

City Breaks in Austria: Tips from the Locals

Been there, done that? Austria's cities are easy and popular weekend getaways. And they certainly don't lack bucket list attractions, be it Mozart's birthplace and the "Sound of Music" filming locations in Salzburg or Schönbrunn and Belvedere Palace in Vienna. However, that really is just half the story: There's a lot more to discover in our cities once you've scratched the surface.

The best way, of course, is to ask the people that actually live there for their favourite spots. Here are our tips for travellers who've ticked off all the major sights (or just want to add some local flavour to their itinerary).

Vienna: Hang out with artists, swim on a boat or tour a funeral museum

Austria's capital beyond all the famous sights – how to spend a day like a local.

- **Eat, drink and shop in the artsy Spittelberg district.** Vienna's creatives hang out in [Spittelberg](#) near Mariahilfer Straße shopping street. Wander through the Biedermeier streets, eat in traditional restaurants such as Amerlingbeisl, and get unique gifts in small boutique shops. Trendy [MuseumsQuartier](#) is also just a stone's throw away.
- **Treat yourself to traditional candies.** Visitors with a sweet tooth will love the [Zuckerwerkstatt](#) ("Candy manufactory") in the first district. Here, candies are made by hand according to recipes from the 18th and 19th century. Their signature treats are the so-called silk candies, shaped like miniature pillows and filled with chocolate.
- **Marvel at street art or swim on a boat.** Vienna's [Danube Canal](#) is the city's number one street art spot. Walk from Schottentor to Schwedenplatz (or the other way around) and, if you're visiting in summer, stop at a beach bar or two along the way. [Neni](#) and [Strandbar Hermann](#) are especially popular. You can also go for a swim on the floating [Badeschiff](#).
- **Go for a stroll at Europe's largest cemetery.** The Viennese are obsessed with death. So, it's just fitting that the [Vienna Central Cemetery](#), the resting place of Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert and Falco among others, is one of their favourite places to walk, jog or cycle around. Love quirky sights? Head to the [Funeral Museum](#).
- **Spend a day at the water.** Beaches and water sports in the city? Absolutely! [Vienna's Old Danube](#) is quickly accessible by underground line U1 from the centre, yet feels like a different world. Stand-up paddle-boarding, sailing, kayaking, swimming, or just chilling out at the shore over a BBQ, you name it, it's all possible here.

Salzburg: Go surfing and sample the city's signature hot dog and beers

Where to eat, drink and enjoy the sunset like a local in Mozart's hometown.

- **Have coffee and cake at Tomaselli.** Family-owned [Cafe Tomaselli](#) at the Alter Markt has been around for more than 300 years, making it Austria's oldest coffee house. Order an Einspänner (espresso topped with whipped cream) or a Melange (espresso topped with steamed milk) along with a cake or strudel.
- **Surf in the city.** Summers can get quite hot in Austria, so why not add some refreshing water sports to the city break itinerary? Salzburg has its very own [surfing wave](#) at the Almkanal (canal), one of the city's best kept secrets. It's open all year round except for a few weeks in September. Hit the wave yourself or watch others master their skills!
- **Enjoy the most popular hot dog in town.** Around lunchtime, you'll notice the locals lining up at [Balkan Grill](#) in Getreidegasse. The tiny place serves everyone's favourite hot dog. While the "Bosna" (a grilled pork sausage in a bread roll with onions, parsley and a secret spice mix) is originally from Bulgaria, this place is a city institution.
- **Have a pint (or two) at Augustinerbräu.** Salzburg is considered Austria's beer capital of Austria, with no less than eleven breweries dotted around town. The best place to taste local brews is [Augustinerbräu](#), the largest beer inn in town. The beer is sold in stone-made pitchers and right from wooden barrels.
- **Watch the sunset from Kapuzinerberg.** While not the only place to gaze at the sunset, the [Kapuzinerberg](#) mountain is most locals' favourite one. Climb up the 261 steps of the "Imbergstiege" staircase, then marvel at the Old Town to your feet and snap some cheesy Instagram shots.

Graz: Hop on a raft, enjoy a fullmoon dinner or get close with Lipizzaners

In Graz, it's all about enjoyment – from the food and wine scene to beach days in the city.

- **Make the most of the Capital of Delights.** Gourmet food, down-to-earth Styrian cuisine or snack from a farmers' market: Graz is Austria's [number one foodie destination](#) and it's all about regional and seasonal cuisine. The city is also the gateway to the [Styrian wine roads](#).
- **Go rafting on the Mur River.** Marvel at the city from the water. Visitors can join [guided tours](#) several times a week (there is a bar on the raft), or rent their own rafts and float down the river. It really can't get much more relaxing than this!

- **Enjoy a fullmoon dinner in a stunning setting.** [Vollmund](#) is a culinary event series from June to September hosted by some of Styria's best chefs. Get ready for a 5-course-dinner in a historical courtyard, a hidden vineyard or alpine plateau with panoramic views.
- **Sip a cocktail at the Murinsel.** Graz has its very own stylish [island bar on the Mur River](#). The extravagant steel construction by US artist Vito Acconci links the river to the Old Town and is the perfect place for drinks and people-watching on a warm summer evening.
- **Meet the world-famous Lipizzaners.** Vienna's Spanish Riding School is known around the world, but the horses' birthplace and country home is in the Graz region. Head to [Piber](#) on a day trip and say hello to the Lipizzaners in their natural habitat.

Innsbruck: Eat strudels, take a hike and sip a cocktail at a rooftop bar

Innsbruckers adore the urban-outdoor lifestyle. Here's how you'll fit right in!

- **Try the locals' favourite strudels.** [Strudel-Café Kröll](#), in a small street just around the corner from the famous Golden Roof, has been the locals' go-to place for strudels since it opened in 1976. Choose from apple, mango or plums and savoury options filled with vegetables or meat.
- **Discover the city on a bike.** Sure, a bike can get you from A to B, but it's also a great way to discover a city at your own pace, especially when it's as bike-friendly as Innsbruck. If you're up for a more physical challenge, take the cable car up the mountains. [Bike rentals and guided tours](#) are widely available.
- **Hang out with the city's creative crowd.** While the name might suggest otherwise, [Die Bäckerei](#), literally "The Bakery", isn't quite the place to get your morning coffee (even though they do have a cafe and bar). It's a cultural hub with all kinds of events from opening mic nights to exhibitions, flea markets, and live gigs.
- **Get active at Innsbruck's local mountain.** Those living in Innsbruck love to spend their spare time outdoors and [Patscherkofel](#) makes a quick nature escape. Take the cable car up, then head on a hike (or ski in winter), enjoy a picnic with spectacular views, or sample traditional Tyrolean delights at family-run inns.
- **Sip a drink with a 360° view.** [Hotel aDLERS](#) has one of the most popular rooftop bars in town. Head to the aDLERS Bar on the 12th floor for a cocktail (or coffee earlier in the day) or make your way right to the top for the Havana Bar, scoring with stunning views and regular rooftop parties.

Linz: Marvel at street art and laser shows and try the famous meat loaf

Linz' locals love everything art and futuristic and are proud of their signature snacks.

- Tour the Mural Harbor. Linz' port warehouses and containers have been turned into one of [Europe's largest graffiti hotspots](#), featuring about 300 murals from 40 international street artists. Some of the guided tours even include hands-on graffiti taster workshops.
- **Try the original Linzer Torte cake.** Linzer Torte, a traditional nut pastry filled with red currant jam, is considered the world's oldest known cake (the recipe dates back to the 1600s). Head to [Jindrak cafe](#) in the Old Town for the original treat.
- **Take Europe's steepest adhesion railway up the Pöstlingberg mountain.** Linz' [local hill](#) features a basilica, a zoo, and a Dragon Express through a fairy-tale world. Hop on the Pöstlingberg tram on the main square and you'll be at the top in 20 minutes.
- **Snack a meat loaf at Leberkas Pepi.** [Leberkas Pepi](#) on Rathausgasse has been an institution of Linz' snack food scene since 1989 and has since expanded to Vienna. The classic order is the "Leberkäsesemmel", a roll with a meat loaf and optional pickles. Expect queues at all hours of the day (and night).
- **Head to the Ars Electronica Festival.** At Linz' museum of the future, [Ars Electronica](#), you can learn all about AI, robots and even analyse your own DNA. The annual highlight is the [Ars Electronica Festival](#) at the shores of the Danube River with DJ sets, laser shows and much more.