

## Culture Meets Nature: Austrian City Trips with a Bonus

Museums, Imperial palaces, restaurants, rooftop bars – city breaks are full of adventures for culture and history buffs, no doubt. But what if you need a quick break from the buzz, the noise, and all the people around you, especially during peak travel season? If you travel to Austria, call yourself lucky. Here, holidaymakers don't have to choose between exciting city adventures and relaxing nature breaks – they can have both in one day.

Many of Austria's most popular city destinations double as nature escapes. Picture yourself wandering through an art exhibition in the morning, then enjoying lunch at an award-winning restaurant before spending your afternoon on a mountain bike or at a local countryside vineyard. In Austria's cities, sightseeing meets outdoor adventures – an intriguing combo for everyone wanting to max out their holidays.

### Innsbruck: Imperial sightseeing, summit hikes and mountain bike tours

Tirol's capital scores with its geographic location: Right amidst the Alps, visitors benefit from a unique urban-alpine mix, allowing them to sip their coffee at a trendy bar in the Old Town while enjoying gorgeous mountain views. Innsbruck's centre is perfectly walkable and filled with Imperial elegance, featuring Baroque and Gothic architecture as well as landmarks such as the [Golden Roof](#), the [Imperial Palace and Gardens](#), the [City Tower](#) (walk up 133 steps for stunning panoramas of the centre) and the [Court Church](#) with its 28 life-size bronze figures. Then, there's [Ambras Castle](#), overlooking the city and housing the first museum in the world, as well as the family-run [Grassmayer Bell Foundry](#), which has produced bells for almost 100 countries since 1599.

Straight from the Old Town, visitors can hop on a lift or cable car and get whisked up the [Nordkette range](#) in less than half an hour. Hafelekar peak (2,300 m) is considered the most spectacular viewpoint of the city, with the medieval streets to your feet and Karwendel nature park peeking just behind the centre. The Nordkette is also a great place for all kinds of outdoor activities, ranging from an [easy summit hike](#) to the family-friendly [Path of Perspectives](#) hiking trail and a challenging (but rewarding!) [mountain bike tour](#). Another highlight is the [Alpine Zoo](#), Europe's highest zoo, and home to eagles, bears, wolves, otters, and other local species.

### Graz: Modern art, Lipizzaner and a wine route at your doorstep

Austria's second largest town wows with its artsy vibe, foodie scene, and Mediterranean climate. If you're a first-timer, head straight to the [Schlossberg](#) mountain to get a first idea of

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the city: Climb up the 260 steps or take a short ride with the funicular or glass lift from the centre, then marvel at the Old Town from above, an UNESCO-awarded maze of intricate façades, and courtyards hidden away from the main streets. Afterwards, make your way back down and check out the [Clock Tower](#), another city landmark. The [Kunsthaus Graz](#) (Museum of Contemporary Art) is the place to be for arts and architecture fans. Floating like a mysterious balloon between the rooftops and named “alien” by its creators, it is spectacular inside and outside. To cap the day, enjoy dinner at one of the many restaurants and sip a cocktail at the futuristic [Murinsel \(Island in the Mur\)](#).

While Graz has plenty to offer as a city already, it's not all about the urban lifestyle. The [Schöckl](#), Graz' local mountain, is a popular recreational spot for hikers and mountain bikers that is quickly accessible from the centre by cable car (or on foot). Graz is also surrounded by vineyards, with the [South Styrian Wine Road](#) just a 30-minute drive away. Soak up the landscapes, a mix of forests, flowery meadows and, of course, wine-growing estates, then stop at one (or more!) of the wine taverns, called Buschenschanken, for a glass of local wine and traditional snacks. Horse fans will love the [Lipizzaner Stud Farm Piber](#), where the stars of Vienna's world-famous Spanish Riding School grow up.

### Salzburg: Mozart, the Trapp family and hiking trails for all ages

If you think of Salzburg, chances are, “[The Sound of Music](#)” and Mozart will instantly come to mind. The city is a Mekka for fans of the film, with “The Sound of Music” location tours, selfie spots and a puppet version of the film at the Marionette Theatre awaiting. Those more interested in classical music will surely enjoy wandering around [Mozart's birthplace](#) on famous [Getreidegasse](#) before listening to a concert or two. The [Mirabell Palace and Gardens](#), the [Dom Quartier](#) with all its galleries, [Hohensalzburg Fortress](#) and the [Museum of Modern Art](#) are hotspots heavily frequented by history geeks and those adoring all things art.

City breakers hoping to include a quick nature escape in their trip (that goes beyond Salzburg's many parks and gardens) are equally well catered for: Salzburg's local mountain, the [Untersberg](#), makes a great destination for a relaxed walk with postcard-perfect city views. It is also home to the [Salzburg Open Air Museum](#), featuring more than 100 rural buildings from the 16th to the 20th century. Nearby [Gaisberg](#) mountain is a favourite among the sporty crowd, with hiking and mountain biking trails and a paragliding club.