrally located hotel. Guests can use the sauna, steam bath and pool next door.

Hotel Alpenrose (☎ 721 75; www.hotel-alpenrose.net; Rosengasse 4-6; s/d €71/122;) The rose garden, Biedermeier salon and bubblegum-pink façade of this boutique hotel appeal to hopeless romantics. There's an air of nostalgia about this 16th-century merchant's house with its wood-beamed, antique-furnished rooms.

Eating

Dogana (☎ 751 26-3; Neustadt 20; lunch €8.70, mains €18-25; ☎ 9am-1am Tue-Thu, 9am-2am Fri & Sat) Earthy tones and mellow music give this gourmet haunt a contemporary kick. The menu changes seasonally, but staples include delicious salads (try the curried *kikeriki*) and value for money lunches.

Wirtschaft zum Schützenhaus (☎ 852 90; Gölfer Strasse 2; mains €10-14; ☎ lunch & dinner Thu-Mon) *Schiessen und Geniessen* (shoot and enjoy) is the motto at this half-timbered tavern, where lederhosen-clad staff bring humungous schnitzels to the table. The tree-shaded beer garden has prime views of the castle and a pet corner with fluffy rodents to keep kids amused.

Rauch Café (☎ 763 55; Marktgasse 12-14; mains €17-23; ☎ 9am-1am Mon-Sat, 10am-1am Sun) Rauch's buzzy terrace is packed when the sun shines. If you can stomach chilli first thing, try the 'how to cure the hangover' breakfast (€12.90). The menu is Mediterranean with flavours like wild garlic gnocchi. DJs spin house music here after dark.

For self-caterers, there is an **Interspar** (Leonhardsplatz) supermarket at the southern end of the town centre.

Drinking

Café April (☎ 827 13; Neustadt 39; ☎ 9am-midnight Tue-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) Wacky touches like upside-down watering cans grab your attention

at this café. The pocket-sized terrace is a fine spot for a relaxed drink.

Ourpick Nectar Bar (☎ 829 902; www.nectar-bar.at; Marktplatz 1; ☎ 4pm-2am Mon-Thu; 11am-4am Fri & Sat) Squeezed between the houses, this party place packs 'em in at the weekends. The inner courtyard gets a regular makeover – expect a Hawaiian beach in summer, and a Christmas market in winter when 'tis the season to drink hot chocolate laced with rum. The fun-loving owner Tobias stages events from iPod challenges to Mexican nights with free-flowing tequila.

Getting There & Away

Bus depart from outside Feldkirch's train station. Trains head north to Bregenz (€5.10, 30 minutes) and Dornbirn (€3.70, 20 minutes), and southeast to Bludenz (€3.70, 15 minutes).

Feldkirch is the gateway to Liechtenstein's capital, Vaduz (€2.20, 40 minutes); a change at Schaan is normally necessary. Liechtenstein has a customs union with Switzerland, so you'll pass through Swiss customs before entering Liechtenstein.

BLUDENZ

☎ 05552 / pop 14,000

Medieval Bludenz is the only town in Austria (and perhaps the world) that can lay claim to having purple cows; the Milka ones churned out from the Suchard chocolate factory. When you've managed to drag yourself away from the *Schokolade*, explore the sweet centre lined with cobblestone streets and arcaded passageways, the legacy of the town's heyday as the seat of the Habsburg governors from 1418 to 1806.

Orientation & Information

The town centre is on the northern bank of the Ill River. The **tourist office** (☎ 621 70; www.bludenz.at; Werdenbergerstrasse 42; ☎ 8am-noon & 2-5.30pm Mon-Fri Sep-Jun, 8am-noon & 2-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat Jul & Aug) is five minutes' walk from the train station and has free internet access.

Across the road is the town's **post office** (Werdenbergerstrasse 37), and not far east is a small pedestrian-only shopping area.

Sights & Activities

One of Bludenz's best features can't even be seen. Almost anywhere you wander in the centre, the rich, enticing aroma of chocolate will fill your nostrils. The source of these



divine smells is the **Suchard chocolate factory**; unfortunately there are no guided tours but you can stock up on chocs at its **shop** (Fohrenburgstrasse 1; ☎ 9-11.30am & 1.30-4.30pm Mon-Thu, 9-11.30am & 1.30-4pm Fri). Chocolate also plays an important part in the children's **Milka Chocolate Festival** in mid-July, when 1000kg of the stuff is up for grabs in prizes. There's also music, games and plenty of kids too full of sugar to control.

To explore the other attractions, join a free **city tour** organised by the tourist office; departing at 10am on Thursday from mid-May till October. Affording snapshot views of the mountains, the **Kirchensteig** is a covered walkway that climbs up to the Gothic parish church, **St Laurentiuskirche** (Mutterstrasse; admission free; ☎ daylight), dominated by an octagonal, onion-domed spire. The **Stadtmuseum** (☎ 636 21; Kirchgasse 9; admission €1.50; ☎ 3-5pm Mon-Sat Jun-early Sep) houses a small display on folk art and prehistoric finds.

The Austrian Alpine Club's **Kletterhalle** (☎ 626 39; Untersteinstrasse 5; €6 plus €0.80 shoe hire; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) is an excellent climbing hall where you can practise clambering up

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boulders before tackling the real thing in the Alps.

About 1km north of the town centre, a **cable car** (☎ 627 52; Hinterplärsch; adult/child one-way €6.20/4, return €10.40/6.50; ☎ 9am-6pm Sun-Thu, 9am-10pm Fri & Sat May-Oct, 9.30am-5.30pm Sat-Thu, 9.30am-10.30pm Fri Nov-Apr) rises up to **Mittersberg** (1401m), the starting point for numerous hiking, Nordic walking and cycling trails. If you don't want to walk it, catch bus 1 from in front of the train station to the cable car station.

Bludenz is a good base for exploring the surrounding valleys. There are 15 **skiing** areas within a 30km radius and ski bus transport to/from Bludenz is sometimes included in the price of ski passes. **Walking** and **cycling** are other popular activities; the tourist office has thick booklets on summer and winter outdoor pursuits.

Sleeping

The tourist office can book accommodation. Private rooms usually offer the best value, even though a surcharge of around €3.50 per day applies for stays under three days.

Camping Seeburger (☎ 625 12; Obdorfweg 9; campsites per adult/tent €5.35/7.90;) This leafy, well-kept campsite sits in the shadow of the Alps. Campers can relax in the whirlpool and sauna.

Landhaus Muther (☎ 657 04; Alemannenstrasse 4; s/d €35/70;) Smothered in geraniums in summer, this homely chalet is fairly central. The rooms are old-style and simple, but fastidiously clean.

Val Blu (☎ 631 06; Haldenweg 2a; s/d €54/88;) There's not a single wood beam or checked curtain at this ultramodern spa hotel,

defined by glass walls and smooth contours. The functional, minimalist-style rooms feature wi-fi and flat-screen TVs.

Schlosshotel (☎ 630 16-0; www.schlosshotel.cc; Schlossplatz 5; s/d €80/130; (P)) Clinging to the cliffs above Bludenz, this smart hotel shelters modern rooms with balconies. There's a terrace for warm evenings and free mountain-bike hire for guests.

Eating

Remise (☎ 342 82; Am Raiffeisenplatz; lunch €7.90, mains €6-12; ☎ 10am-1am Mon-Fri, 9am-1am Sat) This laid-back café serves up an arty atmosphere and tasty snacks from salads and toasts to curries. The cultural venue next door regularly hosts exhibitions, film screenings and concerts.

Altes Rathaus (☎ 673 00; Rathausgasse 1a; mains €8-15; ☎ 10am-1am Mon-Sat) A sleek newcomer to Bludenz, this glass-fronted café on the main drag rustles up cheese-rich specialties, steaks and yummy cakes.

Nova Bräu (☎ 685 68; Werdenbergerstrasse 53; mains €8-16; ☎ 11am-2am Mon-Thu, 11am-4am Fri & Sat, 10am-3am Sun) Copper vats gleam at this cavernous brewpub, cranking out hearty fare like *Tafelspitz* (boiled beef) washed down with Föhrenburger beer (from the brewery opposite). At the front, Arche Nova bar is a ship complete with palms and fish lights; why a nautical theme in the Alps is anyone's guess!

In the pedestrian-only area in the town centre is the Kronenhaus department store, with a **Spar** (Werdenbergerstrasse 34) supermarket.

Getting There & Away

Bludenz is on the east-west InterCity (IC) express rail route, two hours from Innsbruck (€20.70, every two hours) and 45 minutes from Bregenz (€7.50, hourly). By regional train, Bregenz-Bludenz is 70 minutes (every 30 minutes).

The east-west A14 road passes just south of the Ill River and the town centre. Buses run down all five valleys around Bludenz.

MONTAFON

pop 15,540

Silent and unspoilt, the **Montafon** (www.montafon.at) was apparently Hemingway's favourite valley and is still a fine spot for a wee adventure. Running south from Bludenz, the vale is quilted green in summer, blanketed white in winter and silhouetted by the glaciated Silvretta range year-round. All that natural

splendour doesn't go to waste: freestyle skiers and families seeking uncrowded pistes and a low-key vibe flock here, as do hikers spellbound by the craggy summits.

Walking, cycling and skiing are available along the length of Montafon. During winter, the **Montafon-Card** (3-/7-day pass €98/195) covers public transport and the 65 lifts in the valley; its summer equivalent is the **Montafon-Silvretta-Card** (€32/43).

One of the first proper resorts along the valley is family-friendly **Schruns**, which has a **tourist office** (☎ 05556-721 66; www.schruns-tschaiguns.at; Silvrettastrasse 6; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon & 4-6pm Sat, 10.30am-noon Sun mid-Jun-Sep, 8am-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-mid-Jun). A much-loved hangout of Hemingway in the 1920s, **Hotel Taube** (☎ 05556-723 84; Silvrettastrasse 1; s/d €30/96; (P)) makes a good base to explore the area.

The panoramic **Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse** soon winds its way under peaks rising to well over 2500m, before climbing over the 2036m **Bielerhöhe Pass** via a series of tight switchbacks. At the top of the pass is the **Silvretta Stausee** (2030m), an ice-cold alpine reservoir, across which the snow-capped peaks of **Piz Buin** (3312m) and **Klostertaler Egghorn** (3120m) shine brightly on a sunny day. The reservoir is the trailhead for the dramatic **Radsattel Circuit** (see p92).

A budget place to bed down at **Bielerhöhe** is the **Madlenerhaus** (☎ 05558-42 34; www.madlenerhaus.at; dm €8-10; ☎ Dec-mid-Jan, mid-Feb-Easter, mid-Jun-Oct). This DAV (German Alpine Club) alpine hut has comfy four- to 10-bed dorms and a **restaurant** (mains €5-12) serving solid Austrian fare. For more creature comfort, check into the architecturally innovative **Silvrettahaus** (☎ 05558-42 46; s/d €43/72; (P)) or homy **Piz Buin** (☎ 05558-42 31; www.pizbuin-silvretta.at, in German; s/d €40/72; mains €8-13; (P)). Both open from late May to early November and from Christmas to April.

Getting There & Away

There are plenty of daily trains from Bludenz to Schruns (€2.30, 20 minutes), from where up to five buses daily continue onto Partenen (€3, 35 minutes) at the base of the Silvretta pass. From mid-July to mid-October, eight buses daily climb from Partenen to the Silvretta Stausee (€2.30, 35 minutes). The Silvretta Hochalpenstrasse pass is controlled by a toll road, which costs €11.50/10.50 for cars/motorcycles.

WESTERN ARLBERG

☎ 05583

With its backbone of monochrome mountains and snow-sure slopes, the Arlberg region is one of Austria's top destinations for skiing. Though it straddles Vorarlberg and Tyrol, a single ski pass covers all of its resorts (see p362).

A picture-postcard village, **Lech** (1450m) is a magnet to royalty (Princess Diana used to ski here), film stars and poseurs who like to pretend to be such from behind Gucci shades. It's also making strides as an eco-friendly ski resort (see boxed text, p72) with photovoltaic energy operating its lifts and a biomass heating plant. The terrain is well suited to intermediates, with some advanced off-piste possibilities. A cable car scales Rüfikopf (2362m), but most of the lifts and runs are on the opposite side of the valley, on the Kriegerhorn (2178m) and Zuger Hochlicht (2377m). The central **tourist office** (☎ 21 61-0; www.lech-zuers.at; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Sat) has bags of info on skiing and walking possibilities and an accommodation board. From July to September, it also arranges themed walks (free with the local *Gästekarte*) ranging from sunrise hikes to botanical strolls.

Six kilometres south lies **Zürs** (1716m), a smaller resort with its own **tourist office** (☎ 22 45; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Fri). The cable car runs throughout the year, but in summer the resort has all the character of a dust bowl.

One kilometre south of Zürs is the **Flexen Pass** (1773m), after which the road splits: the western fork leads to **Stuben** (1407m), the eastern one to St Anton am Arlberg in Tyrol.

Sleeping

Almost every street in Lech and Zürs is lined with hotels (many five-star), but it's still worth booking ahead in winter. Cheaper options are private rooms and holiday apartments. Expect prices to be 30% to 50% higher than those quoted here in the winter high season. Any of the following are fine bets.

Pension Alwin (☎ 309 30; pension@alwin.at; No 309; s/d €31/62; (P)) A bargain place close to the centre, this pinewood chalet features bright rooms with parquet floors. After a day on the slopes, the sauna is the perfect wind down.

Haus Nening (☎ 24 08; nening.lech@aon.at; No 149; s/d €32/64; (P)) This cheery chalet opposite Schlegelkopf lift has snug wood-panelled rooms and a garden. Bike rental and ski storage are available.

Pension Waldesruh (☎ 24 02; waldesruh@vol.at; No 144; s/d €36/66; (P)) Set back from the road, this quiet chalet offers neat and tidy rooms with balcony.

Eating

Many hotels have a fine, albeit slightly pricey, restaurant. Self-caterers can head to Spar on the main street. The following places are independent of a hotel:

Ambrosius Stübli (☎ 419 30; No 239; mains €7-16; ☎ lunch & dinner) Kick back on the sunny terrace at this traditional tavern near Rüfikopf lift; the schnitzel and *Kaiserschmarrn* (shredded pancakes) come recommended.

Hüs Nr. 8 (☎ 33 22-0; No 8; mains €8-16; ☎ lunch & dinner) *Raclette* and fondue are on the menu at this rustic chalet, with a small patio and playground.

Fux (☎ 22 25; Omesberg 587; mains €16-30; ☎ lunch & dinner) Glass walls and gold Buddhas jazz up this slick restaurant. The cuisine has an Asian twist – think Wagyu beef carpaccio and yellowfin tuna. The head-spinning wine list has 1700 bottles to pick from.

Getting There & Away

Buses run between Lech and Zürs (€1.20, seven minutes); both resorts have connections to St Anton am Arlberg (see p365). For Bludenz (€5.80, 1½ hours) and beyond, a change in Langen is required. Note also that snow occasionally blocks the Flexen Pass in winter. In summer, Lech can also be approached from the north, via the turning at Warth (1494m).

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ACCOMMODATION

You'll find it all in Austria – from simple mountain huts to five-star hotels fit for kings. Tourist offices invariably keep lists and details, and some arrange bookings for a small fee, while others will help free of charge.

Most hotel rooms in Austria have their own shower, although some rock bottom digs do still have *Etagendusche* (corridor shower). It's wise to book ahead at all times (often a day or two is enough), but especially well in advance during the high seasons: July and August, at Christmas and Easter and between December and April in ski areas. Some places don't accept telephone reservations. Confirmed res-

ervations in writing are binding on either side and compensation may be claimed if you do not take a reserved room or if a reserved room is unavailable.

In mountain resorts, high-season prices can be up to double the prices charged in the low season (May and November, which fall between the summer and winter seasons). In other towns, the difference may be 10% or less.

In some resorts (not often in cities) a *Gästekarte* (guest card) is issued to guests. This card may offer discounts on things such as cable cars and admission, so check with a tourist office if you're not offered one at your resort accommodation.

The listings in the accommodation sections of this guidebook are arranged from budget to midrange to top-end options. The general price range split is anything below €60 per double for budget options, from €60 to €130 per double for midrange, and top-end is anything above €130. Vienna is an exception to the rule: budget ends at €70, midrange accommodation falls between €70 and €200, and top-end choices go over and above €200. Unless otherwise noted, we quote high-season rates throughout this book.

Prices are for rooms with bathroom and, unless noted otherwise, include breakfast. Before setting out, consider logging on to the following sites for more information:

www.austria.info Austrian National Tourist Office website, with links to accommodation sites.

www.austrian-hotelreservation.at Regional listings of hotels, alpine huts and chalets and online booking service; also in English.

www.campsite.at Comprehensive website listing around 70% of campsites in Austria; in a number of languages.

www.tiscover.at Hotels, rooms, last-minute deals and holiday packages, alongside general tourist information on Austria.

Alpine Huts

There are over 530 of these huts in the Austrian Alps maintained by the Österreichischer Alpenverein (ÖAV; Austrian Alpine Club; p83) and the German Alpine Club (DAV). Huts are found at altitudes between 900m and 2700m and may be used by the general public.

PRACTICALITIES

- The metric system is used in Austria; decimals are indicated with commas and thousands with points (full stops).
- International newspapers are widely available in the larger cities; local big sellers include *Kronen Zeitung*, *Kurier* and *Der Standard*.
- Independent broadcaster ÖRF (Österreichischer Rundfunk; Austrian Broadcasting Corporation; www.orf.at) runs a total of 13 radio stations and two TV channels, ÖRF1 and ÖRF2. Programmes are generally dubbed rather than subtitled. Radio station FM4 (103.8 FM) has news in English from 6pm to 7pm.
- You can get prints of digital photos and burn DVDs at many photo outlets.
- Wi-fi is widely available and often free to use.
- Electric sockets have the two small round holes common throughout Central Europe (220V AC, 50Hz). North American (110V) appliances will need a transformer.
- Videos in Austria use the PAL image-registration system (similar in the UK and Australia), and are not compatible with the NTSC system used in the USA, Canada and Japan.

Meals or cooking facilities are often available. Bed prices for nonmembers are around €24 to €30 in a dorm or €12 to €18 for a mattress on the floor. Members of the ÖAV or affiliated clubs pay half-price and have priority. Contact the ÖAV or a local tourist office for lists of huts and to make bookings.

Camping

Austria has over 490 camping grounds that offer users a range of facilities such as washing machines, electricity connections, onsite shops and, occasionally, cooking facilities. Camping gas canisters are widely available. Campsites are often scenically situated in an out-of-the-way place by a river or lake – fine if you're exploring the countryside but inconvenient if you want to sightsee in a town. For this reason, and because of the extra gear required, camping is more viable if you have your own transport. Prices can be as low as €3 per person or tent and as high as €8.

A majority of the campsites close in the winter. If demand is low in spring and autumn, some campsites shut, even though their literature says they are open, so telephone ahead to check during these periods. In high season, campsites may be full unless you reserve and higher prices may apply.

Free camping in camper vans is allowed in autobahn rest areas and alongside other roads, as long as you're not causing an obstruction. It's illegal to camp in tents in these areas. Note that 'wild camping' in cities or protected areas is also illegal.

While in the country, pick up camping guides from the **Österreichischer Camping Club** (Austrian Camping Club; ☎01-713 6151; www.campingclub.at, in German; Schuberting 1-3, A-1010 Vienna) and a *Camping Map Austria* from the Österreich Werbung (p391).

Private Rooms

Rooms in private houses are cheap (anything from €18 to €40 per double) and in most towns you will see *Privat Zimmer* (private room) or *Zimmer Frei* (room free) signs. Most hosts are friendly; the level of service though is lower than in hotels. On top of this, you will find *Bauernhof* (farmhouses) in rural areas, and even *Öko-Bauernhöfe* (organic farms). Regional tourist offices (p391) are good information sources for farm stays.

Hostels

Austria is dotted with *Jugendherberge* (youth hostels) or *Jugendgästehaus* (youth guest-houses). Facilities are often excellent: four- to six-bed dorms with shower/toilet are the norm in hostels, while many guesthouses have double rooms or family rooms; internet facilities and a restaurant or café are commonplace.

Austria has over 100 hostels affiliated with Hostelling International (HI), plus a smattering of privately owned hostels. HI hostels are run by two hostel organisations (either can provide information on all HI hostels):

Österreichischer Jugendherbergsverband (ÖJHV;

☎533 53 53; www.oehv.or.at; Schottenring 28;

🕒9am-5pm Mon-Thu, 9am-3pm Fri)

Österreichischer Jugendherbergswerk (ÖJHW;
☎ 533 18 33; www.oejhw.at; Helfferstorferstrasse 4;
☎ 9.30am–6pm Mon–Fri).

Gästekarten are always required, except in a few private hostels. It's cheaper to become a member in your home country than to join when you get to Austria. Nonmembers pay a surcharge of €3.50 per night for a *Gästekarte*, but after six nights the guest card counts as a full membership card. Most hostels accept reservations by telephone or email and some are part of the worldwide computer reservations system. Dorm prices range from €14 to €19 per night.

Cheap dorm-style accommodation is sometimes available in ski resorts even if there is no hostel. Look for the signs *Touristenlager* or *Matratzenlager* (dorm); unfortunately, such accommodation might only be offered to pre-booked groups.

Hotels & Pensions

Pensions and hotels (often known as *Gästehäuser* or *Gasthöfe*) are rated from one to five stars depending on the facilities they offer. However, as the criteria are different you can't assume that a three-star pension is equivalent to a three-star hotel. Pensions tend to be smaller than hotels and usually provide a more personal service, less standardised fixtures and fittings and larger rooms. Hotels invariably offer more services, including bars, restaurants and garage parking.

With very few exceptions, rooms in hotels and pensions are clean and well-appointed; expect to pay an absolute minimum of around €35/45 for a single/double room. Internet booking, weekend or multiple-night deals, or simply asking, can often result in a cheaper room. Credit cards are rarely accepted by cheaper places. In theory, hotel prices are not negotiable; in practice, you can often haggle for a better rate in the low season or if you're staying more than a few days.

In low-budget accommodation, a room advertised as having a private shower may mean that it has a shower cubicle rather than a proper en suite bathroom.

Where there is a telephone in the room it's usually direct-dial, but this will still be more expensive than using a public telephone. TVs are almost invariably hooked up to satellite or cable. Better hotels will usually have the added bonus of a minibar.

BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

Meals are usually available, either for guests only, or more often, in a public restaurant on site. A pension that supplies breakfast only is known as a *Frühstückspension*; the hotel equivalent is *Hotel-Garni*. Other hotels and pensions will offer the option of paying for half board (where breakfast and one main meal is provided) or even full board (where all meals are provided). In budget places, breakfast is basic, usually consisting of only a drink, bread rolls, butter, cheese spread and jam. As you pay more, breakfast gets better: in two-star places it's usually *Erweitert* ('extended' to include more choices) and in places with three stars or more it's usually buffet style. A typical buffet will include cereals, juices and a selection of cold meats and cheeses – maybe even (in top places) hot food such as scrambled eggs, sausage and bacon. In five-star hotels breakfast generally costs extra, but may be included in special, lower weekend rates.

Rental Accommodation

Ferienwohnungen (self-catering holiday apartments) are very common in Austrian mountain resorts, though it is often necessary to book these well in advance. The best idea is to contact a local tourist office for lists and prices.

University Accommodation

Studentenheime (student residences) are available to tourists over university summer breaks (from the beginning of July to around the end of September). During university terms the kitchen and dining room on each floor are open, but when they're used as seasonal hotels these useful facilities generally remain locked. Rooms are perfectly OK but nothing fancy; some have a private bathroom. Expect single beds (though beds may be placed together in double rooms), a work desk and a wardrobe. The widest selection is in Vienna, but look for them also in Graz, Salzburg and

Innsbruck. Prices per person are likely to range from €20 to €35 per night and sometimes include breakfast.

ACTIVITIES

See the Outdoor Activities chapter (p74) for details on walking, skiing, cycling and other outdoor pursuits in Austria.

BUSINESS HOURS

Offices and government departments generally open from 8am to 3.30pm, 4pm or 5pm Monday to Friday. There are no real restrictions on shop opening hours but most open between 9am and 6pm Monday to Friday and until 1pm Saturday (until 5pm in larger cities).

Banking hours are from 8am or 9am until 3pm Monday to Friday, and there are extended hours to 5.30pm on Thursdays. Many of the smaller branches close from 12.30pm to 1.30pm for lunch. Most post offices open for business from 8am to noon and 2pm to 6pm Monday to Friday; some also open on Saturday from 8am to noon. Restaurants serve lunch between 11am and 3pm and dinner from 6pm to midnight, and often close in between. Hours for cafés vary considerably and are included in our listings. As a rule, however, a traditional café will open around 7.30am and shut at about 8pm; pubs and bars close anywhere between midnight and about 4am throughout the week.

CHILDREN

The infrastructure for travellers with kids is good and getting better, and children are welcome at tourist attractions, restaurants and hotels. Regional tourist offices have focused a lot on kids recently and now produce brochures aimed directly at families. Museums, parks and theatres often have programmes for children over the summer holiday periods and local councils occasionally put on special events and festivals for the little ones.

Log on to www.kinderhotels.at for information on child-friendly hotels throughout the country. For helpful travelling tips, pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* by Cathy Lanigan.

Practicalities

Facilities are definitely improving throughout the country but not in all directions. Some restaurants do have children's menus

but may not have high chairs or nappy-changing facilities. In general, only mid-range to top-end hotels have cots and can arrange daycare.

In the bigger cities, breast-feeding in public won't cause eyelids to bat. Everything you need for babies, such as formula and disposable nappies, is widely available. Rental car companies can arrange safety seats. Newer public transport, such as trams and buses in Vienna, are easily accessible for buggies and prams, but the older models can prove a nightmare. Sundays, public holidays, and during the summer holidays, children under the age of 15 travel free on Vienna's transport system (with photo ID; children between six and 16 can travel half-price, and travel for kids up to the age of six is always free).

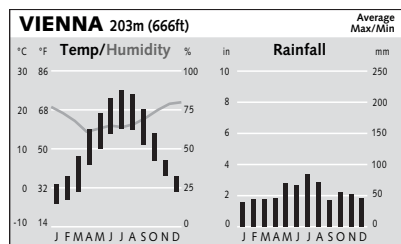
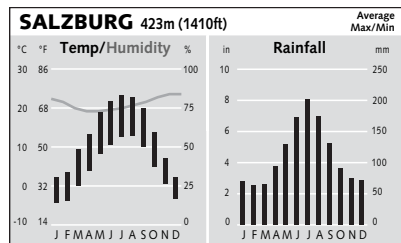
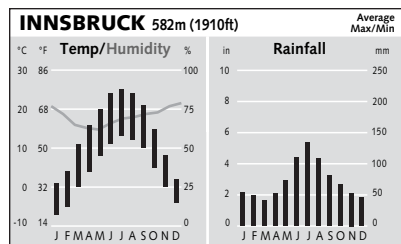
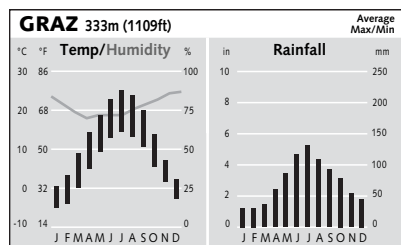
Sights & Activities

With its parks, playgrounds and great outdoors, Austria has plenty to keep the kids entertained. Vienna has two great kids' museums and loads of swimming locations; see p138) for more details. Outside the capital, Graz has the only museum directed at children, FriDa & FreD (p228). Its Schlossberg Cave Railway (p228) will also entertain the little tykes. Closer to the capital, shallow Neusiedler See (p193) is a perfect place to holiday with children. In Linz, Ars Electronica (p203) and the Pöstlingberg (p204) are fine attractions for the kids, as is the Minimundus miniature park (p292) in Klagenfurt. Once the kids are finished with Minimundus, the region's lakes are an enticing destination, as is Die Spur des Einhorn (p301) in Friesach. Austrians love their puppets; one of the best puppet places is the Marionettentheater (p280) in Salzburg.

Trips underground also keep the kids amused; the Erzberg mine (p242) in Styria and the salt mines (p249) of Salzkammergut are exciting places.

CLIMATE CHARTS

Austria lies within the Central European climatic zone, though the eastern part of the country has what is called a Continental Pannonian climate, characterised by hot summers and mild winters. To the west, the Alps tend to draw the clouds, though the alpine valleys often escape much of the downfall. The *Föhn*, a hot, dry wind that sweeps down from the mountains, mainly in early spring and autumn – can be rather uncomfortable



for some people and often has a bad reputation among Austrians.

The climate charts show average temperatures and rainfall in the larger cities, but these can vary wildly from year to year.

COURSES

Many places, including some of Austria's universities, offer German courses, and they can usually offer the option of accommodation for

the duration. Two of the better known course providers in Vienna are:

Berlitz (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 82 86; www.berlitz.at, in German; various locations; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-12.30pm Sat) Offers private, intensive day and evening courses and has four offices in Vienna.

Inlingua Sprachschule (Map pp120-1; ☎ 512 22 25; www.inlingua.at; Neuer Markt 1, Vienna; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri) Courses run for a minimum of two weeks and can either be taken in the morning or some evenings. Classes are limited to six students and individual tuition is also available.

In Innsbruck, try the following:
Inlingua Innsbruck (☎ 562 031; www.inlingua-tirol.at; Südtirolerplatz 6) Year-round courses, usually in small groups.
Innsbruck University (☎ 587 233; www.uibk.ac.at/iht; Innrain 52) Intensive courses in July and August.

Check the *Gelbe Seiten* (yellow pages) under *Sprachschulen* for more listings in other towns and cities.

CUSTOMS

Theoretically there is no restriction on what you can bring into Austria from other EU states. However, to ensure these remain for personal use, guideline limits are 800 cigarettes, 200 cigars, 1kg of tobacco, 10L of spirits, 90L of wine, 110L of beer and 20L of other alcoholic beverages. The same quantity can be taken out of Austria, as long as you are travelling to another EU country.

For duty-free purchases outside the EU, you may bring into Austria 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco, plus 2L of wine and 1L of spirits. Items such as weapons, drugs (both legal and illegal), meat, certain plant materials and animal products are subject to stricter customs control.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Austria is one of the safest countries to travel in and crime rates are low by international standards, but you should always be security conscious. Be wary of leaving valuables in hotel rooms; management will look after expensive items if you ask them, even in hostels. Don't leave valuables in cars, especially overnight. In general, let common sense prevail and don't make it easy for thieves by loosely carrying cameras and jewellery around.

In the event of theft or loss, get a police report – this will be necessary for you to claim on your travel insurance. Your consulate

should be able to help replace documents if you're left in a desperate situation.

DISCOUNT CARDS

There are various discount cards available throughout Austria, covering either a region of a province or an entire province. Some are free and provide discounts at hotels and sights, while others must be purchased but may give you free entry to attractions and include public transport. Ask at your hotel or contact provincial tourist offices for details. Examples include the free Neusiedler See Card, and the Salzburg Card (from €23/11.50 adult/child) giving free entry to every sight in town and reduced entry to a further 27 attractions plus free public transport for the duration.

Senior Cards

In some cases senior travellers will be able to get discount admission to sights, but local proof is often required. It can't hurt to ask and show proof of age, though. The minimum qualifying age for Austrians is 65 for men and 60 for women.

Student & Youth Cards

International Student Identity Cards (ISIC) and Euro26 cards will get you discounts at most museums, galleries and theatres. You may even get a discount on air, bus and train tickets.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Austrian Embassies & Consulates

The Austrian Foreign Ministry website (www.bmaa.gv.at) has a complete list of embassies and consulates. It's in German only, but is quite easy to navigate.

Australia (☎ 02-6295 1533; www.austriaemb.org.au; 12 Talbot St, Forrest, Canberra, ACT 2603)

Canada (☎ 613-789 1444; www.austro.org; 445 Wilbrod St, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6M7)

Czech Republic (☎ 257 09 05 11; www.austria.cz; Viktora Huga 10, CZ-15115 Prague 5)

France (☎ 01-40 63 30 63; paris-ob@bmeia.gv.at; 6, Rue Fabert, F-75007 Paris)

Germany (☎ 030-202 87-0; www.oesterreichische-botschaft.de; Stauffenbergstrasse 1, D-10785 Berlin)

Hungary (☎ 01-479 70-10; www.austrian-embassy.hu; Benczúr utca 16, 1068 Budapest)

Ireland (☎ 01-269 45 77; dublin-ob@bmeia.gv.at; 15, Ailesbury Court Apt, 93, Ailesbury Rd, Dublin 4)

Italy (☎ 06-844 01 41; www.austria.it; Via Pergolesi 3, I-00198 Rome)

The Netherlands (☎ 070-324 54 70; den-haag-ob@bmeia.gv.at; van Alkemade laan 342, 2597 AS Den Haag)

New Zealand (consulate only; ☎ 04-499 6393; austria@ihug.co.nz; Level 2, Willbank House, 57 Willis St, Wellington)

Slovakia (☎ 02-59 30 15 00; www.embassyaustria.sk; Venturska 10, SK-81101 Bratislava)

Slovenia (☎ 01-479 07 00; www.aussenministerium.at/laibach; Presernova cesta 23, SI-1000 Ljubljana)

UK (☎ 020-7344 3250; www.austria.org.uk; 18 Belgrave Mews West, London SW1X 8HU)

USA (☎ 202-895 6700; washington-ob@bmeia.gv.at; 3524 International Court NW, Washington, DC 20008)

Embassies & Consulates in Austria

All the embassies and consulates listed below are located in Vienna. For a complete listing of embassies and consulates, look in the Austrian telephone book under *Botschaften* (embassies) or *Konsulate* (consulates).

Australia (Map pp120-1; ☎ 506 74-0; www.australian-embassy.at; Mattiellstrasse 2-4)

Canada (Map pp120-1; ☎ 531 38-3000; www.kanada.at; Laurenzerberg 2)

Czech Republic (Map pp116-17; ☎ 899 581 11; www.mzv.cz/vienna; Penzingerstrasse 11-13)

France (Map pp120-1; ☎ 502 75 200; www.consul-france-vienne.org; Wipplinger Strasse 24-26)

Germany (Map pp120-1; ☎ 711 54-0; www.wien.diplo.de/vertretung/wien; Metternichgasse 3)

Hungary (Map pp120-1; ☎ 537 80-300; kom@huem.bvie.at; Bankgasse 4-6)

Ireland (Map pp120-1; ☎ 715 42 46; vienna@dsa.ie; Rotenturmstrasse 16-18)

Italy (Map pp120-1; ☎ 713 56 71; www.ambvienna.esteri.it; Ungargasse 43)

The Netherlands (Map pp120-1; ☎ 01-589 39; www.mfa.nl/wen; 7th fl, Opernring 5)

New Zealand (consulate-general; Map pp120-1; ☎ 318 85 05; www.nzca.at; Salesianergasse 15/3)

Slovakia (Map pp114-15; ☎ 318 90 55; www.vienna.mfa.sk; Armbrustergasse 24)

Slovenia (Map pp120-1; ☎ 585 22 40; vdu@gov.si; Nibelungengasse 13)

Switzerland (Map pp116-17; ☎ 795 05-0; www.eda.admin.ch/wien; Prinz Eugen Strasse 7)

UK (Map pp116-17; ☎ 716 13-0; www.britishembassy.at; Jaurès-gasse 12)

USA (Map pp120-1; ☎ 313 39-0; www.usembassy.at; Boltzmanngasse 16)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Most festivals and cultural events are small-scale local affairs, so it's worth checking with local tourist offices or the Österreich Werbung (Austrian National Tourist Office;

ANTO; p391), which compiles a list of annual and one-off events taking place in Austria. The cycle of music festivals throughout the country is almost unceasing, and religious holidays provide an opportunity to stage colourful processions. **Corpus Christi** (the second Thursday after Whitsunday) brings carnivals, including some held on lakes in the Salzkammergut. **National Day** on 26 October inspires various events, often accompanied by much patriotic flag-waving.

More details of specific events are given in the text, but here's a selection of annual highlights throughout the country.

JANUARY

New Year concerts (1 January) The new year is welcomed throughout Austria with classical concerts. The Vienna Philharmonic's performance in the Staatsoper is the most celebrated.

Perchtenlaufen (5 to 6 January) Celebrated across much of western Austria, this festival promotes good fortune and a prosperous harvest for the forthcoming year. Locals dress as *Perchten* (spirits crowned with elaborate headdresses) and parade through the streets. Salzkammergut's equivalent is Glöcklerlaufen.

FEBRUARY

Fasching (Shrove-tide Carnival; 11 November to Shrove Tuesday) Austria's carnival season, which really only gets going at the end of January/beginning of February, when people parade around in fancy dress and party till the wee small hours. Look for *Fasching Krapfen* (a sweet bun filled with jam) during this time.

MARCH OR APRIL

Easter Easter is marked by a long-weekend or week-long holidays and family gatherings.

MAY

Maypole Day (1 May) Colourful, lively countrywide affairs accompanied by maypoles, plenty of alcohol and unabandoned merriment.

Wiener Festwochen (Vienna Festival Weeks; ☎ 589 22-22; www.festwochen.or.at) Wide-ranging programme of arts from around the world, from May to mid-June.

JUNE

Midsummer Night (21 June) A celebration of the summer solstice, with hilltop bonfires and partying through the night.

JULY & AUGUST

Music Festivals Classical, jazz and rock festivals take place throughout the country over summer.

OCTOBER

Cattle Roundup (early October) In the alpine areas the coming of autumn sees cattle herds coming down out of the mountains. The event is marked with various festivals. **Wine Harvest** (all October) Styria, Burgenland and Lower Austria mark the grape harvest with bottle after bottle of wine and folk music.

NOVEMBER

Allerheiligen (All Saints' Day; 1 November) Austrians flock to cemeteries throughout the country to pay their respects to the dead.

St Martin's Day (11 November) The day of St Martin of Tours is marked with feasts of goose and wine.

DECEMBER

St Nicholas Day (5 to 6 December) More for the kids, this day sees St Nicholas drift from house to house handing out presents to good children. He is often accompanied by the *Krampus* (devil), who punishes the bad children (which never happens). In many places, this day is also marked by **Krampuslaufen**: young men dress up as demons in heavy wooden masks and run through the streets, terrorising villagers along the way.

Weihnacht (Christmas; 25 December) A quiet family affair, aside from the *Christkindlmärkte* (Christmas markets), which take place throughout the country from early December till the 24th.

FOOD

A full rundown on local cuisine, drinks, and our top eating experiences appears in the Food & Drink chapter (p59). As ballpark figures, budget mains are anything below €10, midrange from €10 up to €20, and top end anything above that.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Vienna is reasonably tolerant towards gays and lesbians, more so than the rest of the country. Austria has received criticism in past years on its laws on homosexuality, but these days is close to European par. The age of consent for anyone – homosexual or heterosexual, man or woman – is 14, but if money's involved it's 18, and if one partner is 18 or older and the other between 14 and 16, additional youth-abuse laws swing into force. Police are not obliged to press charges if both partners are under 14, providing the age difference is less than two years.

The 'Gay & Lesbian Vienna' boxed text (p140) has specific listings of publications, organisations, hotels and bars for gays and lesbians. Online information (in German)

can be found at www.gayboy.at, www.rainbow.or.at, www.gay.at and www.gayguide.at. The *Spartacus International Gay Guide*, published by Bruno Gmünder (Berlin), is a good international directory of gay entertainment venues worldwide (mainly for men).

HOLIDAYS

Basically, everything shuts down on public holidays. The only establishments open are bars, cafés and restaurants and even some of these refuse to open their doors. Museums like to confuse things – some stay closed while others are open and offer free admission. The big school break is in July and August. This is a time when most families go on holiday so you'll find some places, like cities, a little quieter and others, such as popular holiday destinations, busier. Avoid ski breaks during much of February; school pupils have a week off during that time and invariably the ski slopes are full to overflowing with kids and parents.

The public holidays in Austria are:

New Year's Day (Neujahr) 1 January

Epiphany (Heilige Drei Könige) 6 January

Easter Monday (Ostermontag)

Labour Day (Tag der Arbeit) 1 May

Whit Monday (Pfingstmontag) 6th Monday after Easter

Ascension Day (Christi Himmelfahrt) 6th Thursday after Easter

Corpus Christi (Fronleichnam) 2nd Thursday after Whitsunday

Assumption (Maria Himmelfahrt) 15 August

National Day (Nationalfeiertag) 26 October

All Saints' Day (Allerheiligen) 1 November

Immaculate Conception (Mariä Empfängnis) 8 December

Christmas Day (Christfest) 25 December

St Stephen's Day (Stephanitag) 26 December

INSURANCE

Organising a travel insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical problems is an essential part of planning for your trip. There is a wide variety of policies available, so check the fine print.

Some policies specifically exclude 'dangerous activities', which can include skiing, motorcycling, rock climbing, canoeing and even hiking. If you're planning on doing any of these activities, be sure to choose a policy that covers you.

You may prefer a policy that pays doctors or hospitals directly rather than having to

pay on the spot and claim later. If you have to claim later make sure you keep all documentation. Some policies ask you to call back (reverse charges) to a centre in your home country where an immediate assessment of your problem is made.

Check that the policy covers ambulances or an emergency flight home.

See p407 for more on health insurance. For information on car rental insurance, see p403.

INTERNET ACCESS

Wi-fi or network-cable access is available free or with charges in many hotels. All top hotels have plugs for connecting your laptop to the internet, but as yet it's not possible to organise an ISP in Austria for a short period (minimum contracts run for 12 months) so you'll have to arrange one from home. AOL's access number in Vienna is ☎ 071-891 50 52, Compuserve's ☎ 071-891 51 61 and Eunet's ☎ 899 330.

Public internet access is well covered across the country; for details of specific internet cafés see individual destination chapters. Prices are generally around €4 to €8 per hour. If there are no cafés in town, it's worth checking with the local library; some have computer terminals connected to the internet which are often free to use. Remember to take some form of ID with you.

LEGAL MATTERS

Austria offers the level of civil and legal rights you would expect of any industrialised Western nation. If you are arrested, the police must inform you of your rights in a language that you understand.

For information on the ages of sexual consent, see opposite.

In Austria, legal offences are divided into two categories: *Gerichtsdelikt* (criminal) and *Verwaltungsübertretung* (administrative). If you are suspected of having committed a criminal offence (such as assault or theft) you can be detained for a maximum of 48 hours before you are committed for trial. If you are arrested for a less serious, administrative offence, such as being drunk and disorderly or committing a breach of the peace, you will be released within 24 hours.

Drunken driving is an administrative matter, even if you have an accident. However, if someone is hurt in the accident it becomes a criminal offence. Possession of a controlled

drug is usually a criminal offence. Possession of a large amount of dope (around 300g) or dealing (especially to children) could result in a five-year prison term. Prostitution is legal provided prostitutes are registered and have obtained a permit.

If you are arrested, you have the right to make one phone call to 'a person in your confidence' within Austria, and another to inform legal counsel. If you can't afford legal representation, you can apply to the judge in writing for legal aid.

Free advice is given on legal matters in some towns, for example during special sessions at Vienna's *Bezirksgerichte* (district courts). As a foreigner, your best bet when encountering legal problems is to contact your national consulate (see p385).

MAPS

Freytag & Berndt of Vienna offers the most comprehensive coverage of the country. It publishes good town maps (1:10,000 to 1:25,000 scale) and has a *Wanderkarte* series for walkers, mostly on a 1:50,000 scale. Motorists should consider buying its *Österreich Touring* road atlas; this covers Austria (1:150,000) and 48 Austrian towns. If this is too detailed then their *Österreich road map* (1:500,000) will suffice. Extremely detailed walking maps are produced by the ÖAV at a scale of 1:25,000. Kompass also has a range of excellent walking maps. The most detailed maps, however, are produced by the Bundesamt für Eich-und Vermessungswesen (BEV; Federal Office for Calibration and Measurement); their country-wide and regional maps are available in good bookshops and map stores.

Bikeline maps are recommended for those travelling round the country by bicycle; eight maps (1:100,000 or 1:75,000) cover the most popular areas for cycling and two delve into mountain biking in Carinthia and the Hohe Tauern National Park.

For getting around cities, maps provided by tourist offices, in conjunction with the maps in this book, are generally adequate. These are usually free, but where there's a charge you can probably make do with the hotel map instead.

MONEY

Like other members of the European Monetary Union (EMU), Austria's currency is the euro, which is divided into 100 cents.

There are coins for one, two, five, 10, 20 and 50 cents and for €1 and €2. Notes come in denominations of €5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200 and €500. The Quick Reference on the inside front cover lists exchange rates.

ATMs

In Austria ATMs are known as *Bankomaten*. They are extremely common and are accessible till midnight, some are 24 hours. Even villages have at least one machine; look for the sign with blue and green horizontal stripes. ATMs are linked up internationally, have English instructions and are usually limited to daily withdrawals of €400 with credit and debit cards.

Check with your home bank before travelling for charges for using a *Bankomat*; there's usually no commission to pay at the Austrian end.

Cash

With the number of ATMs, the practice of carrying large amounts of cash around has become obsolete. It is, however, worth keeping a small amount in a safe place for emergencies.

Credit Cards

Visa, EuroCard and MasterCard are accepted a little more widely than American Express (Amex) and Diners Club, although a surprising number of shops and restaurants refuse to accept any credit cards at all. Upmarket shops, hotels and restaurants will accept cards, though. Train tickets can be bought by credit card in main stations. Credit cards allow you to get cash advances at most banks.

For lost or stolen credit cards, call the following:

Amex ☎ 0800 900 940

Diners Club ☎ 01-501 35 14

MasterCard ☎ 01-717 01 4500

Visa ☎ 01-711 11 770

Moneychangers

Banks are the best places to exchange cash, but it pays to shop around as exchange rates and commission charges can vary a little between them. Normally there is a minimum commission charge of €2 to €3.50, so try to exchange your money in large amounts to save on multiple charges. Banks at train stations often have longer hours, and *Wechselstuben* (money-exchange offices) – usually found in the centre

of large cities or at train stations – even longer, but commissions are often high.

Taxes & Refunds

Mehrwertsteuer (MWST; value-added tax) in Austria is set at 20% for most goods. Prices are always displayed inclusive of all taxes.

All non-EU tourists are entitled to a refund of the MWST on single purchases over €75. To claim the tax, a U34 form or tax-free cheque and envelope must be completed by the shop at the time of purchase (show your passport), and then stamped by border officials when you leave the EU. To be eligible for a tax refund, goods must be taken out of the country within three months of the date of purchase. The airports at Vienna, Salzburg, Innsbruck, Linz and Graz have a counter for payment of instant refunds. There are also counters at major border crossings. The refund is best claimed as you leave the EU, otherwise you will have to track down an international refund office or claim by post from your home country.

Before making a purchase, ensure the shop has the required paperwork; some places display a 'Global Refund Tax Free Shopping' sticker. Also confirm the value of the refund; it's usually advertised as 13% (which is the refund of the 20% standard rate of value-added tax after various commissions have been taken), though it may vary for certain categories of goods.

Tipping

Tipping is a part of everyday life in Austria; in restaurants, bars and cafés and in taxis it's customary to give about 10%. Add the bill and the tip together and hand it over in one lump sum. It also doesn't hurt to tip hairdressers, hotel porters, cloak-room attendants, cleaning staff and tour guides one or two euros.

Travellers Cheques

All major travellers cheques are equally widely accepted, but you may want to use Amex, Visa or Thomas Cook because of their 'instant replacement' policies. A record of the cheque numbers and the initial purchase details is vital when it comes to replacing lost cheques. Without this, you may well find that 'instant' might take a very long time. You should also keep a record of which cheques you have cashed. Keep these details separate from the cheques.

American Express exchange services are run by Interchange Austria. A minimum commission of €5 is charged on Amex cheques in euros for amounts of €50 to €250, or 2% if the amount is above that. For non-Amex cheques it's €7/12 for €100/250. Amex cheques in US dollars are exchanged without charge. Banks typically charge €7 or more to exchange travellers cheques. Avoid changing a lot of low-value cheques as commission costs will be higher. Big hotels also change money, but rates are invariably poor. Look especially carefully at the commission rates charged by exchange booths; they can be quite reasonable or ridiculously high.

POST

Austria's postal service (www.post.at) is easy to use and reliable. *Postämter* (post offices) are commonplace, as are bright yellow post boxes. Stamps can also be bought at *Tabak* (tobacconist) shops. Sending a standard letter within Austria or Europe costs €0.55 and worldwide €1.25. The normal weight limit for *Briefsendung* (letter post) is 2kg; anything over this limit must be sent as a package. In Austria, mailing a 2kg package starts from €4.20. Sample prices for a 2kg package internationally are: Australia (€25), Canada & the USA (€18), and Germany & the UK (€14). Maximum weights range from 20 kg (including Italy, Canada) to 31.5 kg (including Austria, USA).

For post restante, address letters *Postlagernde Sendungen* rather than *Postlagernde Briefe* as the former is the preferred term in Austria. Mail can be sent care of any post office and is held for a month; a passport must be shown on collection.

SHOPPING

You could possibly base a whole trip around shopping – and leave broke. The items you'd be most likely to leave with are jewellery, glassware and crystalware, ceramics, pottery, woodcarvings, wrought-iron work and textiles. There are also many antique shops, especially in Vienna.

Designer fashion is on the move in Vienna, which, by a far cry, is Austria's best city for shopping. See the destination chapters for tips on shopping in large cities.

Don't overlook the many markets throughout the country; alongside local produce you may find some local folk-art gems.

For special reductions, look for *Aktion* (sales promotion) signs. Prices are fixed in shops, but it can't hurt to ask for 'a discount for cash' if you're making several purchases. Bargain hard in flea markets.

Top Viennese hotels have a free booklet entitled *Shopping in Vienna* that details all sorts of shopping outlets; there are similar booklets in other cities.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

There's no stigma attached to travelling solo in Austria. Most hostels, pensions and hotels have single rooms available and they're generally a little more than half the price of a double room.

Making contact with the locals is relatively easy in smaller towns and cities if you know a little German; without German, things are a little harder, but definitely not impossible. Many people speak good English, or at least enough to hold a conversation for an hour or two. In the bigger cities, pseudo-Irish and English pubs are havens for expats and Austrians keen on Guinness and a chat in English.

TELEPHONE

Austria's country code is ☎ 0043. **Telekom Austria** (☎ 0800-100 100; www.telekom.at, in German) is Austria's main telecommunications provider and maintains public telephones (particularly those inside or outside post offices) throughout the country. These take either

coins or phonecards and a minimum of 20 cents is required to make a local call. Every post office has a phone booth where both international and national calls can be made; rates are cheaper from 6pm to 8am Monday to Friday and on weekends. Another option is call centres, which have recently been introduced into the telecommunications arena. They offer competitive rates, especially for long-distance calls.

Free phone numbers start with ☎ 0800 or ☎ 0810 while numbers starting with ☎ 0900 are pay-per-minute. When calling Austria from overseas drop the zero in the area code; ie the number for Vienna's main tourist office is ☎ 0043 1 211 14-555. When calling a number from within the same town or city, dialling the town's code is not required; however, when placing a call to elsewhere in Austria (or from a mobile) the code needs to be used.

Directory assistance for numbers in Austria and the EU is available on ☎ 11 88 77.

International Calls

To direct-dial abroad, first telephone the overseas access code (00), then the appropriate country code, then the relevant area code (minus the initial 0 if there is one), and finally the subscriber number. International directory assistance is available on ☎ 0900 11 88 77.

Tariffs for making international calls depend on the zone. To reverse the charges (call collect), you have to call a free phone number to place the call. Some of the numbers are listed below (ask directory assistance for others):

Australia ☎ 0800-200 202

Ireland ☎ 0800-200 213

New Zealand ☎ 0800-200 222

South Africa ☎ 0800-200 230

UK ☎ 0800-200 209

USA (AT&T) ☎ 0800-200 288

USA (Sprint) ☎ 0800-200 236

Mobile Phones

Austria's *Handy* (mobile phone) network works on GSM 1800 and is compatible with GSM 900 phones but generally not with systems from the USA or Japan. *Handy* numbers start with 0699, 0676, 0664, 0660 and 0650. The major *Handy* networks – Drei, One, A-1 and T-Mobile – sell SIM cards with €10 worth of calls for €39. Telering, a smaller operator, has SIM cards for €30 with €30 worth of calls. Refill cards can be purchased from supermar-

kets and Trafik for €20 or €40. Before buying an Austrian SIM card, confirm that your phone is unlocked; check with your home network before leaving.

Reciprocal agreements with foreign providers do exist, but check with your own provider before leaving home for costs and availability. If your provider is European, www.roaming.gsm-europe.org will help you work out costs inside Austria.

You can rent mobile phones at **Tel-Rent** (☎ 01-700 733 340; rental incl phone & SIM card per day/week €18/90, additional weeks €54), located in the arrivals hall at Schwechat Airport in Vienna. Delivery or pick-up within Vienna is available for €26.

Phonecards & Internet Calls

There's a wide range of local and international *Telefon-Wertkarte* (phonecards), which can save you money and help you avoid messing around with change. They are available from post offices, *Tabak* and train stations. Large internet cafés (p387) have Skype software on their terminals and headphones for internet telephony, but you'll need to register and put money on your account in order to make calls to landlines or mobile phones.

TIME

See the World Time Zones (p446-7) for Austria's position.

Note that in German *halb* is used to indicate the half-hour before the hour, hence *halb acht* means 7.30, not 8.30.

TOURIST INFORMATION Local Tourist Offices

Any town or village that tourists are likely to visit will have a centrally situated tourist office and at least one of the staff will speak English. They go by various names – *Kurort*, *Fremdenverkehrsverband*, *Verkehrsamt*, *Kurverein*, *Tourismusbüro* or *Kurverwaltung* – but they can always be identified by a white 'i' on a green background.

Staff can answer inquiries, ranging from where and when to attend religious services for different denominations, to where to find vegetarian food. Most offices will have an accommodation-finding service, often free of charge. Maps are always available and usually free.

Some local tourist offices hold brochures on other localities, allowing you to stock up

on information in advance. If you're empty-handed and arrive somewhere too late in the day to get to the tourist office, try asking at the railway ticket office, as staff there often have hotel lists or city maps. The tourist office may have a rack of brochures hung outside the door, or there may be an accommodation board you can access even when the office is closed. Top hotels usually have a supply of useful brochures in the foyer.

In addition, each province has its own tourist board (see list below), though some of these are geared more to handling written or telephone inquiries than dealing with personal callers.

Burgenland Tourismus (☎ 02682-633 84-0; www.burgenland.info, in German; Schloss Esterházy, Eisenstadt; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri) A regional tourist office set up more for telephone and email requests.

Kärnten Information (☎ 0463-3000; www.karnten.at; Casinoplatz 1; A-9220 Velden; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri) Carinthia's regional tourist office, with information on the *Kärnten Card*.

Niederösterreich Werbung (Map pp120-1; ☎ 01-536 10 6200; www.niederoesterreich.at; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Thu, 8.30am-4pm Fri) The official information office for Lower Austria. Ask about the *Niederösterreich-Karte*, a card that entitles you to discounts throughout the province. At the time of research, the office was moving to a new address in St Pölten. See the website or contact the St Pölten tourist office for new details.

Oberösterreich Tourismus (☎ 070-22 10 22; www.oberoesterreich.at; Freistädter Strasse 119, A-4041 Linz) The information office for Upper Austria has a very large selection of brochures which can be requested by mail.

Österreich Werbung (ANTO; ☎ 0810-10 18 18; www.austria.info) Austria's national tourist office; phone and email inquiries only.

Salzburger Land Tourismus (☎ 0662-668 8-0; www.salzburgerland.com, in German; Wiener Bundesstrasse 23, A-5300 Hallwang bei Salzburg) Like other regions, Salzburger Land also offers a discount card, the *Salzburgerland Card*.

Steirische Tourismus (☎ 0316-400 30; www.steiermark.com; St Peter Hauptstrasse 243, A-8042 Graz) Staff at this Styria information office are happy to send you piles of useful information on the province.

Tirol Info (☎ 0512-72 720; www.tirol.at; Maria-Theresien-Strasse 55, A-6010 Innsbruck) Tyrol's regional tourist office.

Vorarlberg Tourismus (☎ 05574-425 25-0; www.vorarlberg-tourism.at; Bahnstrasse 14, Tourismshaus, A-6901 Bregenz) Information office for Austria's most westerly province.

Tourist Offices Abroad

The Austrian National Tourist Office has branches in many countries. In most European countries, there are no drop-by visitor services and inquiries are handled centrally by multilingual staff in Vienna. ANTO offices can be reached from inside these countries at the following:

Australia (☎ 02-9299 3621; info@antosyd.org.au; 1st fl, 36 Carrington St, Sydney, NSW 2000)

Canada (☎ 0416-96 33 81; anto-tor@sympatico.ca; 2 Bloor Street West, Suite 400, Toronto, Ontario M4W 3E2)

Czech Republic (☎ 800 180 800; info@rakousko.com)

France (☎ 0811 60 10 60; vacances@austria.info)

Germany (☎ 01802 10 18 18; urlaub@austria.info)

Hungary (☎ 06 800 12726; informacio@austria.info)

Ireland (☎ 189 093 01 18; holiday@austria.info)

Italy (☎ 02-46 75 191; vacanze@austria.info)

Japan (☎ 03-358 222 33; oewtyo@austria.info; Kokusai Shin-akasaki Bldg; West Tower 2F, 6-1-20 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052)

Spain (☎ 902 999 432; informacion@austria.info)

Switzerland (☎ 0842 10 18 18; ferien@austria.info or vacances@austria.info)

The Netherlands (☎ 0900 04 00 181; vakantie@austria.info)

UK (☎ 0845 101 18 18; holiday@austria.info)

USA (☎ 212 944-6880; travel@austria.info; 9th fl, 120 West 45th St, New York, NY 10036)

For other countries and representatives, contact the Austrian National Tourist Board for the complete list of addresses, or visit www.austria.info and use the country portal selector (top right).

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

The situation in Austria for travellers with disabilities is improving but is still by no means plain sailing, especially outside Vienna. Ramps leading into buildings are common but aren't universal; most U-Bahn stations have wheelchair lifts but on buses and trams you'll usually be negotiating gaps and one or more steps.

For distance travel, ÖBB, the Austrian National Railways, has a section for people with disabilities on its website (www.oebb.at). Change to the English language option, then go to 'Personenverkehr' and submenu 'Barrier-free travelling'. You can also get information and arrange your trip by calling ☎ 5-1717 (051717 inside Austria) 7am to 9pm. Press 5 after the recorded message, and 5 again for 'notification of trips of wheelchair users

or persons with other handicaps'. You must book at least three days in advance. No special service is available at unstaffed stations.

The detailed pamphlet, *Vienna for Visitors with Disabilities*, from Tourist Info Wien (p123), is available in German or English. In other cities, contact the tourist office directly for more information.

Some of the more expensive (four star or above, usually) hotels have facilities tailored to travellers with disabilities; cheaper hotels invariably don't.

Organisations

There is no national disabled organisation in Austria, but the regional tourist offices or any of the following can be contacted for more information:

Behinderten Selbsthilfe Gruppe (☎ 03332-65 405; www.bsgh.at; Selbstgasse 5, 8320 Hartberg, Styria)

Bizeps (Map p122; ☎ 523 89 21; www.bizeps.at, in German; Kaiserstrasse 55/3/4a, Vienna)

Upper Austria tourist office (www.oberoesterreich.at/nohandicap, in German) Information on contacts, guides and wheelchair hire.

VISAS

Visas for stays of up to three months are not required for citizens of the EU, the European Economic Area (EEA), much of Eastern Europe, Israel, USA, Canada, the majority of Central and South American nations, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia or New Zealand. All other nationalities require a visa; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website at www.bmaa.gv.at has a list of Austrian embassies where you can apply for one.

If you wish to stay longer you should simply leave the country and re-enter. For those nationalities that require a visa, extensions cannot be organised within Austria; you'll need to leave and reapply. EU nationals can stay indefinitely but are required by law to register with the local *Magistratisches Bezirksamt* (magistrate's office) if the stay exceeds 60 days.

Austria is part of the Schengen Agreement which includes all EU states (minus Britain and Ireland) and Switzerland. In practical terms this means a visa issued by one Schengen country is good for all the other member countries and a passport is not required to move from one to the other (a national identity card is required, though). Things are a little different for the 10 new EU-member states which joined in 2004; a

passport is still required to move in and out of these countries, but check with your local embassy for more up-to-date information. Austrians are required to carry personal identification, and you too will need to be able to prove your identity.

Visa and passport requirements are subject to change, so always double-check before travelling. Lonely Planet's website, www.lonelyplanet.com has links to up-to-date visa information.

VOLUNTEERING

Voluntary work is a good way to meet people and do something for the country you're visiting. In Austria, maintaining hiking trails is popular, but other volunteer projects range from joining a performance group on social issues to repairing a school fence outside Vienna. Generally, there's something for everyone, young or senior, lasting anything from a week to 18 months or more.

The key to finding a volunteer position in Austria is to hook up with the networks in your home country and/or if you speak German, to approach an Austrian organisation directly. If you speak German, you can track down an organisation from the Austrian government website www.freiwilligenweb.at (in German).

Networks rely mostly on people using their websites to locate projects; go to Travel Tree (www.traveltree.co.uk), a portal for volunteers. International Voluntary Service Great Britain (IVS; www.ivs-gb.org.uk) uses this portal and is networked with the worldwide group Service Civil International. In Australia, International Volunteers for Peace (www.iwp.org.au) also uses this network. Volunteers for Peace (www.vfp.org) in the US is for US and Canadian citizens and has a difficult-to-find searchable Project Directory down the bottom of its website. The Canada-based Canadian Alliance for Development Initiatives and Projects (CADIP; www.cadip.org) is also open to US and Canadian citizens.

One European foundation with excellent programmes is the Bergwald Projekt, which offers volunteer work protecting and maintaining mountain forests in Austria, Germany and Switzerland. Generally, the Austrian programmes last one week. The contact is the *Oesterreichischer Alpenverein* (fax 0512-57 55 28; www.bergwaldprojekt.at, in German; Wilhelm-Greif-Strasse 15, 6010 Innsbruck).

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

In cities, Austrian women enjoy the same status and opportunity as men, although 'Stone Age' gender customs have survived in some conservative, rural parts of the country.

Women travellers should experience no special problems. Fortunately, physical attacks and verbal harassment are less common than in many other countries. However, normal caution should be exercised when travelling alone or in unfamiliar situations. Some Austrian trains have a special section for women travelling alone and a growing number of underground car parks have a section near the staffed ticketing office designated as a women-only parking space.

Cities usually have a *Frauenzentrum* (women's centre) and/or telephone helplines. In Vienna, for example, there is the Frauenotruf (☎ 01-71 719), an emergency, 24-hour hotline for reporting rape and sexual violence.

WORK

EU nationals can work in Austria without a work permit or residency permit, though as intending residents they need to register with the police (or the magistrate's office if in Vienna).

Non-EU nationals need both a work permit and a residency permit and will find it pretty hard to get either. Inquire (in German) about job possibilities via local labour offices; look under *Arbeitsmarktservice* in the White Pages for the closest office. Your employer in Austria needs to apply for your work permit. Applications for residency permits must be applied for via the Austrian embassy in your home country. A good website for foreign residents is www.wif.wien.at.

Teaching is a favourite of expats in the bigger cities; look under *Sprachschulen* (language schools) in the *Gelben Seiten* (phone book) for a list of schools. Ski resorts are another good place to look for work; there are often vacancies in snow clearing, chalet cleaning, restaurants and ski-equipment shops. Language skills are particularly crucial for any type of work in service industries. Your best chance of finding work is to start writing or asking around early – in summer for winter work and in winter for summer work. Some people do, however, get lucky by arriving right at the beginning of the season and asking around; tourist offices and ski shops should be able to point you in the direction of current vacancies.

In October, grape-pickers are usually required in the wine-growing regions.

Useful books for those searching for work abroad include *Working in Ski Resorts – Europe & North America* by Victoria Pybus, *Work Your Way Around the World* by Susan Griffith, and *The Au Pair and Nanny's Guide to Working Abroad* by Susan Griffith and Sharon Legg. All these titles are published in the UK by Vacation Work (www.vacationwork.co.uk).

Online jobs are listed on a number of web-sites, including:

www.ams.or.at Austria's labour office; in German.

www.jobfinder.at Directed towards professionals; in German.

www.jobpilot.at Comprehensive site with loads of professional jobs; in German.

www.studentenjob.com Specialises in student jobs; in German.

www.virtualvienna.net Aimed at expats, with a variety of jobs, including UN listings.

Transport

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GETTING THERE & AWAY

Austria is well connected to the rest of the world. Vienna and four of the country's regional capitals are served by no-frills airlines (plus regular airline services). Europe's extensive bus and train networks crisscross the country and there are major highways from Germany and Italy. It's also possible to enter Austria by boat from Hungary, Slovakia and Germany.

ENTERING THE COUNTRY

A valid passport is required when entering Austria. The only exception to this rule occurs when entering from another Schengen country (all EU states minus Britain and Ireland); in this case, only a national identity

card is required. Procedures at border crossings from other EU countries are relatively lax compared with procedures at airports, and provincial capital airports are stricter than those in Vienna. See p392 for more information.

AIR

Vienna is the main transport hub for Austria, but Graz, Linz, Klagenfurt, Salzburg and Innsbruck all receive international flights. Flights to these cities are often a cheaper option than those to the capital, as are flights to Airport Letisko (Bratislava Airport) which is only 60km east of Vienna in Slovakia. Bregenz has no airport; your best bet is to fly into Friedrichshafen in Germany or Altenrhein in Switzerland. With advance booking, no-frills airlines can be very cheap.

Seriously consider booking early over the Christmas and New Year period; prices tend to soar at this time.

Airports & Airlines

Austrian Airlines (code 05; ☎ 05 17 89; www.aa.com; Hegelgasse 21) is the national carrier and has the most extensive services to Vienna. It is a member of Star Alliance (www.staralliance.com).

See the Getting There & Away sections of individual chapters for airlines flying to/from Austria's international airports:

Airport Letisko Bratislava (BTS; ☎ 421 2 3303 33 53; www.airportbratislava.sk) Serves Slovakia's capital

Bratislava and has good transport connections to Vienna.

Graz (GRZ; ☎ 0316-29 02-0; www.flughafen-graz.at, in German)

Innsbruck (INN; ☎ 0512-225 25-0; www.innsbruck-airport.com, in German)

Klagenfurt (KLU; ☎ 0463-41 500; www.klagenfurt-airport.com)

Linz (LNZ; ☎ 07221-600-0; www.flughafen-linz.at)

Salzburg (SZG; ☎ 0662-85800; www.salzburg-airport.com, in German)

Vienna (VIE; ☎ 01-7007 22233; www.vienna-airport.com)

Tickets

Except for the no-frills carriers, airlines themselves rarely offer the cheapest deals direct; it can pay, however, to explore their websites. A

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motor travel generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow jetsetters to offset the greenhouse gases they are responsible for with contributions to energy-saving projects and other climate-friendly initiatives in the developing world – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, supports the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: lonelyplanet.com.

good travel agent can give you advice as well as a cheap deal, though internet purchases will often be better than these.

You can book online directly with airlines or web-based companies selling flights; the following are good places to start:

Airbrokers (www.airbrokers.com) USA company specialising in cheap tickets.

Cheap Flights (www.cheapflights.com/www.cheapflights.co.uk) Very informative site with specials, airline information and flight searches, mainly from the USA and UK.

Expedia (www.expedia.com/www.expedia.co.uk) Online travel company listing major airlines; the earlier you book the better.

Flight Centre (www.flightcentre.co.uk) Respected operator handling direct flights, with sites for Australia, New Zealand, the UK, USA and Canada.

Hotwire (www.hotwire.com) Bookings from the USA only; some cheap last-minute deals.

Last Minute (www.lastminute.com) One of the better sites for last-minute deals, including hotels.

Orbitz (www.orbitz.com) Cheap deals when flying from the USA.

Price Line (www.priceline.com) Name-your-own-price USA site.

STA Travel (www.statravel.com) Popular for international student travel, but you don't necessarily have to be a student to take advantage of deals; website linked to worldwide STA sites.

Travel (www.travel.com.au/www.travel.co.nz) Reputable Australia and New Zealand online flight bookers.

Travelocity (www.travelocity.com) USA site that allows you to search fares to/from practically anywhere.

Australia & New Zealand

From this side of the globe, it's worth investigating round-the-world (RTW) tickets, as these may not be much more expensive than a straightforward return ticket. Check the travel agencies' advertisements in the Yellow Pages and the Saturday travel sections of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Age* in Melbourne and the *New Zealand Herald*.

From Australia, Austrian Airlines/Lauda Air offers flights via Bangkok to Vienna (five times weekly from Melbourne and Sydney). As with flights coming from North America, there are plenty of connections via London and Frankfurt.

For the location of **STA Travel** branches call ☎ 1300 733 035 or visit www.statravel.com.au. **Flight Centre** (☎ 133 133; www.flightcentre.com.au) has offices throughout Australia. For online bookings, try www.travel.com.au. In New Zealand, both **Flight Centre** (☎ 0800 243 544; www.flightcentre.co.nz) and **STA Travel** (☎ 0508 782 872; www.statravel.co.nz) have branches throughout the country. The site www.travel.co.nz is recommended for online bookings.

AIRLINES FLYING TO AND FROM AUSTRIA

Aside from Austrian Airlines, the following airlines connect Austria to the rest of the world:

Air Berlin (AB; ☎ 0810-1025 73 800; www.airberlin.com; hub Köln Bonn Airport, Köln)

Air France (AF; ☎ 01-502 22-2400; www.airfrance.fr, in French; hub Roissy-Charles De Gaulle Airport, Paris)

Alitalia (AZ; ☎ 01-505 17 07; www.alitalia.com; hub Leonardo DaVinci International Airport, Rome)

British Airways (BA; ☎ 01-7956 7567; www.britishairways.com; hub Heathrow Airport, London)

Delta Air Lines (DL; ☎ 01-7956 7023; www.delta.com; hub Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, Atlanta)

German Wings (4U; ☎ 0820 240554; www.germanwings.com; hub Bonn Airport, Köln)

Flybe (BE; www.flybe.com; hub Exeter International Airport, Exeter)

InterSky (ISK; ☎ 05574-488 00; www.intersky.biz; hub Friedrichshafen Airport)

KLM (KL; ☎ 0900-359 556; www.klm.at; hub Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam)

Lauda Air (NG; ☎ 0820 320 321; www.laudaair.com; hub Vienna International Airport)

Lufthansa (LH; ☎ 0810-1025 80 80; www.lufthansa.com; hub Frankfurt Airport)

Niki (HG; ☎ 0820 737 800; www.flyniki.com; Vienna International Airport)

Ryanair (FR; ☎ 0900-210 240; www.ryanair.com; hub Stansted Airport, London)

Sky Europe (SP; ☎ 01-998 555 55; www.skyeurope.com; hub Airport Letisko Bratislava, Bratislava)

Styrian Spirit (ZZ; ☎ 0508-051 212; www.styrianairways.com; hub Graz Airport)

Swiss International (LX; ☎ 0810-810 840; www.swiss.com; hub EuroAirport Schweiz, Basel)

Thomsonfly (BY; ☎ 019 289 598; www.thomsonfly.com; hub Luton Airport)

TuiFly (X3/HF; ☎ 01805 757510; www.tuifly.com; hub Hanover Airport)

Welcome Air (2W; ☎ 0512-295 296-300; www.welcomeair.com; hub Innsbruck Airport)

Continental Europe

Like spokes on a wheel, flights go from Vienna to all parts of Europe. Routes to the east are as well covered as those to the west, with Austrian Airlines flying regularly to Bucharest, Kiev, Moscow, St Petersburg, Vilnius, Warsaw and Yekaterinburg (among other destinations).

Austria's other international airports have connections to Belgium, Croatia, Greece, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain and Turkey.

Recommended agencies include:

France Anyway (☎ 0892 893 892; www.anyway.fr); Last-minute (☎ 0892 705 000; www.lastminute.fr); Nouvelles Frontières (☎ 0825 000 747; www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr); OTU Voyages (www.otu.fr; specialises in student travel); Voyageurs du Monde (☎ 01 40 15 11 15; www.vdm.com)

Germany Expedia (www.expedia.de); Just Travel (☎ 089 747 3330; www.justtravel.de); Lastminute (☎ 01805 284 366; www.lastminute.de); STA Travel (☎ 01805 456 422; www.statravel.de; for travellers under the age of 26)

Italy CTS Viaggi (☎ 06 462 0431; www.cts.it, in Italian)

The Netherlands Airfair (☎ 020 620 5121; www.airfair.nl, in Dutch)

UK & Ireland

Discount air travel is big business in London. In addition to the travel sections of the major Sunday papers, check the travel classifieds in London's weekly *Time Out*, the *Evening*

Standard and in the free online magazine *TNT* (www.tntmagazine.com).

Flybe connects Salzburg with Exeter and Southampton. Ryanair flies from London-Stansted to Klagenfurt and Salzburg. Austrian Airlines flies via London from Dublin to Vienna; Aer Lingus flies there direct, and British Airways flies Vienna, Innsbruck and Salzburg to London, as well as Salzburg to Manchester.

Some of the more reliable agents in London include:

Flight Centre (☎ 0870 890 8099; www.flightcentre.co.uk)

Flightbookers (☎ 0870 814 4001; www.ebookers.com)

North-South Travel (☎ 01245 608 291; www.northsouthtravel.co.uk) North-South Travel donates part of their profits to projects in the developing world.

Quest Travel (☎ 0870 442 3542; www.questtravel.com)

STA Travel (☎ 0870 160 0599; www.statravel.co.uk) For travellers under the age of 26.

Trailfinders (☎ 020-7938 3939; www.trailfinders.co.uk)

Travelbag (☎ 0870 890 1456; www.travelbag.co.uk)

USA & Canada

The North Atlantic is the world's busiest long-haul air corridor, and various newspapers contain ads placed by consolidators (discount travel agencies). San Francisco is the ticket-consolidator capital of the US, although some

good deals can be found in Los Angeles, New York and other big cities.

All direct flights from the USA arrive in Vienna. Austrian Airlines has one daily scheduled flight from Washington DC and New York, and most days from Chicago. Passengers from other destinations in the USA fly with United Airlines or US Airways flights from gateway cities.

The following agencies are recommended for online bookings:

American Express travel site www.itn.net

Cheap Tickets www.cheaptickets.com

Expedia www.expedia.com

Lowest Fare www.lowestfare.com

Orbitz www.orbitz.com

STA Travel www.sta.com (for travellers under the age of 26)

Travelocity www.travelocity.com

In Canada, Austrian Airlines flies direct from Toronto daily; flights to or from elsewhere in Canada are with Air Canada. Austrian Airlines uses Lufthansa via Frankfurt am Main (Germany) for its daily Montreal connection. One recommended travel agent is **Travel CUTS** (☎ 800-667-2887; www.travelcuts.com), Canada's national student-travel agency.

LAND Bus

Travelling by bus is a cheap but less comfortable way to cross Europe. It's easiest to book with **Eurolines** (www.eurolines.com; Vienna Map p000-000; ☎ 798 29 00; www.eurolines.at; Erdbergstrasse 202; Graz ☎ 0316 67 11 55; Wiener Strasse 229), a consortium of coach companies with offices all over Europe.

While the bulk of Euroline buses pass through Vienna, its 14 stops in Austria include Graz, Linz, Salzburg, Klagenfurt and Innsbruck.

Eurolines runs buses to/from London (Victoria coach station) and Vienna (one way/return €84/156, 23 hours, five or seven days per week); anyone under 26 or over 60 gets a 10% discount on most fares and passes. For other destinations see www.eurolines.com.

Blaguss/Eurolines (see Columbus Reisen or Eurolines for contact details) has buses to Prague (one way/return €22/34, six hours, 8am and 5pm daily). **Columbus Reisen** (Map pp120-1; ☎ 534 11-123; Dr Karl Lueger Ring 8; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) handles advance bookings.

For quick trips around Europe, both Eurolines and **Busabout** (☎ 020-7950 1661; www.busabout.com), a London-based firm, have bus passes. The **Eurolines Pass** is priced according to season. A 15-day pass costs UK£135 to £225 for adults, or 30 days for UK£205 to £299 (less for those under 26). It covers 35 cities across Europe (including Vienna and Salzburg).

Busabout offers two passes for travel around 50 European cities. It splits them into three different 'loops' which you can combine. From May to September the **Northern Loop** starts from Paris and includes Vienna, Salzburg and St Johann in Tyrol, as well as Prague and several German cities (one/two/three loops UK£289/489/599). Its **Flexipass** (UK£239 six cities, UK£29 per extra city) is another option.

Car & Motorcycle

Getting to Austria by road is simple as there are fast and well-maintained motorways through all surrounding countries. The first thing to do is turn on your headlights – day or night – or you will face a €15 fine.

There are numerous entry points into Austria by road from Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy and Switzerland. Liechtenstein is so small that it has just one border crossing point, near Feldkirch in Austria. The presence of the Alps limits options for approaching Tyrol from the south (Switzerland and Italy). All main border-crossing points are open 24 hours; minor crossings are open from around 6am or 8am until 8pm or 10pm.

Proof of ownership of a private vehicle and a driver's licence should always be carried while driving. EU licences are accepted in Austria while all other nationalities require a German translation or an International Driving Permit (IDP). Third-party insurance is a minimum requirement in Europe and you'll need to carry proof of this in the form of a Green Card.

Carrying a warning triangle and first-aid kit in your vehicle is also compulsory in Austria. If you're a member of an automobile association, ask about free reciprocal benefits offered by affiliated organisations in Europe. For information on Austria's road rules and regulations, see p403.

Train

Austria benefits from its central location within Europe by having excellent rail connections to all important destinations. The *Thomas Cook European Timetable* gives all train schedules, supplements and reservations information. It is updated monthly and is available from Thomas Cook outlets. In the USA, call ☎ 800-367 7984.

Express trains can be identified by the symbols EC (EuroCity, serving international routes) or IC (InterCity, serving national routes). The French Train à Grande Vitesse (TGV) and the German InterCityExpress (ICE) trains are even faster. Extra charges can apply on fast trains and international trains,

and it is a good idea (sometimes obligatory) to make seat reservations for peak times and on certain lines.

Overnight trips usually offer a choice between a *Liegewagen* (couchette) or a more expensive *Schlafwagen* (sleeping car). Long-distance trains have a dining car or snacks available.

Vienna is one of the main rail hubs in Central Europe; for details of the main train stations and the routes they serve, see p158. Elsewhere in Austria, Salzburg has express-train connections in the direction of Munich (€27, 1½ to two hours), Linz towards Prague (€41, five hours) and Regensburg (€45, two to 3½ hours), Graz towards Budapest (€43,

EUROPEAN RAIL PASSES

If you plan to travel widely in Europe, the following special tickets and rail passes may be worth pursuing. Some of these may have different names in different countries. For information on a range of rail passes, visit www.raileurope.com, www.raileurope.co.uk and www.railpassdirect.co.uk.

Eurail Pass

Only available to non-European residents, Eurail passes are valid for unlimited 1st-class travel on national railways and some private lines in much of Western Europe (the UK is not included) as well as Hungary and Romania. Passes come in 15- or 21-day lots (for US\$656 or \$852) or one-, two- or three-month lots (for US\$1058, \$1494 or \$1843). The Eurail Flexi pass allows 10 or 15 days travel in two months and costs US\$776 or \$1020. Discounts on both are available for people travelling in groups and those under 26.

Eurail Select Pass

The Eurail Select Pass allows 1st-class travel for non-European residents in three, four or five bordering countries with a choice of five to 15 days over a two-month period. For Austria, that can include Germany, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Italy and Switzerland (from US\$417 to \$921), but not Slovakia. The Eurail Select Pass Saver offers a cheaper deal for two or more people travelling together.

InterRail Pass

Only available to anyone who has lived in Europe for at least six months, this pass gives travellers unlimited travel for up to one month on most of the state railways of Western and Central Europe (except in their own country). A global pass offers 1st- and 2nd-class travel for five days within a 10-day period (€249/329), 10 days within 22 (€359/489), 22 continuous days (€469/629) or one month (€599/809). Discounts apply for those under 26. A country pass for Austria for three to eight days in one month is also available (€109-229) for 2nd class.

Regional Passes

Various regional passes for non-European residents combine 1st-class travel in Austria with one to three countries. These include the Austria–Czech Republic Pass (US\$232), Austria–Croatia–Slovenia Pass (US\$254), Austria–Hungary Pass (US\$232) and the Austria–Switzerland Pass (US\$358), all for four days in two months; the Austria–Germany Pass offers 1st- or 2nd-class (from US\$312 to \$560 for five to 10 days) travel. For most you can buy additional days, and group or youth prices are also available.

6½ to 7½ hours) and Ljubljana (€31, three to 3½ hours), Klagenfurt towards Ljubljana (€21, 2½ hours) and Venice (€35, four hours); and Innsbruck north to Munich (€44, two hours), south to Verona (€45, 3½ to 4½ hours) and west to Zürich (€47, 3¾ hours). Most of the services listed above depart at least every two to three hours daily (these prices may vary slightly depending on the type of train service).

In the UK, buy tickets through **Rail Europe** (☎ 08705-848 848; www.raileurope.co.uk). Travel by train from London involves taking the Eurostar to Paris (UK£59 to £309 return) and connecting to Vienna. All up, it takes about 16 hours.

For a 2nd-class one-way fare to/from Vienna expect to pay €180 from Paris (12 hours), €169 from Amsterdam (14 hours) and €47 from Prague (4½ hours).

RIVER

The Danube (Donau) is a traffic-free access route for arrivals and departures from Austria. Since the early 1990s the Danube has been connected to the Rhine by the River Main tributary and the Main-Danube canal in southern Germany. The *MS River Queen* does 13-day cruises along this route, from Amsterdam to Vienna, between May and September from around £2000. It departs monthly in each direction.

In Britain bookings can be made through **Noble Caledonia** (☎ 020-7752 0000; www.noble-caledonia.co.uk); it also makes bookings for the *MS Amadeus*, which takes seven days to get from Passau to Budapest. In the USA, you can book through **Uniworld** (☎ 1-800-733-7820, 1-818-382-2700 outside the US; www.uniworld.com), which handles this and many other Danube tours. For information on connections to Passau in Germany, see p208.

Heading east, boats travel to Bratislava (hydrofoil one way/return €27/54, 1¼ hours) three times daily from April to late October, plus Friday and Saturday evening from May to October. These Twin City Liner ships dock at the DDSG quay between Marienbrücke and Schwedenbrücke in Vienna (tickets are also sold there in summer; note that a new quay on the Danube Canal is in planning). A hydrofoil to Budapest (one way/return €89/109, 5½ hours) runs daily from mid-April to late October from the Handelskai office of the

company operating both services: **DDSG Blue Danube** (Map pp116-17; ☎ 588 80; www.ddsg-blue-danube.at; Handelskai 265; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, also 10am-4pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct). Alternatively, bookings can be made through all Österreichische Verkehrsbüro offices (see p124 & p123).

GETTING AROUND

Transport systems in Austria are highly developed and generally very efficient, and reliable information is usually available in English. Individual bus and train *Fahrplan* (timetables) are readily available, as are helpful annual timetables.

Austria's main rail provider is the **Österreichische Bundesbahn** (ÖBB; Austrian Federal Railways; www.oebb.at), which has an extensive country-wide rail network. This is supplemented by a handful of private railways. Wherever trains don't run, a **Postbus** (www.postbus.at) usually does. Timetables and prices for many train and bus connections can be found online at www.oebb.at.

Most provinces have an integrated transport system offering day passes covering regional zones for both bus and train travel.

AIR

Flying in a country the size of Austria is not really necessary. Those who for special reasons do need to fly, though, will find a couple of airlines serving longer routes.

Airlines in Austria

Austrian Airlines (p395), and its subsidiaries Tyrolean Airways and Austrian Arrow offer several flights daily between Vienna and Graz, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, Linz and Salzburg, and also flights between Graz and Linz, and Linz and Salzburg.

Welcome Air (p397) has flights from Innsbruck to Graz, along with a handful of international services.

BICYCLE

Cycling is a popular activity in Austria, and most regional tourist boards have brochures on cycling facilities and routes within their region. Separate bike tracks are common, not only in cities, but also in the country. The Danube cycling trail is something of a Holy Grail for cyclists, though there are many

other excellent bike routes in the country. Most are close to lakes or rivers, where there are fewer hills to contend with. For more information on popular cycle routes, see the Outdoor Activities chapter (p77).

It's possible to take bicycles on any train with a bicycle symbol at the top of its timetable; these trains are either regional or *Eilzüge* (medium-fast trains). A transferable bicycle ticket valid on trains costs €2.90 per day, €7.50 per week and €22.50 per month. Sending a bike by courier as a *Bahnkurierpaket* costs €29 within Austria, arranged directly at the counter in the station. On some EC and IC trains you can accompany your bike (€6.80 for a day ticket). An international ticket for a bike costs €12 per day.

Hire

All large cities have at least one bike shop that doubles as a rental centre. In places where cycling is a popular pastime, such as the Wachau in Lower Austria and the Neusiedler See in Burgenland, almost all small towns have a rental shop and train stations have rental facilities. Rates vary from town to town, but expect to pay around €10 per day; see the destination chapters for specific details on bike hire.

BOAT

The Danube serves as a thoroughfare between Vienna and Lower and Upper Austria. Services are generally slow, scenic excursions rather than functional means of transport. For more information on boat travel in Vienna, see p158; for Lower Austria see p164; and for Upper Austria p208. Some of the country's larger lakes, such as Bodensee and Wörthersee, have boat services.

BUS

The *Postbus* (Post Bus) network is best considered a backup to the rail service, more useful for reaching out-of-the-way places and local destinations than for long-distance travel. Rail routes are sometimes duplicated by bus services, but buses really come into their own in the more inaccessible mountainous regions. Buses are fairly reliable, and usually depart from outside train stations. For remote travel, plan a day or two ahead and go on a weekday; services are reduced on Saturday, often nonexistent on Sunday.

For nationwide bus information, call ☎ 01-711 01 between 7am and 8pm, or log on to the websites www.oebb.at or www.postbus.at. Local bus stations or tourist offices usually stock free timetables for specific bus routes.

Costs

Bus fares are comparable to train fares; however, you can't buy a long-distance ticket and make stop-offs en route as you can on a train. Prices are listed throughout the destination chapters; here are a few sample one-way fares:

Destination	Cost	Duration (hr)
Graz–Klagenfurt	€14.70	2½
Kitzbühel–Lienz	€13.20	2
Salzburg–Bad Ischl	€8.70	1½
Salzburg–Zell am See	€13.30	2
Vienna–Mariazell	€23.30	3½

Reservations

It's possible to buy tickets in advance on some routes, but on others you can only buy tickets from the drivers. More often than not, though, there is no need to make reservations as most Austrians and tourists use the railway system.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Driving in Austria is a pleasure; roads are well maintained, signs are everywhere and rules are usually adhered to. The use of *Personenkraftwagen* (PKW) or *Auto* (cars) is often discouraged in city centres though, and it is a good idea to ditch your trusty chariot and rely on public transport.

The fastest roads around the country are the autobahns, identified on maps by national 'A' numbers or pan-European 'E' numbers (both are usually given in this book). These are subject to a general motorway tax. Their course is often shadowed by *Bundesstrassen* (alternative routes), which are as direct as the terrain will allow, sometimes using tunnels to maintain their straight lines. In the mountains, you can opt instead for smaller, slower roads that wind over mountain passes. These can add to your journey but the scenery often makes up for the extra time and kilometres. Some minor passes are blocked by snow from November to May. Carrying snow chains in winter is highly recommended and may be compulsory in some areas.

Cars can be transported by *Autoreisezüge* (motorail trains). Vienna is linked by a daily

are a common feature in Austrian cities; take care if you've never driven among them before. Trams always have priority. Vehicles should wait behind while trams slow down and stop for passengers.

Urban Parking

Most town centres have a designated *Kurzparkzone* (short-term parking zone), where on-street parking is limited to a maximum of 1½ or three hours (depending upon the place) between certain specified times. *Parkschein* (parking vouchers) for such zones can be purchased from *Tabak* shops or pavement dispensers and then displayed on the windscreen. Outside the specified time, parking in the *Kurzparkzone* is free.

HITCHING

Hitching is never entirely safe anywhere in the world and we don't recommend it. Travellers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a potentially serious risk. Those who choose to hitch will be safer if they travel in pairs and let someone know where they are planning to go. An alternative is to check notice boards at universities for people looking for passengers to share a trip.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

Austria's local transport infrastructure is excellent, inexpensive and safe. It runs from about 5am or 6am to midnight, though in smaller towns evening services may be patchy or finish for the night much earlier.

Tickets will generally cover all forms of public transport in a town or city. Passes and multi-trip tickets are available in advance from *Tabak* shops, pavement dispensers, and occasionally tourist offices. They usually need to be validated upon first use in the machine on buses or trams. In some towns drivers will sell single tickets, but rarely passes. Single tickets may be valid for one hour, 30 minutes, or a single journey, depending on the place, and cost about €1.70. If you're a senior, attending school in Austria, or travelling as a family, you may be eligible for reduced-price tickets in some towns.

You can usually buy excellent value one-day or 24-hour tickets which often only cost double the price of a single ticket. Weekly or three-day passes may be available too, as well as multi-trip tickets, which will work out cheaper than buying individual tickets for each journey.

Fines for travelling without a valid ticket easily outweigh the price it would have cost to buy one. Depending on the inspector, you could have real problems if you aren't carrying enough cash to pay the fine at the time you're caught.

Bus

Buses are the mainstay of local transport in Austria. Towns that require some form of public transport will at least have a local bus system; it will be well used, comprehensive and efficient.

Keep alert when you're about to get off a bus: if you haven't pressed the request button and there's nobody waiting at the bus stop, the driver will go right past it.

Metro

Vienna is the only city with a metro; see p160 for more details.

Taxi

On the whole, taxis are cheap, ubiquitous and safe. Stands are invariably located outside train stations and large hotels. Fares are metered and comprise two elements: a flat starting fee plus a charge per kilometre. A small tip is expected; add about 10% to the fare. Telephone numbers for taxi companies are given under Getting Around in the destination chapters.

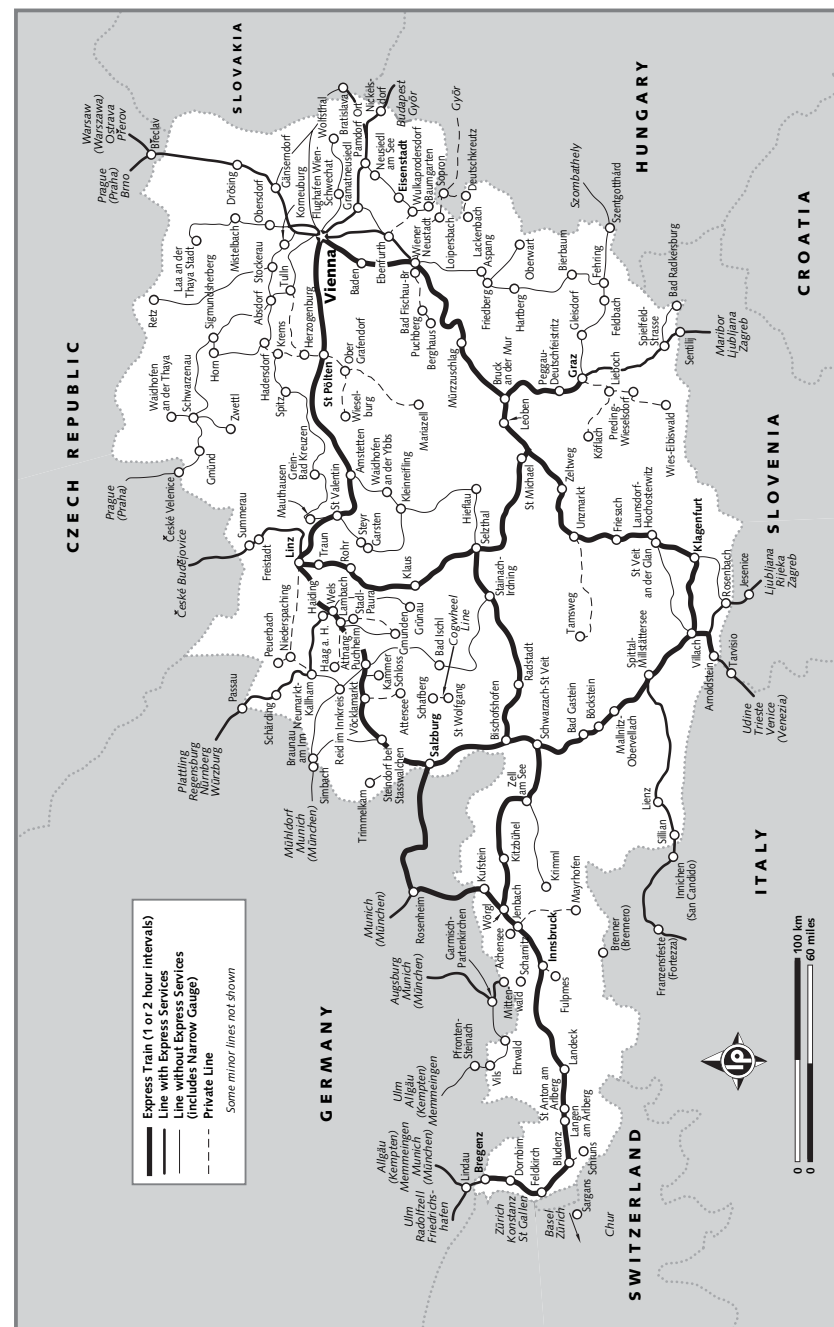
Tram

Many of Austria's larger cities, such as Graz, Linz and Vienna, supplement their bus systems with convenient and environmentally friendly trams. Most towns have an integrated transport system, meaning you can switch between bus and tram routes on the same ticket.

TRAIN

Like much of Europe, Austria's train network is a dense web reaching the country's far-flung corners. The system is fast, efficient, frequent and well used. **ÖBB** (24-hr information ☎ 05 17 17; www.oebb.at) is the main operator, and is supplemented with a handful of private lines.

The German for train station is *Bahnhof* (abbreviated as *Bf*); the main train station is the *Hauptbahnhof* (abbreviated as *Hbf*). Some small rural stations are unstaffed and tickets cannot be bought there; these stations are indicated on timetables by a rectangle with a diagonal line through the middle. All



reasonably sized stations have facilities for exchanging foreign currency or travellers cheques and make some provision for luggage storage, either at a staffed counter or in 24-hour luggage lockers. Many stations have information centres where the staff speak English, and display information on special tickets and deals.

Bahnsteig (platforms) at train stations are divided into zones (A, B and sometimes C) and may be used for more than one train. Note that trains occasionally split en route so be sure to sit in the correct carriage. Diagram boards on the platforms show the carriage order (1st or 2nd class, dining car etc) of IC and EC trains. Separate yellow posters in stations list *Ankunft* (arrivals) and *Abfahrt* (departures).

Classes

The type and speed of a train can be identified by its prefix. EuroCity (EC), InterCity (IC) and InterCityExpress (ICE) are all express trains, stopping only at major stations; they usually include a dining car. EuroNight (EN) is an international night train, with *Schlafwagen* (sleeping cars) and *Liegewagen* (couchettes). D (*Schnellzug*) are fast trains while E (*Eilzug*) are medium-fast trains that stop at some smaller stations. Slow, local trains have no letter prefix and stop at all stations. On small local trains serving relatively isolated routes, there may be a button to press to request the train to stop (as on buses). Trains have smoking and nonsmoking compartments, though Vienna's S-Bahn trains are nonsmoking only.

Long-distance express trains always provide the choice of travelling in 1st or 2nd class, while overnight trains have the option of a *Schlafwagen* or *Liegewagen*. Most local services have 2nd-class carriages only.

Costs

Austrian train fares are priced according to distance: €1.90 for 10km, €8.30 for 50km, €16.20 for 100km. These fares are for 2nd class; the equivalent rate in 1st class is €6.70, €16.80 and €27.80. Fares for children aged six to 15 are half-price; younger kids travel free if they don't take up a seat. Small pets (in suitable containers) travel free; larger pets travel at half-price.

Tickets can be purchased on most trains but they cost €3 extra (unless you board at an unstaffed station or the ticket machine is

out of order). Credit cards, Eurocheque cards and Eurocheques are accepted at all stations and in ticket machines.

One-way tickets for journeys of 100km or under are valid for only one day and the journey can't be broken. For trips of 101km or more, the ticket is valid for one month and you can alight en route, but you should tell the conductor so your ticket can be suitably endorsed if necessary. This is worth doing, as longer trips cost less per kilometre. Return tickets of up to 100km each way are also valid for one day; tickets for longer journeys are valid for one month, though the initial outward journey must still be completed within three days. A return fare is usually the equivalent price of two one-way tickets.

Reduced rail fares on both national and international routes are sometimes available for those aged under 26; show your passport and ask.

In this book, the fares quoted are always those for 2nd class.

Reservations

Reserving seats in 2nd class within Austria costs €3 for most express services; in 1st class, it's free. If you haven't done so, check (before you sit) whether your intended seat has already been reserved by someone else. Reservations are recommended for travel on weekends.

Train Passes

The Vorteils card is an annual card available to all and sundry. It will probably not be worth the money for the average tourist, but for those sticking around for longer periods, it's a good deal. The Vorteils card (photo required) entitles you to a 45% (50% at a ticket machine) reduction on the ÖBB network and most private lines, and costs €100. The Vorteils card 26 (for people under the age of 26 or families) costs just €20 and the Vorteils card Senior (men over 65, women over 60) costs €27; at these prices you can make savings even during a relatively short stay.

A 2nd-class three-day pass costs €109 and peaks at €147 for eight days. Outside continental Europe, US and British citizens can purchase a similar product, the Austrian Railpass. It provides three to eight days of unlimited travel over 15 days and costs from €135 to €258 for 2nd class and from €198 to €328 for 1st class.

Health

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Travel health depends on your pre-departure preparations, your health care while travelling and how you handle any medical problems that develop. Major health worries are minimal in Austria; the population is very health-conscious, facilities are excellent, restaurants are highly sanitised and there are no major infectious diseases.

BEFORE YOU GO

Prevention is the key to staying healthy while abroad. A little planning before departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses, will save trouble later. See your dentist before a long trip, carry a spare pair of contact lenses and glasses, and take your optical prescription with you. Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled, containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity.

INSURANCE

If you're an EU citizen, a European Health Insurance Card (formerly an E111 form), available from health centres, covers you for most medical care. The cards will not cover you for non-emergencies or emergency repatriation home. Citizens from non-EU countries should

It's usually a good idea to consult your government's travel health website before departure, if one is available:

Australia www.dfat.gov.au/travel/

Canada www.travelhealth.gc.ca

UK www.doh.gov.uk/traveladvice/

US www.cdc.gov/travel/

find out if there is a reciprocal arrangement for free medical care between their country and Austria. If you do need health insurance, make sure you get a policy that covers you for the worst possible scenario, such as an accident requiring an emergency flight home. Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that all travellers should be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, as well as hepatitis B, regardless of their destination. Since most vaccines don't produce immunity until at least two weeks after they're given, visit a physician at least six weeks before departure. See p410 for advice on tickborne encephalitis.

ONLINE RESOURCES

The WHO's publication **International Travel & Health** (www.who.int/ith) is revised annually and is available online. Other useful websites: **www.ageconcern.org.uk** Advice on travel for the elderly. **www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk** General travel advice for the layperson.

www.maristopes.org.uk Information on women's health and contraception.

www.mdtravelhealth.com Travel health recommendations for every country; updated daily.

FURTHER READING

Health Advice for Travellers (currently called the 'T6' leaflet) is an annually updated leaflet by the Department of Health in the UK and available free in British post offices. It contains some general information, legally required and recommended vaccines for

different countries, reciprocal health agreements and a European Health Insurance Card/E111 application form. Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* by Cathy Lanigan includes advice on travel health for younger children. Other recommended references include *Traveller's Health* by Dr Richard Dawood and *Traveller's Good Health Guide* by Ted Lankester.

IN TRANSIT

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots may form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The longer the flight, the greater the risk. The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and breathing difficulties. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent the development of DVT on long flights you should walk about the cabin, contract the leg muscles while sitting, drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

JET LAG & MOTION SICKNESS

To avoid jet lag (common when crossing more than five time zones) try to drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids and eat light meals. Upon arrival, try to get exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep and so on) as soon as possible.

Antihistamines such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine) and meclizine (Antivert, Bonine) are usually the first choice for treating motion sickness. A herbal alternative is ginger.

IN AUSTRIA

AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTHCARE

Good healthcare is readily available and for minor self-limiting illnesses pharmacists can give valuable advice and sell over-the-counter medication. They can also advise when more specialised help is required and point you in the right direction. The standard of dental care is usually good; however, it is sensible to have a dental check-up before a long trip. A straightforward, non-urgent appointment with a doctor might cost anything from €40 to €75.

Drugs, with or without prescription, must be paid for. *Apotheke* (pharmacies) handle all drugs, including aspirin.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Altitude sickness

Lack of oxygen at high altitudes (over 2500m) affects most people to some extent. The effect may be mild or severe and occurs because less oxygen reaches the muscles and the brain at high altitude, requiring the heart and lungs to compensate by working harder. Symptoms of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) usually develop during the first 24 hours at altitude but may be delayed up to three weeks. Mild symptoms include headache, lethargy, dizziness, difficulty sleeping and loss of appetite. AMS may become more severe without warning and can be fatal. Severe symptoms include breathlessness, a dry, irritative cough (which may progress to the production of pink, frothy sputum), severe headaches, lack of coordination and balance, confusion, irrational behaviour, vomiting, drowsiness and unconsciousness. There is no hard and fast rule as to what is too high: AMS has been fatal at 3000m, although 3500m to 4500m is the usual range.

Treat mild symptoms by resting at the same altitude until recovery, usually a day or two. Paracetamol or aspirin can be taken for headaches. If symptoms persist or become worse, however, *immediate descent is necessary*; even 500m can help. Drug treatments should never be used in order to avoid descent or to enable further ascent.

Diamox (acetazolamide) reduces the headache of AMS and helps the body acclimatise to the lack of oxygen. It is only available on prescription and those who are allergic to the sulphonamide antibiotics may also be allergic to Diamox.

Heatstroke

Heat exhaustion occurs following excessive fluid loss with inadequate replacement of fluids and salt. Symptoms include headache, dizziness and tiredness. Dehydration is already happening by the time you feel thirsty – aim to drink sufficient water to produce pale, diluted urine. To treat heat exhaustion, replace fluids with water and/or fruit juice, and cool the body with cold water and fans. Treat salt loss with salty fluids such as soup or Bovril, or add a little more table salt to foods than usual.

PREVENTING ACUTE MOUNTAIN SICKNESS

- Ascend slowly – have frequent rest days, spending two to three nights at each rise of 1000m. If you reach a high altitude by trekking, acclimatisation takes place gradually and you are less likely to be affected than if you fly directly to high altitude.
- It is always wise to sleep at a lower altitude than the greatest height reached during the day if possible. Also, once above 3000m, care should be taken not to increase the sleeping altitude by more than 300m per day.
- Drink extra fluids. The mountain air is dry and cold and moisture is lost as you breathe. Evaporation of sweat may occur unnoticed and result in dehydration. A practical way to monitor hydration is by ensuring that urine is clear and plentiful.
- Eat light, high-carbohydrate meals for more energy.
- Avoid alcohol as it may increase the risk of dehydration.
- Avoid sedatives.
- Avoid tobacco.

In the UK, fact sheets are available from the **British Mountaineering Council** (177-179 Burton Rd, Manchester, M20 2BB).

Heatstroke is much more serious, resulting in irrational and hyperactive behaviour and eventually loss of consciousness and death. Rapid cooling by spraying the body with water and fanning is ideal. Emergency fluid and electrolyte replacement by intravenous drip is recommended.

Hypothermia

Proper preparation will reduce the risks of getting hypothermia. Even on a hot day in the mountains, the weather can change rapidly; carry waterproof garments, warm layers and inform others of your route.

Acute hypothermia follows a sudden drop of temperature over a short time. Chronic hypothermia is caused by a gradual loss of temperature over hours.

Hypothermia starts with shivering, loss of judgment and clumsiness. Unless re-warming occurs, the sufferer deteriorates into apathy, confusion and coma. Prevent further heat loss by seeking shelter, warm dry clothing, hot sweet drinks and shared bodily warmth.

Frostbite is caused by freezing and subsequent damage to bodily extremities. Seriousness is determined by wind chill, temperature and length of exposure. Frostbite starts as frostnip (white numb areas of skin) from which complete recovery is expected with re-warming. As frostbite develops the skin blisters and then becomes black. The loss of damaged tissue eventually occurs. Adequate clothing, staying dry,

keeping well hydrated and ensuring adequate calorie intake best prevent frostbite. Treatment involves rapid re-warming, avoiding re-freezing and rubbing the affected areas.

Insect Bites & Stings

Ticks, which are usually found below 1200m in undergrowth at the forest edge or beside walking tracks, can carry encephalitis (see p410).

Lyme disease (known as *Borreliose*) is a bacterial infection borne by ticks that can affect muscles, the skeleton and organs. It is easy to recognise in the early stage (a rash or red infection around the bite), and is treated with antibiotics. There is no vaccination against it.

Mosquitoes are found in Austria – they may not carry malaria but can cause irritation and infected bites. Use a DEET-based insect repellent.

Bees and wasps only cause real problems to those with a severe allergy (anaphylaxis). If you have a severe allergy to bee or wasp stings carry an 'epipen' or similar adrenaline injection.

Bed bugs lead to very itchy lumpy bites. Spraying the mattress with crawling-insect killer after changing bedding will get rid of them.

Scabies are tiny mites that live in the skin, particularly between the fingers. They cause an intensely itchy rash. Scabies is easily treated with lotion from a pharmacy; other

members of the household also need treating to avoid spreading scabies between asymptomatic carriers.

Snake Bites

Austria is home to several types of snake, which are more prevalent in the mountains. A couple can deliver a nasty, although not fatal, bite. Avoid getting bitten by wearing boots, socks and long trousers while hiking and do not stick your hand into holes or cracks. Half of those bitten by venomous snakes are not actually injected with poison (envenomed). If bitten by a snake, do not panic. Immobilise the bitten limb with a splint (eg a stick) and apply a bandage over the site with firm pressure, similar to a bandage over a sprain. Do not apply a tourniquet, or cut or suck the bite. Get the victim to medical help as soon as possible so that antivenin can be given if necessary.

Tickborne Encephalitis

Tickborne encephalitis (called FSME in Austria) is spread by tick bites. It is a serious infection of the brain and vaccination is highly advised for those in risk areas who are unable to avoid tick bites (such as campers, forestry workers and hikers or ramblers). Two doses of vaccine will give a year's protection, three doses up to three years'. The infection rate in Austria is low and declining (less than 100 cases in most years); this is kept down by comprehensive vaccination, especially in high-risk areas.

Distribution of tickborne encephalitis is uneven; the website www.zecken.at (in German; go to FSME then Verbreitungsgebiete Österreich) has excellent region-by-region maps on distribution that are useful for hikers. Local pharmacists always know whether FSME is a danger in their region and can advise if you're bitten.

Wearing long trousers tucked into walking boots or socks and using a DEET-based insect repellent is the best prevention against tick bites. If a tick is found attached, press down around the tick's head with tweezers, grab the tick as close as possible to the head and rotate continuously in an anticlockwise direction, without pulling, until the tick releases itself. (Chemist shops sell plastic tweezers especially for this purpose.) Avoid pulling the rear of the body as this may squeeze the tick's gut contents through the attached mouth parts into the skin, increasing the risk of infection and disease. Smearing chemicals on the tick will not make it let go and is not recommended.

TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

Anyone travelling with children should know how to treat minor ailments and when to seek medical treatment. Make sure the children are up to date with routine vaccinations, and discuss possible travel vaccines well before departure as some vaccines are not suitable for children under a year old.

In hot, moist climates, any wound or break in the skin is likely to let in infection. The area should be cleaned and kept dry.

Remember to avoid contaminated food and water. If your child has vomiting or diarrhoea, the lost fluid and salts must be replaced. It may be helpful to take rehydration powders for reconstituting with boiled water.

Children should be encouraged to avoid and mistrust any dogs or other mammals because of the risk of rabies and other diseases. Any bite, scratch or lick from a warm-blooded, furry animal should immediately be thoroughly cleaned. If there is any possibility that the animal is infected with rabies, immediate medical assistance should be sought.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Emotional stress, exhaustion and travelling through different time zones can all contribute to an upset in the menstrual pattern. If using oral contraceptives, remember some antibiotics, diarrhoea and vomiting can stop the pill from working and lead to the risk of pregnancy – remember to take condoms with you just in case. Time zones, gastrointestinal upsets and antibiotics do not affect injectable contraception.

Travelling during pregnancy is usually possible but always consult your doctor before planning your trip. The most risky times for travel are during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and after 30 weeks.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Emergency contraception is most effective if taken within 24 hours after unprotected sex. The **International Planned Parenthood Federation** (www.ippf.org) can advise about the availability of contraception in different countries. If emergency contraception is needed, head to the nearest healthcare centre or consult a doctor.

Condoms are readily available throughout Austria. When buying condoms, look for a European CE mark, which means it has been rigorously tested, and then keep them in a cool dry place or they may crack and perish.

Language

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The national language of Austria is German, though for a small country there are a surprising number of regional accents and dialects. This is due in part to the isolating influence of high mountain ranges, causing language to evolve differently in different communities. Austrians will probably tell you that even they have difficulty understanding the accents of compatriots from other regions; indeed, the dialect spoken in Vorarlberg is much closer to Swiss German (*Schwyzertütsch*) – a language all but incomprehensible to most non-Swiss – than it is to the standard High German (*Hochdeutsch*) dialect.

In some areas of the country, a significant minority may have a different first language to German. In Burgenland about 25,000 people speak Croatian, and in Carinthia about 20,000 people speak Slovene.

Fortunately for visitors, Austrians can switch from their dialect to High German whenever necessary, and many speak some English. Young people are usually quite fluent in English. As might be expected, English is more widely spoken in cities and tourist areas than in out-of-the-way rural districts. Staff at tourist and train information offices almost invariably speak English; hotel receptionists and restaurant waiters

usually do as well, especially in the more upmarket establishments. As with any countries you visit, any attempt to communicate with the people in their native tongue will be appreciated, so some knowledge of German will definitely be an asset.

AUSTRIAN GERMAN

Though the grammar is the same as standard High German, there are also many words and expressions that are used only by Austrians. Some words are used throughout the country, others are only used in particular regions, although they'll probably be understood elsewhere. Most of them would not automatically be understood by non-Austrian German speakers. On the other hand, the 'standard' German equivalents would be understood by all Austrians.

Most of the greetings and farewells that we've included in the list of useful phrases are common only to Austria. *Servus* is an informal greeting, and can also be used when taking your leave. The word has been adopted as a motto by the Austrian national tourist office. *Grüss dich* or *Griassdi* (literally 'greet you') is also a familiar, informal greeting. It's especially used by people who don't want to bring God into the conversation (rather than *Grüss Gott* – 'greet God'). For 'goodbye', *Auf Wiedersehen* is the standard phrase; *Baba*, *Pfiati* or *Ciao* are less formal alternatives.

There are a number of ways to describe your lack of sobriety. If you're tipsy you can say *Ich bin beschwipst* or *Ich habe einen Schwips*. If you're definitely the worse for wear, the Viennese dialect expression is *I'hob an dulliö*. If you're very drunk, you could say *Ich bin zu*, though everyone will probably have figured that out already.

Some useful Austrian words are: *Blunzen* (black pudding); *Erdäpfel* (potato); *Faschierter* (minced meat); *Gerstl* (money); *Karfiol* (cauliflower); *Maroni* (roasted chestnut); *Maut* (toll charge); *Müch* (milk); *Obers* (cream); *Paradeiser* (tomato); *Scherzl* (crust of bread); and *Stamperl* (glass for Schnapps). For more useful food-related words, see p65. To request the bill in a restaurant, simply say *Zahlen, bitte* (pay, please).

Words that are more specifically Viennese include:

Beisl	small tavern for food and drink
Bim	tram
Haberer	friend
Stiftl	glass (for wine)
Verdrahn	to sell

The words and phrases included in this language guide should help you through the most common travel situations. Those with the desire to delve further into the language should get a copy of Lonely Planet's *German Phrasebook*.

GRAMMAR

German grammar can be a nightmare for English speakers. Nouns come in three genders: masculine, feminine and neuter (m/f/n). The corresponding forms of the definite article ('the' in English) are *der*, *die* and *das*, with the universal plural form, *die*. Nouns and articles will alter according to complex grammatical rules relating to the noun's function within a phrase – known as 'case'. In German there are four cases: nominative, accusative, dative and genitive. We haven't allowed for all possible permutations of case in this language guide – it's simply too complex to cover here. However, bad German is better than no German at all, so even if you muddle your cases, you'll find that you'll still be understood – and your efforts will definitely be appreciated regardless.

If you've noticed that written German seems to be full of capital letters, the reason is that German nouns always begin with a capital letter.

PRONUNCIATION

It's not difficult to pronounce German because almost all sounds can be found in English. Follow the pronunciation guide and you'll have no trouble communicating.

Vowels

German Pronunciation Guide

a	a	as the 'u' in 'run'
	ah	as the 'a' in 'father'
ei	ai	as as in 'aisle'
ä	air	as in 'air', with no 'r' sound
oo	aw	as in 'saw'
e	ay	as in 'say'
	e	as in 'bed'

ie	ee	as in 'reef'
ö	er	as in 'her', with no 'r' sound
i	i	as in 'bit'
o	o	as in 'pot'
eu/äu	oy	as in 'toy'
u	oo	as in 'moon'
au	ow	as in 'how'
ü	ü	'ee' said with rounded lips
u	u	as in 'put'

Consonants

The only two tricky consonant sounds in German are **ch** and **r**. All other consonants are pronounced much the same as their English counterparts (except **sch**, which is always as the 'sh' in 'shoe').

The **ch** sound is generally like a hiss from the back of the throat, as in Scottish *loch*. When **ch** occurs after the vowels **e** and **i** it's more like a 'sh' sound, produced with the tongue more forward in the mouth. In this book we've simplified things by using the one symbol 'kh' for both sounds.

The **r** sound is different from English, and it isn't rolled like in Italian or Spanish. It's pronounced at the back of the throat, almost like saying a 'g' sound, but with some friction – a bit like gargling.

Word Stress

As a general rule, word stress in German falls mostly on the first syllable. In our pronunciation guides the stressed syllable is shown in italics.

ACCOMMODATION

Where's a ...?

<i>Wo ist ...?</i>	vaw ist ...
bed and breakfast	
<i>eine Pension</i>	ai-ne pahng-zyawn
camping ground	
<i>ein Campingplatz</i>	ain kem-ping-plats
guesthouse	
<i>eine Pension</i>	ai-ne pahng-zyawn
hotel	
<i>ein Hotel</i>	ain ho-tel
inn	
<i>ein Gasthof</i>	ain gast-hawf
room in a private home	
<i>ein Privatzimmer</i>	ain pri-vaht-tsi-mer
youth hostel	
<i>eine Jugendherberge</i>	ai-ne yoo-gent-her-ber-ge

MAKING A RESERVATION

(for phone and written requests)

To ...	<i>An ...</i>
From ...	<i>Von ...</i>
Date	<i>Datum</i>
I'd like to book ...	<i>Ich möchte ... reservieren.</i> (see the list under 'Accommodation' for bed and room options)
in the name of ...	<i>auf den Namen ...</i>
from ... to ... (date)	<i>Vom ... bis zum ...</i>
credit card	<i>Kreditkarte</i>
number	<i>Nummer</i>
expiry date	<i>gültig bis ... (valid until)</i>
Please confirm	<i>Bitte bestätigen Sie</i>
availability and	<i>Verfügbarkeit und Preis.</i>
price.	

What's the address?

Wie ist die Adresse?
vee ist dee a-dre-se

I'd like to book a room, please.

Ich möchte bitte ein Zimmer reservieren.
ikh merk-kh-te bi-te ain tsi-mer re-zer-vee-ren

For (three) nights/weeks.

Für (drei) Nächte/Wochen.
für (drai) nekh-te/vo-khen

Do you have a ... room?

<i>Haben Sie ein ...?</i>	hah-ben zee ain ...
single	
<i>Einzelzimmer</i>	ain-tsel-tsi-mer
double	
<i>Doppelzimmer mit</i>	do-pel-tsi-mer mit
<i>einem Doppelbett</i>	ai-nem do-pel-bet
twin	
<i>Doppelzimmer mit zwei</i>	do-pel-tsi-mer mit tsvai
<i>Einzelbetten</i>	ain-tsel-be-ten

How much is it per night/person?

Wie viel kostet es vee feel kos-tet es
pro Nacht/Person? praw nakht/per-zawn

May I see it?

Kann ich es sehen? kan ikh es zay-en

Can I get another room?

Kann ich noch ein kan ikh nokh ain
Zimmer bekommen? tsi-mer be-ko-men

It's fine. I'll take it.

Es ist gut, ich nehme es. es ist goot ikh nay-me es

I'm leaving now.

Ich reise jetzt ab. ikh rai-ze yetst ap

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

You should be aware that German uses polite and informal forms for 'you' (*Sie* and *du* respectively). When addressing people you don't know well you should always use the polite form (though younger people will be less inclined to expect it). In this language guide we use the polite form unless indicated by 'inf' (for 'informal') in brackets.

If you need to ask for assistance from a stranger, remember to always introduce your request with a simple *Entschuldigung* (Excuse me, ...).

Good day.

Grüss Gott. (pol) grüss got

Hello.

Servus/Grüss Dich/ zer-vus/grüss dikh/
Griassdi. (inf) gree-as-dee

Good ...

<i>Guten ...</i>	goo-ten ...
day	<i>Tag</i> tahk
morning	<i>Morgen</i> mor-gen
afternoon	<i>Tag</i> tahk
evening	<i>Abend</i> ah-bent

Goodbye.

Auf Wiedersehen. owf vee-der-zay-en
Pfiati/Ciao. (inf) pfya-tee/chau

See you later.

Bis später. bis shpay-ter

Bye.

Tschüss/Tschau. chüss/chow

How are you?

Wie geht es Ihnen? (pol) vee gayt es ee-nen
Wie geht es dir? (inf) vee gayt es deer

Fine. And you?

Danke, gut. dang-ke goot

... and you?

Und Ihnen? (pol) unt ee-nen
Und dir? (inf) unt deer

What's your name?

Wie ist Ihr Name? (pol) vee ist eer nah-me
Wie heisst du? (inf) vee haist doo

My name is ...

Mein Name ist .../ main nah-me ist .../
Ich heiße ... ikh hai-se ...

Yes.

Ja. yah

No.

Nein. nain

Please.

Bitte. bi-te

Thank you

Danke./ dang-ke/
(very much). *Vielen Dank.* fee-len dangk

You're welcome. *Bitte (sehr).* bi-te (zair)

Sorry. Entschuldigung. ent-shul-di-gung
Excuse me, ... Entschuldigung. ent-shul-di-gung
 (before asking for help or directions)

DIRECTIONS

Could you help me, please?

Können Sie mir bitte helfen?
 ker-nen zee meer bi-te hel-fen

Where's (a bank)?

Wo ist (eine Bank)?
 vaw ist (ai-ne bangk)

I'm looking for (the cathedral).

Ich suche (den Dom).
 ikh zoo-khe (dayn dawm)

Which way's (a public toilet)?

In welcher Richtung ist (eine öffentliche toilette)?
 in vel-kher rikh-tung ist (ai-ne er-fent-li-khe to-a-le-te)

How can I get there?

Wie kann ich da hinkommen?
 vee kan ikh dah hin-ko-men

How far is it?

Wie weit ist es?
 vee vait ist es

Can you show me (on the map)?

Können Sie es mir (auf der Karte) zeigen?
 ker-nen zee es meer (owf dair kar-te) tsai-gen

SIGNS

Polizei	Police
Polizeiwaache	Police Station
Eingang	Entrance
Ausgang	Exit
Offen	Open
Geschlossen	Closed
Kein Zutritt	No Entry
Rauchen Verboten	No Smoking
Verboten	Prohibited
Toiletten (WC)	Toilets
Herren	Men
Damen	Women

near	nahe	nah-e
far away	weit weg	vait vek
here	hier	heer
there	dort	dort
on the corner	an der Ecke	an dair e-ke
straight ahead	geradeaus	ge-rah-de-ows
opposite ...	gegenüber ...	gay-gen-ü-ber ...
next to ...	neben ...	nay-ben ...
behind ...	hinter ...	hin-ter ...
in front of ...	vor ...	fawr ...
north	Norden	nor-den
south	Süden	zū-den

east Osten os-ten
west Westen ves-ten

Turn ...

Biegen Sie ... ab. bee-gen zee ... ap
left/right
 links/rechts lingks/rekhts
at the next corner
 an der nächsten Ecke an dair naykhs-ten e-ke
at the traffic lights
 bei der Ampel bai dair am-pel

EMERGENCIES

Help!

Hilfe! hil-fe

It's an emergency!

Es ist ein Notfall! es ist ain nawt-fal

Call the police!

Rufen Sie die Polizei! roo-fen zee dee po-li-tsai

Call a doctor!

Rufen Sie einen Arzt! roo-fen zee ai-nen artst

Call an ambulance!

Rufen Sie einen Krankenwagen! roo-fen zee ai-nen krank-ken-vah-gen

Leave me alone!

Lassen Sie mich in Ruhe! la-sen zee mikh in roo-e

Go away!

Gehen Sie weg! gay-en zee vek

I'm lost.

Ich habe mich verirrt. ikh hah-be mikh fer-irt

HEALTH

Where's the nearest ...?

Wo ist der/die/das nächste ...? (m/f/n)
 vaw ist dair/die/das naykhs-te ...

chemist

Apotheke (f) a-po-tay-ke

dentist

Zahnarzt (m) tsahn-artst

doctor

Arzt (m) artst

hospital

Krankenhaus (n) krank-ken-hows

I need a doctor.

Ich brauche einen Arzt.
 ikh brow-khe ai-nen artst

Is there a (night) chemist nearby?

Gibt es in der Nähe eine (Nacht) Apotheke?
 gipt es in dair nay-e ai-ne (nakht-)a-po-tay-ke

I'm sick.

Ich bin krank.
 ikh bin krank

It hurts here.

Es tut hier weh.
 es toot heer vay

I've been vomiting.

Ich habe mich übergeben.
 ikh hah-be mikh ü-ber-gay-ben

I have diarrhoea/fever/headache.

Ich habe Durchfall/Fieber/Kopfschmerzen.
 ikh hah-be durkh-fal/fee-ber/kopf-shmer-tsen

(I think) I'm pregnant.

(Ich glaube,) Ich bin schwanger.
 (ikh glow-be) ikh bin shvang-er

I'm allergic to ...

Ich bin allergisch gegen ... ikh bin a-lair-gish gay-gen ...

antibiotics

Antibiotika an-ti-bi-aw-ti-ka

aspirin

Aspirin as-pi-reen

penicillin

Penizillin pe-ni-tsi-leen

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Do you speak English?

Sprechen Sie Englisch?
 shpre-khen zee eng-lish

Does anyone here speak English?

Spricht hier jemand Englisch?
 shprikt heer yay-mant eng-lish

Do you understand (me)?

Verstehen Sie (mich)?
 fer-shtay-en zee (mikh)

I (don't) understand.

Ich verstehe (nicht).
 ikh fer-shtay-e (nikht)

How do you say ... in German?

Wie sagt man ... auf Deutsch?
 vee zagt man ... owf doytsh

Could you please ...?

Könnten Sie ...? kern-ten zee ...

speak more slowly

bitte langsamer sprechen bi-te lang-za-mer shpre-khen

repeat that

das bitte wiederholen das bi-te vee-der-haw-len

write it down

das bitte aufschreiben das bi-te owf-shrai-ben

NUMBERS

0	null	nul
1	ains	aints
2	zwei	tsvai
3	drei	drai
4	vier	feer
5	fünf	fünf

6	sechs	zeks
7	sieben	zee-ben
8	acht	akht
9	neun	noyn
10	zehn	tsayn
11	elf	elf
12	zwölf	zverlf
13	dreizehn	drai-tsayn
14	vierzehn	feer-tsayn
15	fünfzehn	fünf-tsayn
16	sechzehn	zeks-tsayn
17	siebzehn	zeep-tsayn
18	achtzehn	akh-tsayn
19	neunzehn	noyn-tsayn
20	zwanzig	tsvan-tsikh
21	einundzwanzig	ain-unt-tsvan-tsikh
22	zweiundzwanzig	tsvai-unt-tsvan-tsikh
30	dreißig	drai-tsikh
31	einunddreißig	ain-und-drai-tsikh
40	vierzig	feer-tsikh
50	fünfzig	fünf-tsikh
60	sechzig	zekh-tsikh
70	siebzig	zeep-tsikh
80	achtzig	akh-tsikh
90	neunzig	noyn-tsikh
100	hundert	hun-dert
1000	tausend	tow-sent
2000	zwei tausend	tsvai tow-sent

PAPERWORK

name	Name	nah-me
nationality	Staatsan- gehörigkeit	shtahts-an- ge-her-rikh-kait
date of birth	Geburtsdatum	ge-burts-dah-tum
place of birth	Geburtsort	ge-burts-ort
sex/gender	Sex	seks
passport	(Reise)Pass	(rai-ze-)pahs
visa	Visum	vee-zum

QUESTION WORDS

Who?	Wer?	vair
What?	Was?	vas
Where?	Wo?	vo
When?	Wann?	van
How?	Wie?	vee
Why?	Warum?	va-rum
Which?	Welcher?	vel-kher
How much?	Wie viel?	vee feel
How many?	Wie viele?	vee fee-le

SHOPPING & SERVICES

I'm looking for ...

Ich suche ...
 ikh zoo-khe ...

Where's the (nearest) ...?

Wo ist der/die/das (nächste) ...? (m/f/n)
vaw ist dair/dee/das (naykhs-te) ...

What time does it open/close?

Wann macht er/sie/es auf/zu? (m/f/n)
van makht air/zee/es owf/tsoo

Where can I buy ...?

Wo kann ich ... kaufen?
vaw kan ikh ... kow-fen

an ATM	ein Geldautomat	ain gelt-ow-to-maht
an exchange office	eine Geldwechselstube	ai-ne gelt-vek-sel-shtoo-be
a bank	eine Bank	ai-ne bangk
the ... embassy	die ... Botschaft	dee bot-shaft
the hospital	das Krankenhaus	das krang-ken-hows
the market	der Markt	dair markt
the police	die Polizei	dee po-li-tsai
the post office	das Postamt	das post-amt
a public phone	ein öffentliches Telefon	ain er-fent-li-khes te-le-fawn
a public toilet	eine öffentliche Toilette	ain er-fent-li-khe to-a-le-te

I'd like to buy ...

Ich möchte ... kaufen.
ikh merkh-te ... kow-fen

How much (is this)?

Wie viel (kostet das)?
vee feel (kos-tet das)

That's too much/expensive.

Das ist zu viel/teuer.
das ist tsoo feel/toy-er

Can you lower the price?

Können Sie mit dem Preis heruntergehen?
ker-nen zee mit dem prais he-run-ter-gay-en

Do you have something cheaper?

Haben Sie etwas Billigeres?
hah-ben zee et-vas bi-li-ge-res

I'm just looking.

Ich schaue mich nur um.
ikh show-e mikh noor um

Can you write down the price?

Können Sie den Preis aufschreiben?
ker-nen zee dayn prais owf-shrai-ben

Do you have any others?

Haben Sie noch andere?
hah-ben zee nokh an-de-re

Can I look at (it)?

Können Sie (ihn/sie/es) mir zeigen? (m/f/n)
ker-nen zee (een/zee/es) meer tsai-gen

more	mehr	mair
less	weniger	vay-ni-ger
smaller	kleiner	klai-ner-tee
bigger	größer	gro-ser

Do you accept ...?

Nehmen Sie ...? nay-men zee ...

credit cards

Kreditkarten kre-deet-kar-ten

travellers cheques

Reiseschecks rai-ze-sheks

I'd like to ...

Ich möchte ... ikh merkh-te ...

change money (cash)

Geld umtauschen gelt um-tow-shen

cash a cheque

einen Scheck einlösen ai-nen shek ain-ler-zen

change some travellers cheques

Reiseschecks einlösen rai-ze-sheks ain-ler-zen

I want to buy a phone card.

Ich möchte eine Telefonkarte kaufen.
ikh merkh-te ai-ne te-le-fawn-kar-te kow-fen

Where's the local Internet cafe?

Wo ist hier ein Internet-Café?
vaw ist heer ain in-ter-net-kaf-fay

I'd like to ...

Ich möchte ... ikh merkh-te ...

get Internet access

Internetzugang haben in-ter-net-tsoo-gang hah-ben

check my email

meine E-Mails checken mai-ne ee-mayls che-ken

TIME & DATES**What time is it?**

Wie spät ist es? vee shpayt ist es

It's (one) o'clock.

Es ist (ein) Uhr. es ist (ain) oor

Twenty past one.

Zwanzig nach eins. tsvan-tsikh nahkh ains

Half past one.

Halb zwei. ('half two') halp tsvai

Quarter to one.

Viertel vor eins. fir-tel fawr ains

am

morgens/vormittags mor-gens/fawr-mi-tahks

pm

nachmittags/abends nahkh-mi-tahks/ah-bents

now	jetzt	yetst
today	heute	hoy-te
tonight	heute Abend	hoy-te ah-bent
tomorrow	morgen	mor-gen
yesterday	gestern	ges-tern
morning	Morgen	mor-gen
afternoon	Nachmittag	nahkh-mi-tahk
evening	Abend	ah-bent

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
Saturday
Sunday

Montag	mawn-tahk
Dienstag	deens-tahk
Mittwoch	mit-vokh
Donnerstag	do-ners-tahk
Freitag	frei-tahk
Samstag	zams-tahk
Sonntag	zon-tahk

January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
December

Januar	yan-u-ahr
Februar	fay-bru-ahr
März	merts
April	a-pril
Mai	mai
Juni	yoo-ni
Juli	yoo-li
August	ow-gust
September	zep-tem-ber
Oktober	ok-taw-ber
November	no-vern-ber
Dezember	de-tsem-ber

TRANSPORT**Public Transport****What time does the ... leave?**

Wann fährt ... ab?

van fairt ... ap

boat

das Boot das bawt

bus

der Bus dair bus

train

der Zug dair tsook

tram

die Strassenbahn dee shtrah-sen-bahn

What time's the ... bus?

Wann fährt der ... Bus?

van fairt dair ... bus

first

erste ers-te

last

letzte lets-te

next

nächste naykhs-te

Where's the nearest metro station?

Wo ist der nächste U-Bahnhof?

vaw ist dair naykhs-te oo-bahn-hawf

Which bus goes to ...?

Welcher Bus fährt ...?

vel-kher bus fairt ...

A ... ticket to (Innsbruck).

Einen ... nach (Innsbruck).

ai-nen ... nahkh (eens-brook)

one-way

einfache Fahrkarte ain-fa-khe fahr-kar-te

return

Rückfahrkarte rük-fahr-kar-te

1st-class

Fahrkarte erster Klasse fahr-kar-te ers-ter kla-se

2nd-class

Fahrkarte zweiter Klasse fahr-kar-te tsvai-ter kla-se

The ... is cancelled.

... ist gestrichen. ... ist ge-shtri-khen

The ... is delayed.

... hat Verspätung. ... hat fer-shpay-tung

Is this seat free?

Ist dieser Platz frei? ist dee-zer plats frei

Do I need to change trains?

Muss ich umsteigen? mus ikh um-shtai-gen

Are you free? (taxi)

Sind Sie frei? zint zee frei

How much is it to ...?

Was kostet es bis ...? vas kos-tet es bis ...

Please take me to (this address).

Bitte bringen Sie mich zu (dieser Adresse). bi-te bring-en zee mikh tsoo (dee-zer a-dre-se)

Private Transport**Where can I hire a ...?**

Wo kann ich ... mieten?

vaw kan ikh ... mee-ten

I'd like to hire a/an ...

Ich möchte ... mieten.

ikh merkh-te ... mee-ten

automatic

ein Fahrzeug mit Automatik ain fahr-tsoyk mit ow-to-mah-tik

bicycle

ein Fahrrad ain fahr-raht

car

ein Auto ain ow-to

4WD

ein Allradfahrzeug ain al-raht-fahr-tsoyk

manual

ein Fahrzeug mit Schaltung ain fahr-tsoyk mit shaf-tung

motorbike

ein Motorrad ain maw-tor-raht

How much is it per day/week?

Wie viel kostet es pro Tag/Woche?

vee feel kos-tet es praw tahk/vo-khe

petrol (gas)

Benzin ben-tseen

diesel

Diesel dee-zel

lead

verbleites fer-blai-tes

Benzin ben-tseen

ROAD SIGNS

Gefahr	Danger
Einfahrt Verboten	No Entry
Einbahnstrasse	One Way
Einfahrt	Entrance
Ausfahrt	Exit
Ausfahrt Freihalten	Keep Clear
Parkverbot	No Parking
Halteverbot	No Stopping
Mautstelle	Toll
Radweg	Cycle Path
Umleitung	Detour
Überholverbot	No Overtaking

LPG	Autogas	ow-to-gahs
regular	Normalbenzin	nor-mahl-ben-tseen
unleaded	bleifreies Benzin	blai-frai-es ben-tseen

Where's a petrol station?*Wo ist eine Tankstelle?*

vaw ist ai-ne tangk-shte-le

Does this road go to ...?*Führt diese Strasse nach ...?*

führt dee-ze shtrah-se nahkh ...

(How long) Can I park here?*(Wie lange) Kann ich hier parken?*

(vee lang-e) kan ikh heer par-ken

Where do I pay?*Wo muss ich bezahlen?*

vaw mus ikh be-tsah-len

I need a mechanic.*Ich brauche einen Mechaniker.*

ikh brow-khe ai-nen me-khah-ni-ker

The car has broken down (at ...)*Ich habe (in ...) eine Panne mit meinem Auto.*

ikh hah-be (in ...) ai-ne pa-ne mit mai-nem ow-to

I had an accident.*Ich hatte einen Unfall.*

ikh ha-te ai-nen un-fal

The car/motorbike won't start.*Das Auto/Motorrad springt nicht an.*

das ow-to/maw-tor-raht shpringkt nihkt an

I have a flat tyre.*Ich habe eine Reifenpanne.*

ikh hah-be ai-ne rai-fen-pa-ne

I've run out of petrol.*Ich habe kein Benzin mehr.*

ikh hah-be kain ben-tseen mair

TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN

I need a/an ...*Ich brauche ...*

ikh brow-khe ...

Is there a/an ...?*Gibt es ...?*

gibt es ...

baby change room*einen Wickelraum*

ai-nen vi-kel-rowm

baby seat*einen Babysitz*

ai-nen bay-bi-zits

booster seat*einen Kindersitz*

ai-nen kin-der-zits

child-minding service*einen Babysitter-Service*

ai-nen bay-bi-si-ter-ser-vis

children's menu*eine Kinderkarte*

ai-ne kin-der-kar-te

(English-speaking) babysitter*einen (englisch-*

ai-nen (eng-lish-

sprachigen) Babysitter

shprah-khi-gen) bay-bi-si-ter

highchair*einen Kinderstuhl*

ai-nen kin-der-shtool

potty*ein Kindertöpfchen*

ain kin-der-terpf-khen

stroller*einen Kinderwagen*

ai-nen kin-der-vah-gen

Do you mind if I breastfeed here?*Kann ich meinem Kind hier die Brust geben?*

kan ikh mai-nem kint heer dee Brust gay-ben

Are children allowed?*Sind Kinder erlaubt?*

zint kin-der er-lowpt



Also available from Lonely Planet:
German Phrasebook

Glossary

Abfahrt – departure (trains)
Altstadt – old city
Ankunft – arrival (trains)
ANTO – Austrian National Tourist Office
Apotheken – pharmacy
Auto – car
Autobahn – motorway

Bad – bath
Bahnhof – train station
Bahnsteig – train station platform
Bankomat – ATM; cash point
Bauernhof – farmhouse
Bauernmarkt – farmers market
Beisl – small tavern or restaurant
Benzin – unleaded petrol
Berg – hill or mountain
Bergbahn – cable car
Bezirk – district in a town or city
Bibliothek – library
Biedermeier period – 19th-century art movement in Germany and Austria
Botschaft – embassy
Brauerei – brewery
Briefmarken – stamps
Brunnen – fountain
Bundesbus – state bus; run by the railway (Bahnbus) or the post office (Postbus)
Burg – castle/fortress
Buschenschank (Buschenschenken) – wine tavern(s)

Café Konditorei(en) – café/cake shop(s)
Christkindlmärkt – Christmas market

DAV – German Alpine Club
Dirndl – women's traditional dress
Donau – Danube
Dorf – village

EC – EuroCity; express train
EEA – European Economic Area; comprises European Union states plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway
EN – EuroNight; international and domestic night train
EU – European Union

Fahrplan – timetable
Feiertag – public holiday
Ferienwohnung(en) – self-catering holiday apartment(s)
Festung – fortress

Fiaker – fiacre; small horse-drawn carriage
Flohmarkt – flea market
Flughafen – airport
Fluss – river
Föhn – hot, dry wind that sweeps down from the mountains, mainly in early spring and autumn
FPÖ – Freedom Party (politics)
Freizeitzentrum – sports and leisure centre
Friedhof – cemetery

Gästehaus – guesthouse; sometimes has a restaurant
Gästekarte – guest card; issued by hostels and resorts, used to obtain discounts
Gasthaus – inn or restaurant without accommodation
Gasthof – inn or restaurant; usually has accommodation
Gemeindeamt – local authority office

Hafen – harbour; port
Handy – mobile phone
Hauptbahnhof – main train station
Hauptpost – main post office
Hauptstadt – capital
Heuriger (Heurigen) – wine tavern(s)

IC – InterCity; express train

Jugendherberge/Jugendgästehaus – youth hostel

Kaffeehaus – coffee house
Kapelle – chapel
Kärnten – Carinthia (Austrian province)
Kino – cinema
Kirche – church
Klettern – rock climbing
Konsulat(e) – consulate(s)
Krankenhaus – hospital
Krügerl – glass holding 0.5L
Kunst – art
Kurzparkzone – short-term parking zone

Landesmuseum – provincial museum
Langlauf – cross-country skiing
Lieder – lyrical song
LKW – bus

Mahlzeit – Austrian salutation at the commencement of a meal
Markt – market
Maut – toll (or indicating a toll booth)
Mehrwertsteuer (MWST) – value-added tax

Melange – coffee
Mensa – university cafeteria
Mitfahrzentrale – hitching organisation
Münze – coins

ÖAMTC – national motoring organisation
ÖAV – Austrian Alpine Club
ÖBB – Austrian federal railway
Österreich – Austria
ÖVP – Austrian People's Party (politics)

Parkschein – parking voucher
Pension – B&B
Pfarrkirche – parish church
Pfiff – glass holding 0.125L
PKW – car
Platz – town or village square
Polizei – police
Postamt – post office
Postlagernde Briefe – poste restante
Privat Zimmer – private rooms (accommodation)

Rad – bicycle
radfahren – cycling
Radler – mixture of beer and lemonade
Rathaus – town hall
Reisebüro – travel agency

S-Bahn – suburban train system
SC – SuperCity; express train
Schloss – palace; castle
Secession movement – early 20th-century movement in Vienna seeking to establish a more functional style in architecture; led by Otto Wagner (1841–1918)
See – lake
sgraffito – mural or decoration in which the top layer is scratched off to reveal the original colour/medium underneath
Silvester – New Year's Eve

skifahren – skiing
Stadt – city
Stadtmuseum – city museum
Stadtpfarrkirche – see *Pfarrkirche*
Steiermark – Styria (Austrian province)
Stift – abbey
Stock – floor, in a multi-storied building
Strandbad – designated bathing area on a lake or river; usually has an entry fee
Studentenheime – student residences
surfen – wind surfing

Tabak – tobacco
Tagesteller/Tagesmenü – the set dish or meal of the day in a restaurant; sometimes abbreviated as 'Menü'
Tal – valley
Telefon-Wertkarte – phonecard
Tirol – Tyrol
Tor – gate
Triebwagen – railcar

U-Bahn – urban underground rail system

Verein – club
Vienna Circle – group of philosophers centred on Vienna University in the 1920s and 1930s
Vienna Group – avant-garde art/literary movement formed in the 1950s

Wald – forest
wandern – walking/hiking
Wein – wine
Wien – Vienna
Wiener Gruppe – see *Vienna Group*
Wiener Kreis – see *Vienna Circle*
Würstel Stand – sausage stand

Zimmer frei – see *Privat Zimmer*
Zug – train

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