

# 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.

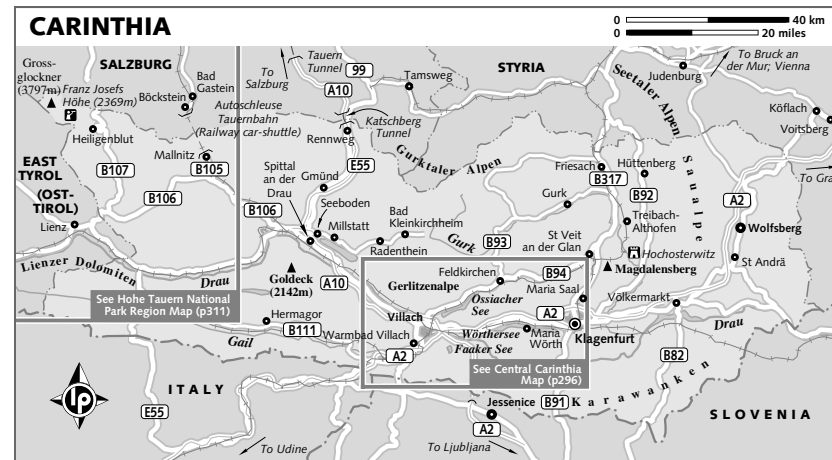
Carinthia's deep medieval heritage is celebrated in picturesque walled villages such as Friesach and Gmund, and impressive castles like the hilltop fortress of Hochosterwitz. Many of the towns and villages nestled in Carinthia's rolling hills hold an annual summer festival, with folk-music groups and 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](http://www.ryanair.com)) and Germany ([www.tuifly.com](http://www.tuifly.com)), plus Austrian domes-

tic flights ([www.aua.com](http://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](http://www.kaerntner-linien.at)) in Klagenfurt. Many of the lakes are served by boat services in summer.

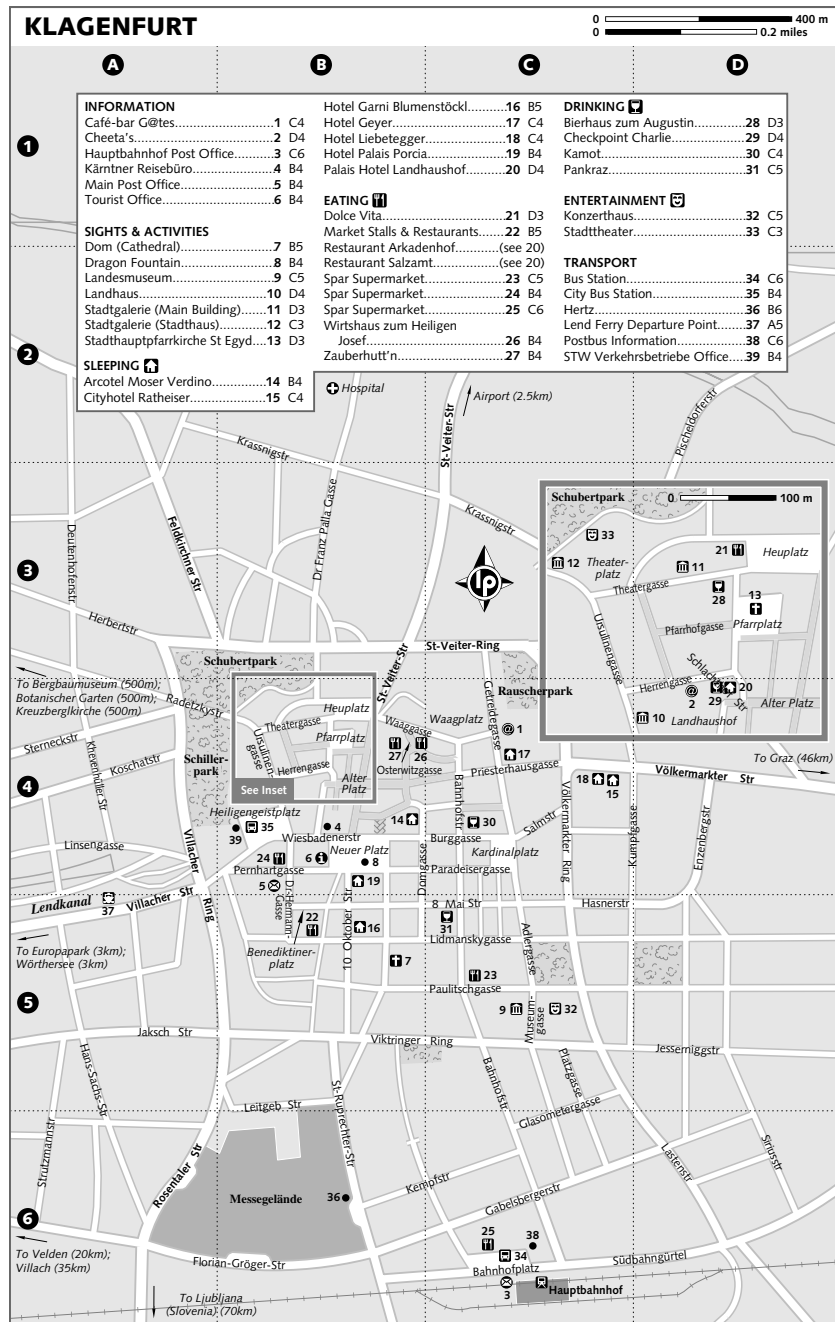
The **Kärnten Card** ([www.kaernten-card.co.at](http://www.kaernten-card.co.at); 2-/5-week card €34/49) gives free/cheaper access to the province's major sights and 50% discounts on buses and trains. It's sold at hotels and tourist offices from mid-April to October.

## 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.



At the town's western limit is the wide green space of Europapark, home to a couple of children's attractions including the bizarre world-in-miniature of Minimundus.

## Orientation

Klagenfurt lies 30km from Slovenia and 60km from Italy. The *Hauptbahnhof* (main train station; Map p290) is about 1km south of Neuer Platz, the centre of town. One block west of Neuer Platz is Heiligengeistplatz, the hub for local buses. Wörthersee is about 4km west of the city centre, with Europapark on its eastern shore.

## Information

### INTERNET ACCESS

**Café-bar G@tes** (Map p290; ☎ 50 97 77; gates@gates.at; Waagplatz 7; per 10 min €1; ☎ 9am-1am Mon-Fri, 5pm-1am Sat & Sun)

**Cheeta's** (Map p290; Herrengasse 7; €3 per 30 min; ☎ 2pm-2am) Dark and smoky, with games.

### MEDICAL SERVICES

**Hospital** (Map p290; ☎ 538-0; St Veiter Strasse 47)

### POST

**Main Post Office** (Map p290; Dr-Herrmann-Gasse 4; ☎ 7.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat) One block west of Neuer Platz, with another branch by the station.

### TOURIST INFORMATION

**Tourist office** (Map p290; ☎ 53 722 23; www.info.klagenfurt.at; Rathaus, Neuer Platz 1; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat, 10am-1pm Sun) Sells Kärnten cards and books accommodation.

### TRAVEL AGENCIES

**Kärntner Reisebüro** (Map p290; ☎ 56 400; www.krb.at; Neuer Platz 2; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) Helpful and central travel service.

## Sights & Activities

### MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

If you've ever wondered what the fossilised head of an ice-age woolly rhinoceros looked like, a visit to **Landesmuseum Rudolfinum** (Map p290; ☎ 305 52; www.landmuseum-ktn.at, in German; Museumgasse 2; adult/child & student/family €5/3/11.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue, Wed & Fri, 10am-8pm Thu, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) will quell your idle speculation. The museum's *Lindwurmschädel* (dragon skull) was found in the 14th century and it even became the model for the head of Klagenfurt's central fountain. This museum also has lots

of Celtic armour and jewellery, and the multimedia 'Glocknerrama' – an acoustic and visual simulation that leads you to the peak of Austria's highest mountain.

Some excellent rolling art exhibitions are held in the **Stadtgalerie** (Map p290; ☎ 537 5532; www.stadtgalerie.net, in German; Theatergasse 4; adult/student/child €5/2.90/free; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun), which has a main venue on Theaterstrasse and a second nearby in the **Alpen-Adria-Galerie im Stadthaus** (☎ 537-5532; Theaterplatz 3; admission free; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun). Those in recent years have included works by Oskar Kokoschka and Californian pop-art maestro Mel Ramos.

The **Bergbaumuseum** (Mining Museum; off Map p290; ☎ 51 12 52; www.bergbaumuseum.at, in German; Prof-Dr-Kahler-Platz 1; adult/child & student €5/3.20; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Oct) is a pleasant option for a rainy day. Exhibits including tools and drilling equipment are housed in tunnels that lead from the grounds of the botanical gardens deep into the hill. The locals took shelter here from Allied bombing during WWII.

**Neuer Platz**, Klagenfurt's central square, is dominated by the **Dragon Fountain** (Map p290), the emblem of the city. The blank-eyed, wriggling statue is modelled on the *Lindwurm* (dragon) of legend, said to have resided in a swamp here long ago, devouring cattle and virgins. The *Lindwurm* is depicted with the local hero who eventually clubbed it to death, wearing a scanty lion skin and sporting a truly terrifying moustache.

The provincial government headquarters, **Landhaus** (Map p290; ☎ 577 57-215; Landhaushof 1; ☎ 9am-5pm Apr-Oct), stands just to the west of Alter Platz. Go through the archway into the cobbled two-storey courtyard to truly admire the building's two steeples. The ceiling of the **Wappensaal** (interior chamber; adult/child €3/2) has a trompe l'oeil gallery painted by Carinthian artist Josef Ferdinand Fromiller (1693-1760), and depicting Carinthian landowners paying homage to Charles VI. Stand in the centre of the room for the best effect.

**Alter Platz** contains a number of historic buildings that provide a lovely backdrop for watching the world go by – best enjoyed from behind an ice cream or a glass of beer. Nearby is the **Stadthauptfarrkirche St Egid** (Pfarrplatz), with an ornate gold-lark interior and some fine ceiling frescos. Its **Stadtpfarrturm** (tower; ☎ 537-2293; €1; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-12.30pm Sat early Apr-early Oct) can be climbed for a good view of the city and surrounding countryside.

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; ☎ P ☎). 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.oehjv.or.at; Neckheimgasse 6; dm/s/d €18.90/26.90/45.80; ☎ P ☎). 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.blumenstoekl.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; Völkermarkter Strasse 10; s €53, d €72-75, ste €95-110; ☎ P) 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; ☎ P) 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; Völkermarkter Strasse 8; s/d €58/85; ☎ P ☎) 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.

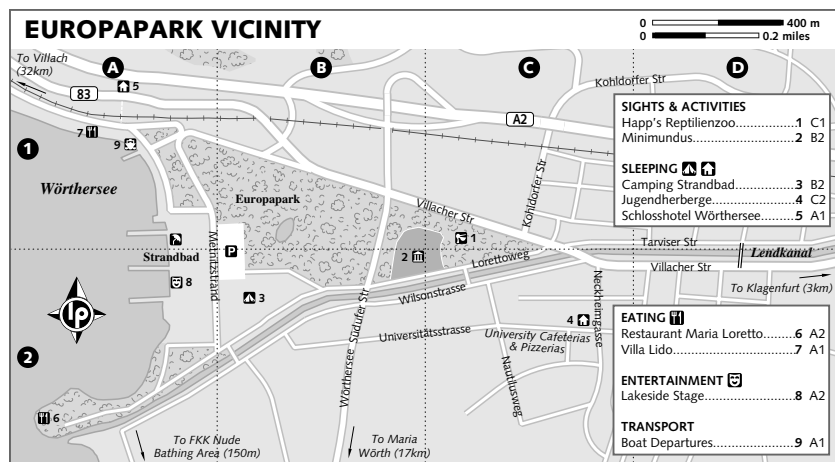
### MIDRANGE & TOP END

**Hotel Geyer** (Map p290; ☎ 578 86; www.hotelgeyer.com; Priesterhausgasse 5; s €55-75, d €80-106, tr €95-114; ☎ P ☎) 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; ☎ P) 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; ☎ P ☎) 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; ☎ P) 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 Ätts 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 lambéed 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 entree.

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 timetables 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)

### TAXI

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 **bicydes** (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.

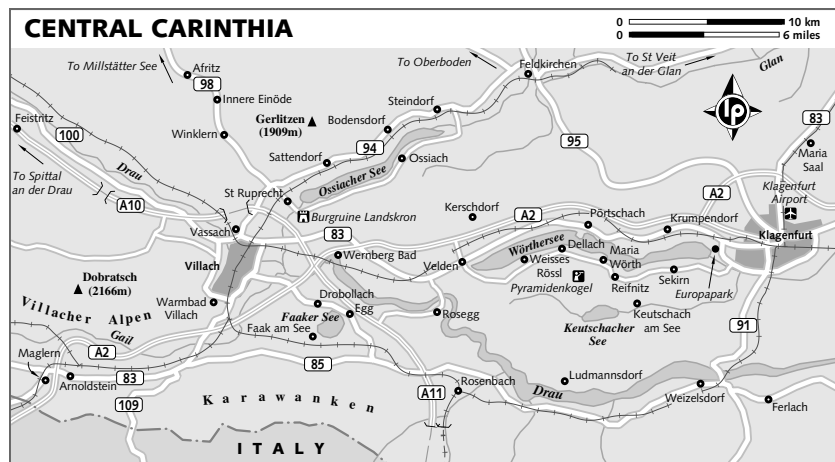
### TAXI

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](http://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.poerschach.at](http://www.poerschach.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](http://www.jilly.at), in German; Alfredweg 5-7; s €119-145, d €170-238; P) 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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, 1½ 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 Drau 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 Drau 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.

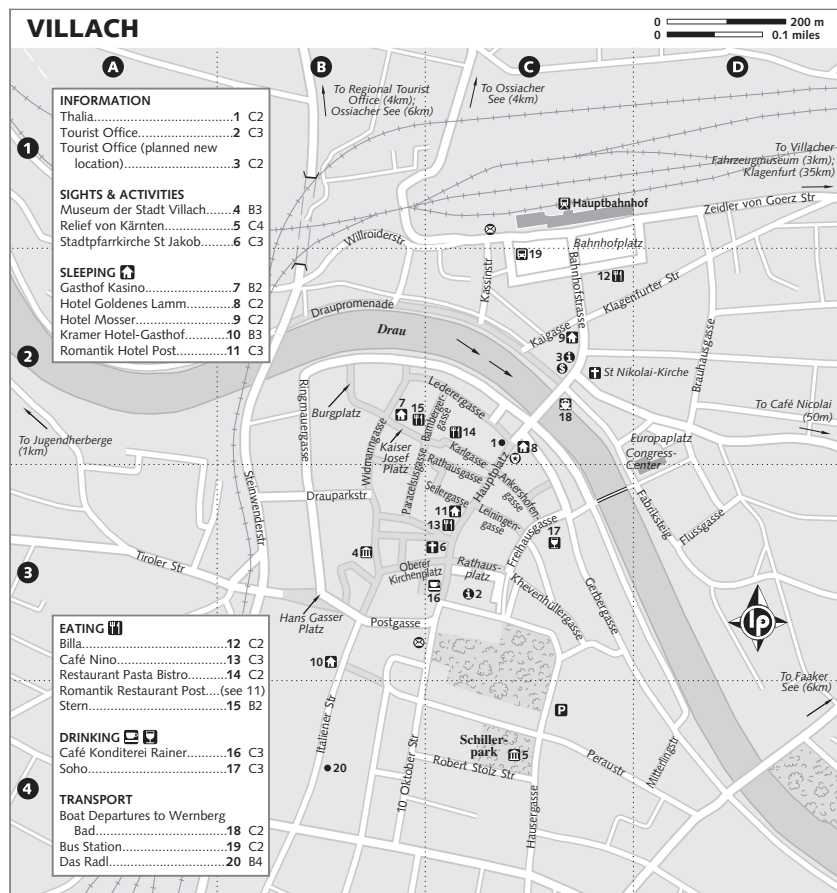
**Thalia** (☎ 23 434 38; Hauptplatz 4) A large bookshop with guidebooks, hiking maps and some English-language books.

**Tourist office** (☎ 205-2900; [www.villach.at](http://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 stucco 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; Widmannngasse 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 **Kirchtag** (☎ 205 3211; www.villacherkirchtage.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; ☎ ☎) 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.hotelgasthofkramer.at; Italiener Strasse 14; s €45-75, d €83-132, tr €117-144; ☎ ☎) 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; ☎ ☎) 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.

**our pick Hotel Mosser** (☎ 241 15; Bahnhofstrasse 9; s €55-68, d €85-150, ste €180-210, apt €140-190; ☎ ☎) 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; ☎ ☎) 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 Konditorei 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, 1¾ 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 **Gerlitz** (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; Töbringer 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 €15/4return) 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 Einhorn exhibition complex.

### Sights & Activities

**Die Spur des Einhorn** (☎ 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.metnitzalerhof.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 peperoncino, 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.

**Havana** (☎ 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 succored 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.

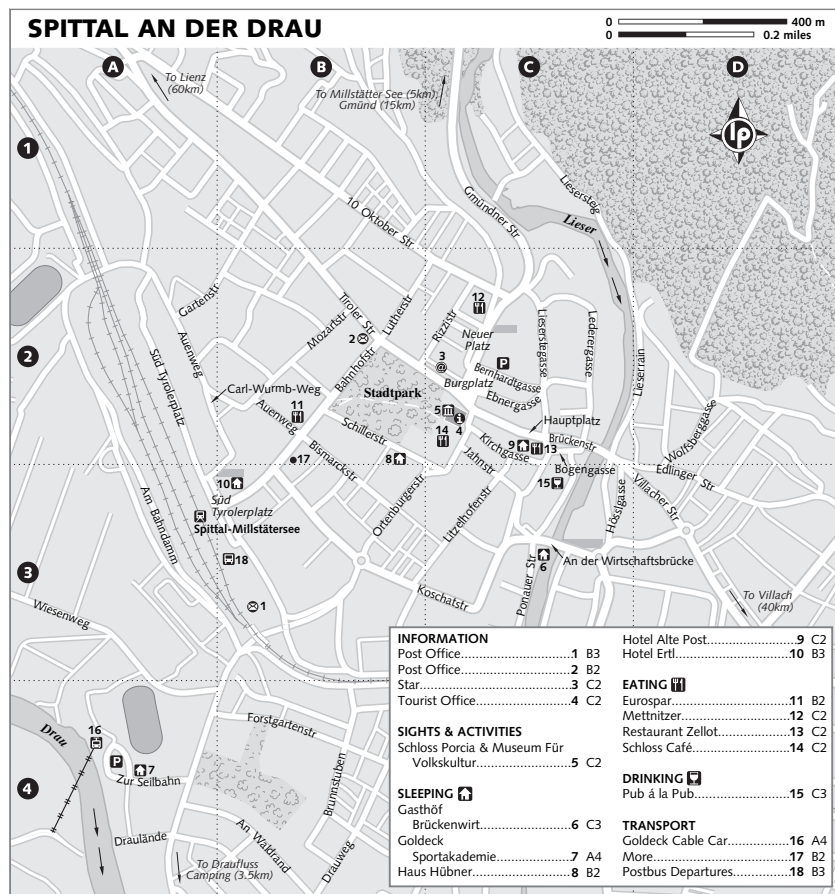
**Star** (☎ 36 897; Tiroler Strasse 10; per 30min €1.50; ☎ 9.30am-9pm Mon-Sat, 11am-9pm Sun) Internet access and call shop. The Schloss Café (p307) also has access.

**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** (☎ 4020-20; ksporcia@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.drauwirt.com; 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 TAUERNBAHN

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 statuae* (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 Stiftsgasse 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; Stiftsgasse 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** (☎ 22 63; 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** (☎ 20 73; 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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