

Alternative City Breaks in Austria

Stunning museums and architecture, top-notch cuisine, and lakeshore or river adventures – all that minus the crowds! While some of Austria’s cities have been tourist magnets for decades (and for all the right reasons!), there are others that are just as well worth visiting but are still somewhat off the tourist map.

The following destinations are perfect for travellers who’ve been to Austria many times – or who just like to wander off the most obvious track for a bit. Think of them as alternative city breaks, that will wow visitors and show them a truly authentic side of the country.

Linz: From steel city to creative and futuristic hub

Upper Austria’s capital [Linz](#) is slightly more edgy than other cities – but it’s 100% real. Start your tour at the main square with its marble Trinity Column and Old Town Hall, before making your way to the Old Town, a lively mix of boutiques and restaurants that doubles as a nightlife hotspot. For a bird eye’s view, head to [Linz Castle](#) or the [Pöstlingberg mountain](#), easily accessible from the main square with the steepest adhesion railway in Europe, the Pöstlingberg tram. Kids will love the [Grottenbahn Dragon Express](#), taking them into a world of dwarves, animals and fairy tales. For music fans, [Musiktheater](#) and [Brucknerhaus](#) are the go-to places.

More interested in what tomorrow holds? The [Ars Electronic Center](#) right at the Danube River is a futuristic museum dedicated to all things robots and AI. Equally worth seeing is the trendy [Mural Harbor](#), one of the largest open air graffiti galleries in Europe with more than 300 artworks by street artists from around the world. Tours included taster spraying courses!

To get a taste of Linz (literally), make sure to try the famous [Linzer Torte](#) cake.

Klagenfurt: A Renaissance gem right at Lake Wörthersee

A city, a mountain and a lake – what else would you need for a perfect city break? [Klagenfurt](#) in Austria’s southernmost province Carinthia sits right on the shores of [Lake Wörthersee](#). It’s often dubbed “Renaissance Gem”, as Italian master builders have visibly left their mark on the 800-year-old city with all its palaces, courtyards and squares. The best place to start exploring is Neuer Platz (New Square), where Klagenfurt’s most famous landmark, the [Lindwurm Fountain](#), awaits, guarded by a dragon-like animal that is the stuff of local legends. Walk along the magnificent facades of the historic centre and take in the Mediterranean vibe.

Klagenfurt also allows visitors to travel around the world without leaving the city: Theme park [Minimundus](#) features famous landmarks from all continents in small versions.

Lake Wörthersee, just minutes from the city centre, is Carinthia’s most popular lake and a playground for water sports fans. The summer parties at the water are equally legendary.

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Graz: Austria's Capital of Delight with an artsy vibe

Austria's second largest town (after Vienna) is known as Austria's Capital of Delight. [Graz](#)' local chefs are renowned for their creative dishes, made of high-quality regional and seasonal products, and served at both cosy inns and high-end restaurants throughout town. Graz has more than 300 city farmers, selling their [signature products](#) (Styria's pumpkin seed oil is added to everything from salads to ice-cream!) at the farmers markets. Add the fine wines, straight from the surrounding vineyards, and cute patios and visitors will quickly embrace the city's version of "La Dolce Vita".

Graz is also a hub for artists, with the [Kunsthau Graz](#) the go-to place for modern works. The building's highly unusual appearance was designed by British architects Peter Cook and Colin Fournier and quickly earned itself a nickname, "the friendly alien". The regularly changing exhibitions inside are equally impressive.

Other must-see landmarks include Graz' city mountain, the [Schlossberg](#), with its [Clock Tower](#), the Museum Joanneum (home to the [world's largest historical armoury](#)), and the [Island in the Mur](#), a futuristic steel construction where visitors can mingle with the locals over cocktails.

Bregenz: An architectural hotspot at Lake Constance

[Bregenz](#) in Austria's westernmost province Vorarlberg benefits from its location right at the shores of Lake Constance. For 2,000 years, Central Europe's third-largest lake has brought trade, ideas and cultural exchange to the city – today, it's still a place where tradition and progress go hand in hand. This especially reflects in Bregenz' architecture, a mix of designs by international architects such as Hans Hollein and Jean Nouvel, and local masters, scoring with clear lines and large amounts of wood. The buildings are down-to-earth, yet cosmopolitan, traditional yet forward-thinking, just like the city itself.

Sightseeing highlights include the [Kunsthau Bregenz](#) with its changing art exhibitions, the [vorarlberg museum](#) (the perfect place to learn more about the province), the [Festspielhaus](#) and the [Bregenz Harbour](#) with the lake promenade.

For stunning panoramic views, head to Bregenz' local mountain [Pfänderberg](#), which is easily accessible by cable car, and for romantic vibes to the [Sunset Steps at Lake Constance](#). Lake Constance itself is great for swimming, boat tours, and all kinds of water sports.