

Introducing Vienna

Northern province of the Romans; crown of the Habsburg empire; bastion of baroque and birthplace of *Jugendstil* and the Secession; to classical music what Nashville is to country and London to punk; queen of the Christmas cities; home to the most successful socialist system Europe has ever seen, and sight of some of the worst atrocities against the Jewish people. Vienna, a city of unquestionable historical significance and extraordinary beauty, is a mix rarely seen today.

Classical Vienna provokes a gamut of images in most people's minds. Angelic choirboys singing in perfect harmony while proud white stallions strut in measured sequence. The grandeur of the Habsburg imperial palaces, Hofburg and Schönbrunn, sitting comfortably beside breathtaking baroque architecture of the Schloss Belvedere and Karlskirche. Sublime *Jugendstil* (Art Nouveau) masterpieces executed by Otto Wagner and Gustav Klimt complement the sublime art collections of the Kunsthistorisches and Liechtenstein museums. And of course strong coffee, delicate pastries and divine cakes are served in traditional *Kaffeehäuser* (coffee houses). Then there's the music. Just let it roll off your tongue: Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, Schubert, Strauss, Brahms, Mahler, Schönberg. For lovers of classical music, it doesn't get *any* better than this.

But Vienna is so much more than its past. It certainly revels in its impressive history, but it's not about to spend all its time living on bygone eras. Like the rest of the Western world, the Viennese have acquired a taste for the exotic and want it on their own turf. Asian diners, kebab houses and conveyor-belt sushi restaurants compete with, but don't overpower, the traditional *Beisl* (beer house) and *Heuriger*



(wine tavern). The upwardly mobile while away the wee small hours in unpretentious bars alongside black-clad night-owls, before moving on to clubs where DJs spin the latest electronica. Modern art venues, like the MuseumsQuartier, constantly host thought-provoking contemporary artists who aren't afraid to push boundaries.

With almost half the city given over to green spaces (more than any other European capital), the not-so-blue Danube (Donau) slicing the city in two and Beethoven's inspiration, the Wienerwald (Vienna Woods), on its western fringes, this is also a city for the pursuit of the great outdoors. And then there's the vast expanse of vineyards, which makes Vienna the largest wine-growing city in the world.

It doesn't matter when you arrive, the city looks just as glorious – some would say even more so – under a layer of snow as it does under the gaze of a midsummer sun. And the constant turnstile of festivals and events rivals anything most other European cities can muster. Come Christmas the good burghers of Vienna roll out the welcoming mat to *Christkindlmärkte*, Christmas markets full of charm and grace, and the all-important *Glüh-*

wein (mulled wine); when summer shines through so does a plethora of musical events. The granddaddy of them all is the Donauinselfest, a free – yes, free – concert attracting over three million screaming revellers. In between, cultural and musical festivities line up beside each other, all vying for attention. The only drawback to the summer is the holiday season: many of the city's world-famous institutions, such as the Vienna Boys' Choir, the Lippanzer Stallions and the Staatsoper, all take breaks, so a little planning can prove very advantageous.

Vienna is a place where culture, history, art and nightlife all mix together seamlessly. With only a few days on your hands, there is a lot to experience, but any time spent in this magical city will bring rich rewards.

MY ESSENTIAL VIENNA

- Heeresgeschichtliches Museum (p84)
- Zentralfriedhof (p97)
- Brunnenmarkt (p185)
- Cycling through the city (p113)
- MuseumsQuartier (p75)

LOWDOWN

Population 1.64 million

Time zone Central European Time (GMT + 1 hour)

3-star double room Around €100-120

Melange coffee Around €3

Käsekrainer €3.20

Opera ticket €2-254

U-Bahn ticket €1.50

Common sight Dogs, dogs, and more dogs

Don't Walk on the cycle paths – cyclists at full speed hurt

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VIENNA TODAY

The brightest diamond in Europe's cultural crown for centuries, Vienna fell on hard times at the end of WWI with the decline of its keepers, the Habsburgs. With the exception of Red Vienna in the 1920s, when the city prospered under the most successful socialist government Europe has ever seen, the city wallowed in the cultural backwaters for much of the 20th century.

The previous 10 years has seen the city turn itself around, and in the 21st century, Vienna is once again looking peachy. Quality of life is high: Mercer Consulting, in its worldwide quality of living survey, ranked Vienna fourth behind Zurich, Geneva and Vancouver. Some Viennese would beg to differ. Nevertheless, the facts speak for themselves – the city's public transport system is one the best in the world, green spaces abound, the circus of public festivals and events grows larger year by year, rent and living costs continue to stay low and the socialist welfare system is strong.

The city's bar and club scene has never been healthier. Traditional pockets such as the Bermuda Dreieck have flourished in the wake of new locations opening up across the city, and now locals are spoilt for choice. The districts inside the Gürtel, in particular Wieden, Mariahilf, Neubau, and Josefstadt, have built up a strong concentration of progressive bars and live-music venues, while districts traditionally bereft of night spots, like Leopoldstadt, are currently experiencing a surge in nightlife. Electronic music, once the darling of Vienna's contemporary music scene, is, like the city, on the comeback. Clubs such as Flex and Künstlerhauspassage not only attract big names in the local scene, such as Kruder & Dorfmeister and the stars of Cheap Records, but also a regular troupe of international DJs and bands. Many of the smaller bars, rhiz, Fluc, and Cabaret Renz included, feature DJs habitually.

The Viennese, back from world trips, tired of schnitzel and began exploring the few Chinese restaurants and Turkish kebab houses in town. Before long, new flavours and spices were popping up all over the city (and continue to do so), whetting the Viennese appetite. In recent years the trend has reversed somewhat, with local cuisine making a comeback: today, modern takes on traditional dishes are in.

Art, a major link in Vienna's cultural armour, continues to go from strength to strength, and fortunately the councillors of Vienna have never been shy about forking out for art and public space. Their greatest achievements in the 21st century – the reopening of the Albertina, home to the world's greatest graphic art collection, and the completion of the Museums-Quartier, the eighth largest cultural complex in the world – have not only complemented the city's incredible art treasure chest, but helped to create an art scene of epic proportions.

Through all the improvements and new-found openness, Vienna has remained an incredibly safe city. Crime has risen ever so slightly in the past few years, but the majority of convictions involve theft and burglary, something that has had little impact on the freedom and safety of the Viennese. People can go almost anywhere night or day and feel unthreatened; women still walk home alone at night without fear of harassment, and the elderly ride the trams and buses well into the night.

Xenophobia, Vienna's Achilles heel, still lurks in the background. In recent years the Freedom Party (FPÖ), formerly headed by Jörg Haider, has played on this fear, targeting foreigners and asylum-seekers during

HOT CONVERSATION TOPICS

- The Viennese – the Viennese complaining about the Viennese.
- HC Strache – Why is he about to cry in his campaign posters?
- Dog Shit – Will the latest movement to clear the streets of canine crap actually work?
- Adele – The return of five of the Belvedere's paintings by Klimt to their rightful owner.
- The Greens – Going from strength to strength.

TOP QUIRKY EVENTS

- Fasching – a time to dress up as a tree, oil slick or your favourite comic character and bar hop across the city.
- Lange Nacht der Museen – one night in the year when museums across the country throw open their doors to all and sundry.
- Life Ball – outrageous outfits, celebrities galore, and all in the noble cause of raising funds for AIDS.
- Soho in Ottakring – a multicultural residential neighbourhood transforms itself into a centre for contemporary art and nightlife.
- Volkstimmfest – a surreal hippy/communist festival with a very laid-back feel and plenty of live acts.

election time. In 2000 it rode the tide of intolerance right to the doorsteps of parliament, forming a coalition government with the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP). This, however, seemed a catalyst for Vienna's sleeping liberals, who demonstrated en masse at Heldenplatz (some 200,000 turned up) against the FPÖ's racist platform. In the 2001 council and 2002 national elections, FPÖ lost major ground in the popularity stakes and Haider left the party due to internal fighting. In stepped HC Strache to fill the void. A young, charismatic politician with perfect teeth, Strache began his career as FPÖ leader with strong xenophobic rhetoric accompanied by weepy eyes and overwrought nationalism. His racially motivated campaign against Turkey's inclusion in the EU in both the 2005 council and 2006 national elections struck a chord with a surprisingly large community in Vienna. His party secured 14.4% of the Vienna vote in 2006, up an incredible 6.4%. Juxtaposing the city's small racist streak is its concern for the environment; the Greens still head off the FPÖ in the popularity stakes, receiving 17.1% of Vienna's votes in the 2006 national elections, and won the districts of Mariahilf, Neubau, and Josefstadt outright. However, it might be time, as Dirk Stermann (of the humorist duo Stermann & Grisseemann) proposed after the 2006 elections, for a 'foreigners' party that hates Austrian nationals'.

Through it all, the Viennese saying *Wien ist ein Dorf* (Vienna is a village) rings true; traditional values are still highly regarded and at times it seems as though everyone knows everyone's business. It may be old fashioned, but its kinda comforting.

CITY CALENDAR

Vienna's calendar of events is a ceaseless cascade of classical concerts, jazz and rock festivals, balls, gay parades, communist gatherings and art happenings. The following is by no means a complete listing of annual events; check the Tourist Info Wien website, www.wien.info, for a more comprehensive list, or read the weekly *Falter* paper. For a full list of public holidays, see the Directory (p226).

JANUARY & FEBRUARY

FASCHING

The Fasching season, a carnival time of costumes and parties, actually runs from November to Ash Wednesday, but February is traditionally the time when most of the action takes place. Look for street parties and drunken Viennese in silly get-ups.

OPERNBALL

☎ 514 44 7880; 01, Staatsoper
Of the 300 or so balls held in January and February, the Opernball (Opera Ball) is number one. Held in the Staatsoper, it's a supremely lavish affair, with the men in tails and women in shining white gowns.

MARCH & APRIL

FRÜHLINGSFESTIVAL

Alternating each year between the Musikverein and the Konzerthaus, this Spring Festival of classical concerts generally runs from the end of March to the beginning of April.

INTERNATIONAL AKKORDEON FESTIVAL

☎ 0676-512 91 04; www.akkordeonfestival.at in German

Running from the end of February through to the end of March, the International Accordion Festival features exceptional players from as close as the Balkans and as far away as New Zealand.



An outdoor cinema in front of the Rathaus screens films for free during the Musikfilm Festival (opposite page)

OSTERKLING FESTIVAL

☎ 427 17; www.osterklang.at in German
Orchestral and chamber music recitals fill some of Vienna's best music halls during this 'Sound of Easter' festival. The highlight is the opening concert, which features the Vienna Philharmonic.

MAY & JUNE

DONAUINSELFEST

www.donauinselfest.at in German
For the younger generation, the Donauinselfest on the Donauinsel (Danube Island) occupies the top spot on the year's events' calendar. Held over three days on a weekend in late June, it features a feast of rock, pop, folk and country performers, which attracts almost three million onlookers. Best of all, it's free!

LANGE NACHT DER MUSIK

<http://langenacht1.orf.at>
For one night, usually in early June, bars and concert venues host a heap of bands playing every kind of music genre conceivable. Tickets (adult/child €14/12; available at venues) grant entry into all performances. An information booth is set up on Heldenplatz two days before the event. The 2006 event was held in September; at the time of writing the schedule for future events was not yet determined.

LIFE BALL

☎ 595 56 00; www.lifeball.org
This AIDS-charity event is one of the high-lights of the ball season calendar and is often graced by international celebrities. It's normally held in the Rathaus around the middle of May and attracts some colourful and flamboyant outfits.

QUEER IDENTITIES

☎ 524 62 74; www.identities.at
Identities is easily Vienna's second largest film festival, showcasing queer movies from around the world. It normally takes place at the beginning of June.

REGENBOGEN PARADE

www.hosiwien.at in German
Late June Vienna is taken over by the Regenbogen Parade (Rainbow Parade), a predominantly gay and lesbian festival attracting some 150,000 people. Expect loads of fun, frolicking and bare skin.

SOHO IN OTTAKRING

www.sohoinottakring.at in German
The multicultural streets bordering the Gürtel in Ottakring come to life in May and June with Soho in Ottakring. Hairdressing salons, disused offices and fishmongers are transformed into art galleries, bars, band venues and art shops, all of which attracts an arty crowd.

VIENNA MARATHON

☎ 606 95 10; www.vienna-marathon.com
The city's top road race is held in May.

WIEN IST ANDERSRUM

☎ 0664-941 14 74; www.geheimsache.at
Wien ist Andersrum is a month-long extravaganza of gay and lesbian art, which takes up all of June every second year (the next is in 2008). Most performances stick to the genre of stage and song.

WIENER FESTWOCHE

☎ 589 22-0; www.festwochen.or.at
Considered to be one of the highlights of the year, the Vienna Festival hosts a wide-ranging program of the arts, based in various venues around town, from May to mid-June. Expect to see quality performance groups from around the world.

JULY & AUGUST

IMPULSTANZ

☎ 523 55 58; www.impulstanz.com
Vienna's premiere avant-garde dance festival attracts an array of internationally renowned troupes and newcomers between mid-July and mid-August. Performances are held in the MuseumsQuartier, Volkstheater and a number of small venues.

JAZZ FEST WIEN

☎ 712 42 24; www.viennajazz.org
From the end of June to mid-July, Vienna relaxes to the smooth sound of jazz, blues and soul flowing from the Staatsoper and a number of clubs across town.

KLANGBOGEN FESTIVAL

☎ 427 17; www.klangbogen.at
The KlangBogen Festival ensures things don't flag during the summer holidays. Running from July to August, it features operas, operettas and orchestral music in the Theater an der Wien and Musikverein, plus a few other locations around town.

MUSIKFILM FESTIVAL

01, Rathausplatz
Once the sun sets in July and August, the Rathausplatz is home to screenings of operas, operettas and concerts. They're all free, so turn up early for a good seat. Food stands and bars are close at hand, which are swamped by hordes of people creating a carnival-like atmosphere.

VOLKSSTIMMEFEST

www.volksstimmefest.at in German
For a weekend in late August or early September, the Communist Party fills the Prater with music and art. The festival, which has been running since 1945, features some 30 live acts and attracts a bizarre mix of hip-pies and staunch party supporters.

CULTURE

VIENNESE LIFE

Not only are the Viennese a hard bunch to pin down (possibly a reason why Freud had so much material to work with), but on the surface, lifestyles in Vienna vary greatly. To take the pulse of the city, we posed a few questions on Vienna and the Viennese to some long-time residents.

Marion, a Viennese-born fulltime mother, lives in Penzing; Peter Berger has spent his 35 years living in Landstrasse and works as a bartender; Tom, a professor of analytical

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

LANGE NACHT DER MUSEEN

<http://langenacht.orf.at>
On the first Saturday of October, around 500 museums nationwide open their doors to visitors between 6pm and 1am. One ticket (adult/child €12/10; available at museums) allows entry to all of them, and includes public transport around town. You'll be hard pushed to visit all 83 museums in Vienna though.

VIENNALE FILM FESTIVAL

☎ 526 59 47; www.viennale.at
The country's best film festival, Viennale features fringe and independent films from around the world. It is held every year in October, with screenings at numerous locations around the city. See p171 for more details.

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

CHRISTKINDLMÄRKTE

Vienna's much-loved Christmas market season runs from mid-November to Christmas Day. See p188 for more details.

SILVESTER

The city council transforms the Innere Stadt into one huge party venue for Silvester (New Year's Eve). It's an uproarious affair, with more than enough alcohol consumed and far too many fireworks let off in crowded streets.

WIEN MODERN FESTIVAL

☎ 242 00; www.wienmodern.at
The Wien Modern Festival takes an opposing view to many of the city's music festivals by featuring modern classical and avant-garde music. The festival is held throughout November, with many performances in the Konzerthaus.

chemistry, moved here from Lower Austria 20 years ago; and Lisa, who works in the arts, was born and bred in Leopoldstadt.

Lonely Planet: What do you like about Vienna?

Marion: It's small enough to get everywhere within a reasonable time and it's big enough to give you anonymity. There are lots of things to do with the kids, and you have the benefits of countryside and city.

Peter: I like the public transport system – it works, it's good, and it's cheap. And the size of the city – not too big, not too small, Vienna is still a city you can walk. Half the week I like the cuisine, and the other half not.

Lisa: There are lots of things to do in the city, whether it be cultural, sporting, or simply relaxing.

Lonely Planet: What annoys you about Vienna?

Marion: The Viennese shop assistants, dog turds, not enough of a view from my flat, not enough playgrounds, a growing number of homeless, and too little integration of the poorer immigrants.

Peter: People try to interfere where it's not needed, and don't interfere when help is needed.

Tom: The grumpiness of the people is sometimes hard to take, and their unfriendliness.

Lonely Planet: How have you seen the city change over the last decade or so?

Marion: There are more homeless on the streets, and a lot of houses renovated. Shopping has changed; a lot of the little shops in the outer lying shopping streets, like Thaliastrasse, are dying out and being replaced by bigger shops or shopping centres in the centre. People dress better, there are more restaurants, bars and cultural happenings.

Peter: The city has grown bigger, which has brought both benefits and losses. There are now more possibilities, but also more poor, homeless and drug-addicted.

Tom: It has lost a bit of the open-air museum feel. It's grown younger in a way, there are new places to hang out now, which counterbalance the old coffee houses. It's also got a little bit more international.

Lisa: It has grown bigger as people have moved away from the centre looking for a 'house & garden' lifestyle and there are more nationalities in the city.

Lonely Planet: If you had to describe the Viennese people in one sentence, what would it be?

Marion: Grumpy but helpful and mostly courageous.

Peter: Sweet and sour, sometimes a little too hard.

Tom: They have a golden heart, but gold is very heavy.

Lisa: It's hard to say. The Viennese are multicultural and hard to pin down, a walk through Naschmarkt is proof of this.

Lonely Planet: Are the Viennese grumpy or full of *Wiener Schmah* (Viennese humour)?

Marion: The better off they are the grumpier – the worse the situation, the more *Schmah*.

Tom: Grumpy. They don't take the time to evolve the *Schmah*, most seem stressed and don't take the time to relax.

Peter: Full of grumpy *Schmah*.

THE LOCALS' BEST VIENNA DAY

We also asked our Viennese friends what they'd do with a cheeky day off in the city; here are their favourite ways of enjoying Vienna.

Marion: I'd go to a museum and the Naschmarkt (p185), rent a boat and picnic on the Alte Donau (Old Danube; p78), or go to Erholungsgebiet Steinhof (p112) to fly a kite, then to a *Heurigen* (wine tavern).

Peter: If the weather was bad, I'd seek out a good exhibition. If the weather was good, I'd head for the Lainzer Tiergarten (p99).

Tom: I'd have a very late breakfast at the MuseumsQuartier (p75), sit out the afternoon in a coffee house, and in the evening catch a film at the Votivkino (p172). If it was wet and rainy, I'd head to the Bücherei Wien (p91) and scroll through the newspapers and music.

Lisa: It depends on the weather. I'd head to the Alte Donau for inline skating (p174) or sailing (p173) if it's fine; a museum if not.

A POLITE SOCIETY

For all their grumpiness, the Viennese love *Höflichkeit* (politeness). Shop assistants, waiters and the like greet people with *Grüss Gott* or *Guten Tag* (good day) and expect the same in return. Occasionally you'll hear *Servus*, but it's normally reserved for greetings between friends. *Auf Wiedersehen* (goodbye) will follow you out the door. People either shake hands on greeting or exchange pecks on the cheeks (even between men); *Prost* is the common toast, and eye contact is important when dinking glasses.

How sincere this all is is another matter. Brigitte Schreger, a Viennese from birth and teacher since 1976, is well placed to comment on the city's *Höflichkeit*.

'Most Viennese aren't actually that polite. Ride the U-Bahn and you'll notice how unfriendly they are. Twenty or 30 years ago it was quite different, with sayings like *Küss die Hand* ('kiss the hand', a very polite greeting from a man to a woman), *Habe die Ehre* (honoured to meet you), and very, very occasionally *Gschamsta Diener* (I am your humble servant), still heard on the streets. The latter dates from the Habsburg days. In some shops you have the feeling it's a privilege for you to enter and pay them money.'

'Of course, this isn't representative of the whole society. Many German-based firms and specialist stores still maintain a high level of politeness, and often supermarket assistants are quite friendly if you regularly frequent their store. With regards to the younger generation, I think it depends on the upbringing – it seems the more money the family has, the more outwardly polite they are. Culture also plays a big part; Turkish people have another way of politeness which some Viennese find hard to comprehend. We try to teach politeness in school and hope the kids take it with them.'

And the notoriously rude waiters? 'I have no problem, but then again, I'm a *Stammgast* (regular) at my local coffee house. It seems waiters like things just so, and perhaps foreigners upset the balance. If you're looking for a taste of traditional *Höflichkeit*, take coffee and cake at Demel (p140).'

FOOD

Vienna's cuisine is a conglomeration of the best of the old empire. At its base is the substantial food of southern Germany, but it features a plethora of dishes from throughout Central and Eastern Europe: the world famous *Wiener Schnitzel* arrived from Milan; *Knödel* (dumplings) originated in Bohemia; *Gulasch* (goulash) and *Paprika Huhn* (paprika chicken) crossed the border from Hungary; the delightful *Palatschinken* (pancakes) travelled all the way from Romania and the *Apfelstrudel* (apple strudel) from Turkey.

On the whole, traditional Viennese cuisine is heavy, hearty and strongly meat-based. A must for any visitor – vegetarians and vegans aside – is the *Wiener schnitzel*, the ubiquitous Viennese dish traditionally made with *Kalb* (veal) escalope, but often nowadays with *Schwein* (pork) or *Puten* (turkey). *Gulasch*, a beef stew with a spicy sauce flavoured with paprika, is also on most Viennese menus; *Knödel* seem to appear in every second dish, can be either sweet or sour, and are normally made with potatoes or bread. *Apfelstrudel* is a ubiquitous dessert that is hard to avoid (and quite frankly, who would want to) while *Palatschinken*, a thinner version of the common pancake, is another favourite; like *Knödel*, they are served sweet with jams or savoury with meat.

Aside from standard dishes, Viennese cuisine runs with the seasons. Spring is a time to enjoy crunchy asparagus from the Weinviertel's Marchfeld (see p210) and dishes seasoned with *Bärlauch*, wild garlic found throughout the Wienerwald (p210). Summer brings with it a grand array of fruits, in particular *Erdbeeren* (strawberries) from Burgenland (see p211) and *Marillen* (apricots) from the Danube Valley (see p205). At this time, divine *Marillenknödel* top dessert lists throughout the city. Autumn is blessed with the arrival of *Pilz* (mushrooms – picking them in the Vienna Woods is a favourite pastime of many Viennese), *Kürbis* (pumpkin), wild meats and sweet *Sturm* (cloudy fermenting grape juice; see p142). *Eierschwammerl* (chanterelle mushrooms) and *Kürbiscremesuppe* (cream of pumpkin soup) are dishes to look out for. *Martinigansl* (tender roast goose) is prevalent around St Martin's Day in early November and fish is normally served at Christmas.

Although the menus of traditional *Beisl*n (beer houses), *Gasthäuser* (inns) and *Heurigen* (wine taverns) loyally follow the established culinary standards, Vienna's overall gastronomic scene is in flux. The last few years have seen an explosion of restaurants offering cuisine from around the world: Asian diners, Turkish kebab houses, Italian trattoria and Indian curry houses sprang up like mushrooms after a heavy rain. Yet the city's current

SAUSAGES TO GO

The *Würstelstand* (sausage stand), Vienna's equivalent of a fast-food joint, is a familiar sight throughout the city. They're the perfect place for a quick bite to eat on the run; a pastime imbedded in the Viennese way of life.

These shrines to fatty bangers may sell up to a dozen types of sausage. Each comes with a chunk of bread and a big dollop of mustard (*Senf*) – which can be sweet (*süß* or *Kremser Senf*) or hot (*scharf*) – and are washed down with a beer. Tomato ketchup and mayonnaise can be requested. The thinner sausages are served two at a time, except in the less expensive 'hot dog' version, when the sausage is placed in a bread stick.

Take your pick from the *Frankfurter*, a standard thin, boiled sausage; the *Bratwurst*, a fat, fried sausage; and *Burenwurst*, the boiled equivalent of *Bratwurst*. *Debreziner* is a thin, mildly smoked spicy sausage from Hungary. *Currywurst* is *Burenwurst* with a curry flavour, and *Käsekrainer*, a favourite of 3am snackers, is a sausage infused with cheese. *Tiroler Wurst* is a smoked sausage. Not a sausage, but sold at *Würstelstände* is *Leberkäs* (literally 'liver cheese'), a kind of meatloaf often made from horse meat.

If you want to surprise and perhaps impress the server, use the following Viennese slang to ask for a *Burenwurst* with sweet mustard and a crust of bread: '*A Hasse mit an Söassn und an Scherzl, bitte*'. But you probably won't get it – crusts are generally reserved for regular customers.



Würstelstand in the Innere Stadt

culinary climate is experiencing a 'back to the roots' phase and an upsurge in restaurants offering modern takes on traditional dishes. Leading the way in this new love affair with Viennese cuisine is *Österreicher im MAK* (see p127), *Steirereck im Stadtpark* (p129), and *neo-Beisln* like *Gasthaus Wild* (p128) and *Goldmund* (p133).

Traditionally the main meal of the day is lunch (heralded by *Mahlzeit*, literally 'meal time' – a greeting heard throughout restaurants at midday) and restaurants are well attuned to their customers' needs; a large percentage offer set menus (*Mittagsmenü*), consisting of a salad or soup and a main dish, at a good price. However, like any busy city, lunch can be a rushed affair – dinner, on the other hand, is an event where the food, wine and company are to be savoured. Most Viennese breakfast at home. Week-ends are the exception to the rule: many restaurants cater to a flood of people meeting over continental breakfasts or full fry-ups (p125). The *Naschmarkt* is a prime spot on Saturday mornings.

SPORT

The Viennese aren't what you'd call sports-mad, but the city does have its fair share of fanatical supporters, particularly when it comes to football and skiing, and plenty of locals enjoy walking, swimming, cycling, inline skating and racket sports.

Summer is pretty much a dead time for spectator sports. However, with the arrival of autumn and winter, things heat up, so to speak. The national football league, the Austrian *Bundesliga*, kicks off at the end of autumn and runs until the beginning of spring, with a break during the severe winter months; two of the country's better teams, Austria Memphis and Rapid, are based in Vienna. A local derby is quite an affair, and while the actual football isn't the most scintillating, the match certainly brings out the best and worst in fans.

With much of the country given over to mountainous splendour, snow sports are hugely popular in Austria. Almost every Austrian has skied since they could be pushed down beginner slopes, and the average child will literally ski circles around most tourists. The best skiing is in the western reaches of the country, where most competitions

are held. Vienna has a couple of tiny slopes and a handful of mountains within a couple of hours' drive.

See *Outdoor Activities* (p173) and *Health & Fitness* (p175) in the Entertainment chapter for information on sporting venues and various outdoor activities.

MEDIA

The *Wiener Zeitung* (www.wienerzeitung.at), first published in 1703, is the longest running newspaper in the world. With such a long and solid journalistic background, it's no surprise that Vienna receives a wide and varied view on political and social matters from its media.

Founded in 1957, *Österreichischer Rundfunk* (ÖRF; Austrian Broadcasting Corporation; www.orf.at, in German), the country's independent public broadcaster and the dominant force in Austrian media for decades, has faced stiff competition since the privatisation of airwaves in 2002. It owns 13 radio stations (Österreich1, Ö3, FM4, RÖI and nine regional radio stations) and the county's only two non-cable and satellite TV channels, ÖRF1 and ÖRF2.

Austria produces 16 national and regional daily papers, many of which are Vienna-based. Most are owned by their publishing houses and stick to quality over quantity, which results in fierce competition and generally good investigative journalism. Unusually, papers receive state grants, but this is under review.

Neue Kronen Zeitung (see below), a thoroughly tabloid spread, is easily Austria's most-read newspaper. Together with the *Kurier*, its more bourgeois brother, the two papers reach around half the paper-reading population of Austria daily. *News*, owned by Germany's Gruner und Jahr publishers, has the highest per-household readership in Europe for a weekly news magazine. The Newspapers & Magazines section in the Directory chapter (p228) provides a short but succinct list of papers available in Vienna.

LANGUAGE

German is the official language of Austria, but each region has a distinct dialect. The Viennese dialect has many similarities to High German, but also many differences. It is slower and more relaxed than its High German counterpart (it has all the qualities of a lazy drawl), but it is also more charming. The Viennese love to sprinkle their dialect with lively, evocative words and expressions that are often gobbledegook to other native German speakers. It's also peppered with French words, such as *Melange* and *Totitoir*; a hangover from the days when Maria Theresia encouraged her court to throw a bit of French into the conversation.

Within Vienna itself there exists a further dialect, *Tiefwienerisch*: a thick, sometimes unintelligible dialect that slowly oozes out between the lips, weighed down with expressive sayings that would make your mother blush. This is the language of the working class, but the non-working-class folk of the city just love it and use it at every opportunity.

THE NEUE KRONEN ZEITUNG

The *Neue Kronen Zeitung* (*Krone*; www.krone.at in German), a celebrated daily tabloid, is a power unto itself. Its influence on the nation is said to be so great that no national decision or project can go ahead without its consent, which is ultimately that of its founder and owner, Hans Dichand.

The figures speak for themselves: of a nation of around eight million, three million buy newspapers daily and of that three million, one million purchase a copy of the *Krone*. In percentage terms, that makes the *Krone* the most widely read newspaper per capita in the world. The paper's owners, Hans Dichand and Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ) media group (each own 50%), also publish the *Kurier*, the country's second-largest paper.

So what's all the fuss about? It seems the Viennese, like the rest of the world, love scandal and gossip. It could be said that the *Krone* is a less-aggressive (but just as powerful) version of the UK's *Sun*: light on solid newsworthy items, heavy on attention-grabbing headlines, celebrity gossip, cars and sports. There's even a section devoted to dogs.

The real fuss, however, is the paper's power to influence. Some sectors of society have voiced concern that too much influence lies in the hands of Dichand, and his views are at times far too nationalistic. Dichand recently retired and left the reins to his son Michael, but the paper's substantial influence over the populace remains as strong as ever.

Vienna has been at the crossroads of Europe for millennia and all these comings and goings have helped to create a population comfortable in two, three and sometimes four languages. For around 22% of the population German is not their native tongue. This level of proficiency extends through much of society – you may find yourself being accosted by a beggar asking for money, who, upon your ignorance to his requests in German, will switch to English or French.

If you don't speak much German, or none at all, don't worry. Nowadays English is taught from kindergarten level and a high percentage of the younger population speaks English quite well. The older generation unfortunately did not have the same advantages, but they'll probably be able to understand your requests if you keep them simple. See the Language chapter (p233) for vocabulary and pronunciation tips.

ECONOMY & COSTS

Austria has one of the strongest economies in the EU and Vienna is Austria's financial centre. Citizens enjoy good welfare services and health care, and a benign pensions and housing policy.

Vienna earns its cash through precision engineering, metal products and the manufacture of electrical and electronic goods. Banking and insurance also chip in their fair share, as does the service industry. The port of Vienna is the largest facility for container translocating in inland Europe, and has increased in importance with the opening of the Main canal connecting the Rhine and the Danube (Donau). Tourism isn't high on the list of money earners, although, like the arts industry, it's on the increase.

By European standards, Vienna isn't a particularly expensive city. It's cheaper than Paris, London or Rome, and more expensive than Prague or Budapest. Shopping aside, accommodation will be the most expensive item on your budget. Food isn't that pricey, and if you take advantage of *Mittagsmenü* (set-menu lunch) you'll save and still eat exceptionally well. Museum entry fees range from €1 to €10. Many theatres and classical music halls sell tickets at discounted prices a few hours before performances, and have a standing-room-only section where tickets go for a song. These options help to stretch your euro that little bit further; see also the boxed text It's Free (p54) for ideas. Note that children pay lower prices and students and senior citizens often receive discounts. Public transport is an absolute bargain in Vienna.

On average, staying at a 2- to 4-star hotel (double room), eating out twice a day, taking in a show and a couple of museums and downing a few cups of coffee will set you back around €170 to €250 per day.

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

As well as being the capital city of Austria, Vienna is (and has been since 1922) one of nine federal provinces (*Bundesländer*). Every Austrian federal province has its own head of government (*Landeshauptmann*) and provincial assembly (*Landtag*), therefore the mayor of the city is also the governor of a federal province and Vienna's City Council is a provincial assembly.

The Viennese are the country's staunchest supporters of socialism and are generally a rather cynical, expressive and questioning bunch when it comes to politics. It's not uncommon to hear a heated conversation over the affairs of the state or city at restaurants and

WIEN IST EIN HUNDEKLO

John Sparrow could easily have had Vienna in mind when he penned 'that indefatigable and unsavoury engine of pollution, the dog' in a letter to the *Times*. For some, the streets of the capital are strewn with dog poo; approximately 8.3% of households own a dog, which, at a conservative calculation, equates to 65,000 dogs, and while the Viennese love their dogs, the majority are loath to clean up their mess.

The city caters well to dog owners – 870,000 sq metres of parkland in Vienna is designated dog-only zone. Yet poo is everywhere: on footpaths, between parked cars, on grass verges, in parks and even in doorways. Recently, a campaign under the slogan *Wien ist ein Hundeklo* (Vienna is a dog's toilet) collected 157,000 votes in a matter of months in support of its demands for a council cleanup program and penalties for owners who neglect to clean up after their pets. Unfortunately it has had little effect to date, but the groundswell of support may soon change the councillors' minds. In the meantime, a cautionary glance groundwards before stepping out is advisable.

bars. People are rarely shocked, or even bothered, with the private lives of their politicians and couldn't care less who is having an affair with whom – their concern is how policy-making will affect their day-to-day lives and the future of their city.

Vienna's current mayor is Michael Häupl of the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ). Elections take place every five years; the last, in 2005, resulted in the SPÖ increasing its number of seats to 55, the ÖVP coming in second with 18 seats, the Greens moving up to third with 14 seats, and the FPÖ dropping to last with 13 seats.

On a national level, the SPÖ have historically held power, but the parliamentary race has often been a closely fought battle. The 1996 election ushered in the first post-war coalition between SPÖ and ÖVP, the country's conservative political machine, and in 2000 SPÖ lost its hold on parliament completely when the ÖVP, in collaboration with the FPÖ, had enough votes to form a government. FPÖ has gained international notoriety under its former leader Jörg Haider, who has expressed admiration for Adolf Hitler's labour policies and made several trips to see Iraq's former dictator Saddam Hussein while he was still in power. Haider, the governor of Carinthia province, resigned as head of the FPÖ in early 2000, following the international outcry generated by the FPÖ's inclusion in the federal coalition government.

The 2006 elections turned up more than one surprise. To all and sundry, it looked like a shoe-in for the ÖVP; Alfred Gusenbauer's SPÖ trailed the conservatives in opinion polls right up to voting day, and the increasing popularity of the Greens looked set to steal support from the socialists. The SPÖ went on to win the election with 35.34% of the national vote, 1% more than their biggest rival. Haider had split with the FPÖ in 2002 to form another right-wing party, the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ), which looked out of the running next to his old party and its buoyant new leader, HC Strache. However, he and his party won 4.11% of the national vote and a place in parliament (the threshold for parliamentary representation is 4%).

ENVIRONMENT

THE LAND

Vienna (elevation 156m) occupies an area of 415 sq km in the Danube Valley, the most fertile land in Austria. More than 700 hectares are under vineyard cultivation in the Vienna region, and nearly 90% of the wine produced is white. The largest wine-growing area is Stammersdorf in the northeast of the city.

To the west and north of the city are the rolling hills of the Wienerwald (p210), the much-loved Vienna Woods. These are the only hill ranges to speak of and the rest of the city is relatively flat. The Danube divides the city into two unequal parts, with the old city and nearly all the tourist sights to the west of the river. The Danube Canal (p78) branches off from the main river and winds a sinewy course south, forming one of the borders of the historic centre, the 1st district (Innere Stadt; p52). The long, thin Donauinsel (Danube Island p82), which splits the Danube in two as it courses through Vienna, is a recreation

HOW MUCH?

Box of Mozart Kügeln (marzipan chocolates) – €7.30

One litre of unleaded petrol – hovering over €1

A *Frankfurter* at a *Würstelstand* – €3

A *Krüglerl* (half-litre of beer) at a *Beisl* – Just over €3

An *Achterl* (small glass of wine) at a *Heuriger* – €1 to €1.50

Copy of Vienna's city newspaper *Falter* – €2.40

Ticket to the *Opernball* – €215

20-minute *Fiaker* (horse and carriage) ride – €40

72-hour transport ticket – €12

THIS IMAGE
NOT AVAILABLE
IN PICK & MIX

CITY IMPROVEMENTS

'Constant Improvement' seems to be the motto of the city council. It has financed seminal architectural projects, such as the Gasometer (p97), Bücherei Wien (p91) and MuseumsQuartier (p75), creating superb public spaces while managing to retain the buildings' original ambience. 'URBION', an EU incentive to modernise the West Gürtel area, is another such project. Since 1995 the Gürtel's *Bogen* (disused arched spaces below the tracks of the U6 U-Bahn) have been skilfully transformed into bars, restaurants and art spaces. Developments in the pipeline for the coming years include major overhauls of the city's main train stations, the extension of the U2 U-Bahn (its completion is set to coincide with Euro 2008) and the upgrade of the banks of the Danube Canal and Vienna River.

area populated with beaches, playgrounds and pathways. Just to the east of the island is a loop of water called the Alte Donau (Old Danube), known for its beaches and water sports in summer and its ice skating in winter.

Almost half the city is given over to green spaces, more than any other European capital. Major parks include the Prater (p79), a massive belt of green just to the southeast of the Innere Stadt, and Lainzer Tiergarten (p99), a forested area home to wild animals and enthusiastic walkers in the far western reaches of the city.

GREEN VIENNA

Recycling is well established in Vienna – 295,000 tonnes of waste are recycled annually. This isn't only dictated by conscience – Viennese are compelled to do so by law. Vienna's widespread use of environmentally friendly trams and buses powered by gas has helped keep the city's air reasonably clean, and the Wienerwald does its part as an efficient 'air filter'. The city's water supply, which flows directly from the Alps, is one of the cleanest in the world, although many of the older houses still have lead pipes. This has resulted in one in every 10 houses recording lead in the water supply, but levels are generally too low to cause harm.

The Fernwärme incinerator (p92), has one of the lowest emission levels of any incinerator in the world. This plant processes waste matter, burning 260,000 tonnes of it annually to supply heating for more than 40,000 homes in Vienna.

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The Authors

Neal Bedford



Landing in Vienna shortly after leaving New Zealand on his big OE, Neal spent his first year as an au pair learning the most important aspects of Austrian culture: *Wurst* and *Schaas* are the two most important

words in the German language; copious amounts of *Sturm* must be drunk at least once in your life; Austrian cuisine helps put on weight; and no place in the world invokes Christmas cheer like Vienna.

Like any relationship, his love affair with the city has had its ups and downs – he's left three times for what he thought were greener pastures, only to return to enjoy all that Vienna can offer. The magic of the city still manages to catch him unawares, particularly at night when cycling home through the quiet districts to his flat in Ottakring, and he has come to realise no matter how much he learns about Vienna, there is always an undiscovered pocket close at hand.

CONTRIBUTING AUTHOR

JANINE EBERLE

When Janine stepped in as Commissioning Editor for the Central Europe region in LP's London office, one of her first 'chores' was to spend a week documenting Vienna's shopping scene. Her credentials? A taste for glamour, an eye for a bargain, and a long-

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suffering credit card. The combination of cool trams, great wine, and shops filled with unbelievable amounts of old tat makes Vienna one of her very favourite places to plunge herself into debt.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Greg Elms

A contributor to Lonely Planet for more than 15 years, Greg finds shooting for city guides is like travelling with the fast-forward button pressed down. Armed with a Bachelor of Arts in Photography, Greg was a photographer's assistant for two years before embarking on a travel odyssey. He eventually settled down to a freelance career in Melbourne, and now works regularly for magazines, graphic designers, advertising agencies and, of course, book publishers such as Lonely Planet.

NEAL'S TOP VIENNA DAY

It all depends on the weather, but since it's my 'top' day, it would be a warm September Saturday.

A late breakfast of tomato- and paprika-omelette and Turkish tea at Kent with friends from the 'hood' starts the day off nice and gently, followed by a little shopping at the Bauernmarkt on Brunnenmarkt for seasonal fruits and vegetables. Cycling out of the city, I'd spend a few hours in the Wienerwald (Vienna Woods) working up an appetite before stopping at a *Heuriger* (wine tavern) or *Gasthaus* (inn) to recharge the batteries. A quick break at my flat to refresh, then it's down to the Museums-Quartier to chat with friends, people-watch, and catch the last of the days' rays.

Some food at Saigon or one of the Asian diners on the Naschmarkt is the perfect appetiser for an evening out; I'd then choose a bar on Schleifmühlgasse before heading across the Danube Canal to one of Leopoldstadt's laidback *Lokale* (bars). If things are a little quiet there, I'd move on to the bar Flex before taking a long bike ride through the Innere Stadt – empty of people, I can enjoy its glorious architecture at my leisure. A final stop at rhiz to see if anyone's around for a late nightcap, and then it's off home.

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