

Hostelworld Guide for Vienna

Vienna is a city full of surprises. For every breathtaking building you expect to see, there are another two beside it that you don't. Due to its passionate relationship with classical music grand theatres and ornate opera houses adorn the city centre, but it is also a city bursting with bars and clubs that would feel at home in the hippest of cities. And while it was the seat of the Habsburg Dynasty for so many years, you can live like a king here without upsetting your bank balance.

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The Essentials

Getting There

By plane: Vienna's airport is 19km from the city centre. It is connected to the city centre via train (S7 train) while a bus service also runs from outside the arrivals terminal.

By train: Vienna has two main train stations: Westbahnhof where trains from Western and Northern Europe arrive and Sudbahnhof where trains from Eastern Europe end up.

By bus: The city's main bus station is called Wien Mitte which is also known as Land Strasse. It is in the city centre.

Getting Around

On foot: Vienna is quite large and divided into 23 districts. Getting around the city centre ('Inner Stadt') on foot is easy.

By U-bahn: Vienna's underground network is extremely easy to use and very efficient. There are a variety of tickets you can get, each of which are explained in English on the self-service machines in stations.

By tram: The city's tram network isn't as easy to figure out as the underground, but the #1 and #2 trams are great ways to get around the ring.

Useful phrases

Hello: Hallo
Goodbye: Tschüss
Please: Bitte
Thank you: Vielen Dank
You're welcome: Gern geschehen
Yes: Ja
No: Nein
Of course: Natürlich
Excuse me: Entschuldigung
How are you?: Wie geht es dir?
Open: Geöffnet
Closed: Geschlossen
What is your name?: Wie heisst du?
My name is...: Ich heisse...
How much?: Wie teuer ist es?
May I have the bill?: MKann ich die rechnung haben?

Climate

Vienna grasps all the elements of every season with both hands. In winter in can be achingly cold with temperatures dropping to just above 0°C quite regularly. Make sure to bring warm clothes if your visit falls between December and February. By April temperatures begin to perk up a little and by the time summer arrives the Austrian capital basks in long warm days where t-shirts and shorts will suffice during the day. The sunny days last well into September and it isn't until November that temperatures begin to drop noticeably.

Useful Information

Language: German
Currency: Euro
Electricity: 220 Volts AC, 50 Hz
Area Codes: +43 (Austria), 01 (Vienna),
Emergency Numbers: Ambulance 144 / Fire 122 / Police 133
Time Zone: Central European Time (GMT+1)
Central Post Office: 1st, Fleischmarkt 19
Main Tourist Office: Albertinaplatz

Embassies

USA: +43 (0)1 313 390
UK: +43 (0)1 716 130
Canada: +43 (0)1 5313 83000
Australia: +43 (0)1 506 740
South Africa: +43 (0)1 320 6493
Ireland: +43 (0)1 715 4246
Germany: +43 (0)1 711 540
Spain: +43 (0)1 505 5780
Italy: +43 1 712 5121
New Zealand: +49 (0)30 206 210 (NZ embassy in Germany)
France: +43 (0)1 502 750

Cheap Eats

Pizzeria Der Babenberger, 1st, Babenberger Strasse 5 Pop quiz - your stomach is making funny noises so you decide to get some pizza. Do you (a) get a slice from a pizza stall for €2 or (b) visit this pizzeria which faces the back of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, and get a full pizza for €5? Correct. The answer is b. *Open Mon-Thurs 6.30am-10pm, Fri 6.30am-4pm, closed Sat & Sun.*

Mr. Lee, 4th, Naschmarkt Stand 278 The Naschmarkt area in Vienna's 4th district is peppered with Asian restaurants. Mr. Lee's has a wide range of noodle dishes for €7, plus meals from the wok average around €10. If you just fancy a bowl of soup, you'll get one here for about €2.50. *Open daily from 10.30am-10pm. closed Sun & Fri.*

Mariahilferbrau, 15th, Mariahilferstrasse 152 Food tastes nicer when it is served in airy, bright surroundings, and better again when it is brought to you by friendly staff. This restaurant has all the above plus a varied menu. Meals start at €5 while a traditional Wiener Schnitzel will set you back €7.90. *Open from 12 noon-midnight.*

Ristorante Salambo, 3rd, Radetzky Strasse 3 While this Italian eatery is a bit outside the city centre, it is perfect for something to eat if you visit KunstHausWien close by. For the best value get one of the set menus advertised on the chalk board outside where you will get a three-course meal for under €6. *Open daily from 11am-11.30pm.*

Wurstelstands - A Viennese Institution

Dotted all around Vienna are 'Würstelstands'. An institution throughout the Austrian capital, they serve various types of sausage (curry, cheese and more) along with large amounts of mustard and cost a mere €2.50. A great filler at any time of the day, but be warned - they can be messy.

After Dark

Mozart Stuberl, 15th, Haidmannsgasse 8 This small restaurant/bar is a late-bar in every sense of the phrase. The doors open nightly at 6pm and remain ajar until the wee hours of the morning 6am to be exact. After one too many beers though, the deers heads which hang from the walls may become a tad imposing. *Open daily from 6pm-6am.*

Mezzanin, 7th, Lerchenfelder Gürtel The minute you walk into this bar and set eyes on the oval-shaped seats you'll think to yourself 'I've found a cool bar'. The minute you walk up to the bar and see the DJ spinning relaxed chilled out tunes you'll know you've found a cool bar. Definitely worth checking out. *Open daily from 7pm-4am, until 2am Thurs & Sun.*

Gay / Lesbian Vienna

Vienna's gay scene has got a lot bigger over the last number of years, with more and more gay nights and venues popping up around the city. Just over one year old, **Mango** (4th, Laimgrubengasse 3) is quickly becoming extremely popular with the Viennese gay community. Also popular is the aptly named **Boy-Zone** (4th, Girardigasse 2). The best gay nights include Thursdays in **U4** (12th, Schönbrunner Str.) and Fridays in **Why Not** (1st, Tiefer Graben 22).

Bermuda Triangle, 1st This small area near the Danube Canal and Ruprechtsplatz has one of the highest concentration of bars in the city and on weekends there is always a buzz around the area's cobbled streets. Some bars to look out for include **Casablanca** which is good for live music, **Excess** which has a good underground cellar bar, and **Roter Engel**, 'the voice of Vienna'.

Chelsea, 7th, Lerchenfelder Gürtel Named after the English football club of the same name, Chelsea has been a favourite among young Viennese for years. Packed at weekends, it is a large bar which stretches back further than the eye can see when you first walk in. A great place to watch football games also due to the numerous big screens. *Open daily 6pm-4am, Sun 4pm-4am.*

Flex, 1st, Donaukanal Ask any Viennese young person what is the best club in the city and the answer will more than likely be 'Flex'. Each night has a different theme, one of the most popular being 'London Calling' on Wednesdays. *Open nightly from 10pm-5am.*

Don't Miss

Hofburg Palace The Hofburg Palace was the residence of the Hapsburg dynasty for over 600 years and is the most imposing building in Vienna's Inner Stadt. There are various parts to visit but the most enjoyable are the Imperial Apartments. Admission includes entrance to the Sisi Museum which documents the life of past resident Empress Elisabeth. *Open daily from 9am-5.30pm (6pm July & Aug); admission €13 adult (with guide), €12 student (with guide).*

KunstHausWien

KunstHausWien, 3rd, Untere Weissgerber Strasse 13 Filled with the works of Friedensreich Hundertwasser, from the outside this museum looks like something from a Monty Python cartoon. Inside the split-level floors and colourful paintings are just as unique. *Open from 10am-7pm; admission €9 (Mondays €4.50), children €4.50.*

Rathaus, Rathausplatz, Ringstraße Built between 1872 and 1883 by Friedrich von Schmidt, Vienna's city hall can be seen from all over the city centre thanks to its gothic spires which soar 102 meters into the sky. It looks particularly impressive after dark. Free guided tours are given at 1pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Stephansdom, Stephansplatz To many, the Stephansdom is Vienna's most instantly recognisable building. Built on the site of a church which dates back to 1144, its most striking features are its gothic spire and tiled roof - it has over 250,000 in total. *Open daily from 6am-10pm. Admission free.*

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Maria-Theresien-Platz Regarded as Vienna's finest museum, Kunsthistorisches Museum possesses one of the most valuable and important art collections in the world. *Open Tues-Sun 10am-6pm (9pm on Thurs); admission €12.*

Mark Your Calendar

January to March - Vienna Ice Dream Every year from the end of January until the beginning of March Vienna's Rathausplatz (city hall square) is transformed into a giant ice-rink. Join thousands others glide around this spectacular ice-rink!

March to May - Vienna Spring Festival The annual Vienna Spring Festival is one of the biggest events on the Viennese calendar. Held in Vienna's lustrous Konzerthaus, it is a must for classical music lovers and many tickets cost just €5.

May to June - Vienna Festival The Vienna Festival is a very cultural affair with over 150 performances taking place all over the city. The ensemble comes from all over Austria as well as Brazil, China, and other countries across the globe.

June - Rainbow Parade Vienna goes gay on the last Sunday of every June as over 100,000 revellers take to streets for this annual parade. Expect to see some outlandish costumes on different floats. Afterwards the party continues in Heldenplatz.

June - Danube Island Festival From early one Friday morning, until late the following Sunday night, Vienna's Danube Island just north of the city centre is hopping. Throughout the 3 days artists from all over the world entertain locals and travellers alike. Not to be missed.

July to September - Music Film Festival This is one of the most popular events to take place in Vienna because for two months the Rathausplatz has an open-air stage that hosts cinematic, ballet and jazz evenings plus lots more.

September - Inline Marathon Vienna's annual inline marathon gets more popular every year. Thousands of rollerbladers loop the city's Ringstrasse until they complete the race's 26 miles.

October - Viennale Film Festival Mainstream films from all over the world along with experimental pieces also are showcased at this annual film festival which attracts thousands to the city.

November - Wien Modern Festival This large festival is one of the widest ranging contemporary music festivals in the world and is increasingly embracing electronic music.

December - Christmas Markets Vienna's Christmas Markets are widely regarded as Europe's finest. The main one is in front of the Rathuas, but there are others dotted around the city.

Get Connected

Bignet.café, Karntnerstrasse 61 This Bignet cybercafé enjoys a central location just minutes from the Stephansdom. It also faces the Staatsoper. It has 36 terminals, phones for international calls and fax/webcam facilities also. *Open daily from 9am-11pm; €1.50 for 10 mins, €2.60 for 20, €5.90 per hour.*

Handyshop Telewest, Mariahilfer Strasse 149 There isn't too much to this internet shop (not café) just two minutes walk from Westbahnhof. It's got about 15 terminals, you can make international phone calls and there are chart tunes playing in the background. *Open daily from 9am-11pm; 80c for 15, €1.60 for 30, €3.20 per hour.*

@World-netcafé, Mariahilfer Strasse 103 Tucked down a mall, this is a bright internet café. There are many terminals but some of them are a bit on the slow side. *Open Mon-Sat 8am-11pm, Fri & sun 11am-11pm; €1 per 10 mins/€6 per hour.*

Bignet.enter.price. 7th, Mariahilfer Strasse 27 This branch of the Bignet chain has no less than 200 computers so you'll always find a spare terminal. There are 8 discounted phone boxes and you get snacks also. *Open Mon-Fri/Sun 8am-2am, Sat & Sun 10am-2am; €2.60 for 50 minutes.*

Café Einstein, 1st, Rathausplatz 4 This café gets in by default - there is only one terminal. But it's in the Rathaus which is very impressive. *Open daily 7am-10pm, 9am-midnight Sat & Sun; €4 per hour.*

www.

www.wien.gv.at
www.vienna.at
www.wien-event.at
www.wiener-staatsoper.at

Budget Tips

Visit Vienna's Churches Some of Vienna's most fascinating buildings are its churches. St. Peterskirche tucked away between Vienna's premier shopping streets shouldn't be missed. Augustinerkirche (part of the Hofburg) is breathtaking also, as is St Michaelskirche. Regardless of whom you pray to when in a state of worship, you should devote a couple of hours to visiting them. Most have free admission.

Get cheap tickets to the opera You don't need to be a member of Vienna's bourgeois to enjoy a night at the opera. The hoi polloi can enjoy such masterpieces as 'La Traviata' also for as little as €3.50 (once you don't mind standing). To get these tickets queue up at the opera house about 2 hours before the performance at the 'standing tickets' sign on the right side of the building.

Trams Number 1 and 2

Both trams number 1 and 2 loop Vienna's Inner Stadt on the city's 'Ringstrasse', a collection of 8 streets and one quay. You can jump on anywhere on the ring in any direction and a ticket costs €1.80.

The round trip takes approximately 45 minutes and passes many of Vienna's most impressive buildings including the Rathaus (city hall), the Burgtheater (National Theater) and Parlament which is the seat of two federal assemblies.

Save money when buying rail tickets Vienna is a surprisingly large city and its public network system is an integral part of any tourist's quest to see as much of it as possible. If you are travelling in a pair, buy '2 for 1' tickets where two people can travel for €2, rather than pay €1.50 each. Other tickets where you can make savings on are the day cards (€4.40), or 3-day cards €12.

Retail Therapy

Mariahilfer Strasse This tree-lined street which rolls from beyond Westbahnhof all the way to the Ringstrasse has all types of shops catering for all types of budgets. H+M, Bennetton, C+A can all be found here. If you feel like resting your feet along the way you can do so on one of many benches.

Karntner Strasse Karntner Strasse, which begins at the Staatsoper and extends all the way to Stephansplatz, is Vienna's flagship shopping street. Completely pedestrianised, this is where you need to come if you want stock up on clothes which will enable you to dress to impress.

Generali Center, Mariahilfer Strasse This small shopping centre (it has approximately 33 shops and counting) boasts a great location on Vienna's premier shopping street. Some of the shops found over its two floors include a Nike Shop, 'Rumpel' which specialises in 'future wear', and 'Pink Buddha', a quirky shop selling various accessories.

Kohlmarkt Going on a shopping spree on Vienna's very own answer to Fifth Avenue might not be within the boundaries of most budget travellers, but it doesn't cost anything to window shop! Chanel, Gucci, Armani, Cartier, Louis Vuitton - they can all be found here.

Flohmarkt

If you are going to be in Vienna on a Saturday and would like to let your senses run rampant for an hour or two visit Flohmarkt, Vienna's largest open-air market. Wind your way through the thousands of people who flock to it every weekend and you are guaranteed to find some sort of bargain. At its various stalls you can pick up anything from jackets for €10, shirts for €5, plus there are enough food stalls here to feed a small army. It also has a flea market where old cameras and stereos sit patiently on tables.

A Day in Vienna

Begin your day with a trip round the Ringstrasse on tram numbers one or two. The journey takes 45 minutes and passes many of Vienna's most impressive buildings.

Walk through the grounds of the Hofburg before exploring the Imperial Apartments where the Habsburg dynasty resided.

Before you set off around the city again, rest your feet for a while with a coffee in one of Vienna's famous cafés.

Some of Vienna's most fascinating buildings are its churches, many of which are in the Inner Stadt. Don't miss the Stephansdom, St Peterkirche or Augustinerkirche.

Visit the Kunsthistorische Museum, one of the best museums in the city due to one of the best art collections in the world.

Now you should be in the queue for the Staatsoper. Even if you're not an opera lover you'll enjoy a show. The sets are as exquisite as the building.

After grabbing a quick snack (the opera doesn't finish until 10pm), enjoy the opera, in one of the world's most famous opera houses.

Before going out for the night, get a tram around the ring again. The city's buildings are even more spectacular at night.

Forget what you've heard - the Viennese aren't all in bed by midnight! Check out the bars around the Bermuda Triangle