

Country Guide for
AUSTRIA



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|---------|----|------------------------|
| Section | 1 | Contact Addresses |
| | 2 | General |
| | 3 | Passport |
| | 4 | Money |
| | 5 | Duty Free |
| | 6 | Public Holidays |
| | 7 | Health |
| | 8 | Accommodation |
| | 9 | Resorts & Excursions |
| | 10 | Sport & Activities |
| | 11 | Social Profile |
| | 12 | Business Profile |
| | 13 | Climate |
| | 14 | History and Government |
| | 15 | Overview |

1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

Location: Western Europe.

Österreich Werbung
(Austrian National Tourist Office - ANTO)
Margaretenstrasse 1, 1040 Vienna, Austria
Tel: (1) 58866 or 587 2000. Fax: (1) 588 6620.
E-mail: oeinfo@oewwien.via.at
Web site: <http://www.austria-tourism.at/>

Austrian Embassy
18 Belgrave Mews West, London SW1X 8HU
Tel: (020) 7235 3731. Fax: (020) 7344 0292.
E-mail: embassy@austria.org.uk
Web site: <http://www.austria.org.uk>
Opening hours: Monday to Friday 0900-1200 (personal callers), 0900-1645 (telephone enquiries) and 0900-1200 (visa section).

Austrian National Tourist Office
(ANTO)
PO Box 2363, London W1A 2QB
Tel: (020) 7629 0461. Fax: (020) 7499 6038.
E-mail: info@anto.co.uk
Web site: <http://www.austria-tourism.at>
Enquiries by mail, telephone, fax or e-mail only.

British Embassy
Jaurèsgasse 12, 1030 Vienna, Austria
Tel: (1) 716 130. Fax: (1) 7161 36900 (commercial section). Web site:
<http://www.britishembassy.at>
Consular section: Jaurèsgasse 10, 1030 Vienna, Austria
Tel: (1) 7161 35151. Fax: (1) 7161 35900.

Embassy of the Republic of Austria
3524 International Court, NW, Washington, DC 20008
Tel: (202) 895 6700 or 895 6767 (consular section). Fax: (202) 895 6750 or 895 6773 (consular section). E-mail: obwascon@sysnet.net
Web site: <http://www.austria.org/>
Consulates General in: Chicago, Los Angeles and New York (tel: (212) 737 6400).

Austrian National Tourist Office (ANTO)
500 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800, New York, NY 10110
Tel: (212) 944 6880. Fax: (212) 730 4568. E-mail: info@oewnyc.com
Web site: <http://www.anto.com>

Austrian National Tourist Office (ANTO)
11601 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 2480, Los Angeles, CA 90025
Tel: (310) 477 2038. Fax: (310) 477 5141. E-mail: antolax@ix.netcom.com
Deals with travel trade and media enquiries only.

Embassy of the United States of America
Boltzmanngasse 16, 1090 Vienna, Austria
Tel: (1) 31339. Fax: (1) 310 0682. E-mail: usis@usia.co.at
Web site: <http://www.usembassy-vienna.at>

US Consulate
4th Floor, Gartenbaupromenade 2, 1010 Vienna, Austria
Tel: (1) 31339. Fax: (1) 513 4351.

Austrian Embassy
445 Wilbrod Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6M7
Tel: (613) 789 1444. Fax: (613) 789 3431. E-mail: embassy@austro.org
Web site: <http://www.austro.org>

Austrian National Tourist Office (ANTO)
Suite 3330, 2 Bloor Street East, Toronto, Ontario M4W 1A8
Tel: (416) 967 3381 or 967 4867. Fax: (416) 967 4101. E-mail: anto-tor@sympatico.ca
Web site: <http://www.experienceaustria.com>

Canadian Embassy
Laurenzerberg 2, 1010 Vienna, Austria
Tel: (1) 531 380. Fax: (1) 5313 83321 or 5313 83911 (visa section). E-mail: vienn@dfait-maeci.gc.ca
Web site: <http://www.kanada.at>

Country dialling code: 43.

2 GENERAL

Area: 83,858 sq km (32,378 sq miles).

Population: 8,078,449 (1998).

Population Density: 96.2 per sq km.

Capital: Vienna (Wien). Population: 1,606,843 (1998).

Geography: Austria is a landlocked country, bordered by Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Germany, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and Italy. It is a mountainous country, nearly half of which is covered with forests. Austria's nine Federal Provinces form a political entity, but reflect a diversity of landscapes falling into five sections: the Eastern Alps (62.8%), the Alpine and Carpathian Foothills (11.3%), the Pannonian Lowlands (11.3%), the Vienna Basin (4.4%) and the Granite and Gneiss Highlands or Bohemian Massif (10.1%). Austria's highest mountain is Grossglockner (3798m/12,465ft). On its way from the Black Forest in southern Germany to the Black Sea, the River Danube flows approximately 360km (220 miles) through Austria. The vegetation changes according to the climate: the lower regions are densely wooded, with fir predominating above 1600ft and giving way to larch and stone-pine beyond 4000ft; the Alpine foothills consist predominantly of arable land and grassland (above 2000ft). The Pannonian region is characterised by scrub and heathland.

Government: Federal Republic. Head of State: President Thomas Klestil since 1992. Head of Government: Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel since 2000.

Language: German is the official language. Regional dialects are pronounced and within the different regions of the country one will encounter marked variations from Hochdeutsch, ie 'standard' German. There are Croatian and Slovene-speaking minorities in the Burgenland and southern Carinthia respectively.

Religion: 78% Roman Catholic, 5% Protestant, 4.5% other denominations.

Time: GMT + 1 (GMT + 2 from last Sunday in March to Saturday before last Sunday in October).

Electricity: 220 volts AC, 50Hz. Round 2-pin European plugs are standard.

Communications:

Telephone: Full IDD facilities available. Country code: 43. Outgoing international code: 00. Call boxes are grey and found in all areas. International calls can be made from payphones with four coin slots. Trunk calls within Austria and to 40 countries are cheaper 2000-0800 Monday to Friday and approximately 35% cheaper at the weekend (from 2000 Friday to 0800 Monday).

Mobile telephone: Single and dual band. Roaming agreements in operation.

Internet/E-mail: There are many cybercafés. ISPs include Nextra (web site: <http://www.nextra.at>).

Telegram: Facilities are available from any post office.

Post: Letters up to 20g and postcards within Europe are sent by airmail. Letters within Europe take two to four days, and to the USA four to six days. Stamps may be purchased in post offices or tobacco shops. Postcards and letters within Austria and Europe cost EUR1. Post boxes are yellow or orange. A Poste Restante service is available at most post offices. Address mail to 'Postlagernd' ('Hauptpostlagernd' if a main post office), followed by the person's name, town, and post code. Post office hours: generally 0800-1200 and 1400-1700/1800 Monday to Friday, but main post offices and those at major railway stations are open for 24 hours, seven days a week, including public holidays.

Press: Newspapers are in German. The Wiener Zeitung, established in 1703, is the oldest newspaper in the world. The national daily with the largest circulation is the Neue Kronen-Zeitung, followed by Kurier and Der Standard. English-language newspapers and magazines are also widely available, particularly in the big cities and tourist resorts.

BBC World Service and Voice of America frequencies: From time to time these change.

BBC:

MHz15.5712.109.4106.195

Voice of America:

MHz15.489.7007.1701.197

3 PASSPORT

| | <i>Passport Required?</i> | <i>Visa Required?</i> | <i>Return Ticket Required?</i> |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| British | Yes | 2 | No |
| Australian | Yes | 3 | Yes |
| Canadian | Yes | 3 | Yes |
| USA | Yes | 3 | Yes |
| OtherEU | 1 | 2 | No |
| Japanese | Yes | 4 | No |

Note: Austria is a signatory to the 1995 Schengen Agreement. For further details about passport/visa regulations within the Schengen area see the introductory section How to Use this Guide.

PASSPORTS: Valid passport required by all except 1. nationals of EU countries, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco, San Marino and Switzerland who may enter with a valid national ID card.

VISAS: Required by all except the following:

- (a) 2. nationals of EU countries and nationals of Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland and Switzerland for an unlimited period;
- (b) 3. nationals of Australia, Canada and the USA for stays of up to 3 months;
- (c) 4. nationals of Japan for a period of up to 6 months;
- (d) nationals of Andorra, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guatemala, Israel, Jamaica, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, San Marino, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Uruguay and Venezuela for stays of up to 3 months;
- (e) nationals of Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Estonia, Hungary and Korea (Rep. of), Latvia and Lithuania for stays of up to 90 days;
- (f) nationals of Czech Republic for stays of up to 30 days;
- (g) transit passengers continuing their journey by the same or first connecting aircraft provided holding valid onward or return documentation and not leaving the airport.

Note: Some nationals passing through Austria always require a transit visa, even when not leaving the airport. Transit passengers are advised to check transit regulations with the relevant Embassy or Consulate before travelling.

Types of visa and cost: A uniform type of visa, the Schengen visa, is issued for tourist, business and private visits. Short-stay: £14.75 for 1-30 days and £17.70 for 31-90 days (single-entry); £20.65 (double- or multiple- entry); Transit: £2.95 (single- and multiple-entry); Airport Transit: £2.95.

Note: (a) Prices change with the prevalent exchange rate, so visitors are advised to check the exact price before applying. (b) Spouses and children of EU nationals (providing spouse's passport and the original marriage certificate are produced), and nationals of some other countries, receive their visas free of charge (enquire at Embassy for details).

Validity: Validity according to documents presented. Visas cannot be extended; a new application must be made each time.

Application to: Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy); see address section. Travellers visiting just one Schengen country should apply to the Consulate of that country; travellers visiting more than one Schengen country should apply to the Consulate of the country chosen as the main destination or the country they will enter first (if they have no main destination).

Application requirements: (a) Completed application form(s). (b) Passport valid for at least 3 months beyond the validity of the visa. (c) Fee (cash or postal order only); cheques, except certified bankers drafts, are not accepted. (d) 2 passport photographs. (e) For transit passengers, the visa from the destination country must be obtained first. (f) Proof of intention to return to home country. (Applicants may submit return ticket or vehicle papers if returning by car.) (g) Proof of occupation/student status. (h) *Proof of sufficient financial means to fund stay in Austria. Applicants may submit travellers cheques, a confirmed hotel booking, bank statements or records from a similar financial institution. (i) *An all-risk medical insurance policy covering duration of visa. (j) Postal applicants should enclose a self-addressed, prepaid envelope (registered or recorded delivery) for the return of the passport.

Note*: The requirements (h) and (i) do not apply to those visiting Austria on business, to attend a conference, or for a sporting or cultural event, providing they are able to present either: (a) An invitation from an Austrian institution or Austrian-based company declaring a willingness to guarantee to cover all financial costs of the applicant whilst in Austria. (b) A letter from the applicant's UK-based employer, company or organisation, guaranteeing to cover all the applicant's financial costs whilst they are in Austria.

Working days required: Visa applications are usually dealt with within 2 working days. The processing of certain applications (including postal) may take up to 4 weeks. A self-addressed envelope (preferably registered or recorded delivery) is required for postal applications.

Temporary residence: Seek advice from the Austrian Embassy.

4 MONEY

Single European currency (Euro): The Euro is now the official currency of 12 EU member states (including Austria), although it is currently only used as 'written money' (cheques, bank transactions, credit cards, etc). The first Euro coins and notes are introduced in January 2002; the Austrian Schilling will still be in circulation until July 1 2002, when it will be completely replaced by the Euro. 1 Euro = ASch13.7603.

Currency exchange: Foreign currencies and travellers cheques are exchanged at all banks, savings banks and exchange counters at airports and railway stations at the official exchange rates.

Credit cards: Most major credit cards and Eurocheque cards are accepted in large cities and tourist areas. However, credit cards are less widely accepted in Austria than they are in the USA or the UK and some smaller hotels may require bills to be paid in cash.

Travellers cheques: These are widely accepted. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take travellers cheques in Pounds Sterling.

Currency restrictions: No restrictions except for export of more than EURO100,000 in Austrian currency, for which a permit is required.

Banking hours: Banks in Vienna are open 0800-1230 and 1330-1500 Monday-Wednesday and Friday and 0800-1230 and 1330-1730 Thursday (head offices do not close for lunch). Different opening hours may be kept in the various Federal Provinces. The exchange counters at airports and at railway stations are generally open from the first to the last flight or train, which usually means 0800-2200 including weekends.

5 DUTY FREE

The following goods can be taken into Austria without incurring customs duty by travellers over 17 years arriving from countries outside the EU:

200 cigarettes or 100 cigarillos or 50 cigars or 250g tobacco; 2 litres of wine or fortified wine or spirits up to 22%; 1 litre of spirits; 1 bottle of eau de cologne (up to 250ml); 60ml of perfume; other goods of up to EUR400 (EUR100 for nationals of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and the Slovak Republic).

Abolition of Duty-free Goods within the EU: On June 30 1999, the sale of duty-free alcohol and tobacco at airports and at sea was abolished in all 15 EU member states. Although there are now no limits imposed on importing tobacco and alcohol products from one EU country to another, (with the exceptions of Denmark, Finland and Sweden, where limits are imposed), travellers should note that they may be required to prove at customs that the goods purchased are for personal use only.

6 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Jan 1 2001 New Year's Day. Jan 6 Epiphany. Apr 16 Easter Monday. May 1 Labour Day. May 24 Ascension Day. Jun 4 Whit Monday. Jun 14 Corpus Christi. Aug 15 Assumption. Oct 26 National Holiday. Nov 1 All Saints' Day. Dec 8 Immaculate Conception. Dec 25 Christmas Day. Dec 26 St Stephen's Day. Jan 1 2002 New Year's Day. Jan 6 Epiphany. Apr 1 Easter Monday. May 1 Labour Day. May 9 Ascension Day. May 20 Whit Monday. May 30 Corpus Christi. Aug 15 Assumption. Oct 26 National Holiday. Nov 1 All Saints' Day. Dec 8 Immaculate Conception. Dec 25 Christmas Day. Dec 26 St Stephen's Day.

7 HEALTH

| | <i>Special Precautions</i> | <i>Certificate Required</i> |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Yellow Fever | No | No |
| Cholera | No | No |
| Typhoid and Polio | No | - |
| Malaria | No | - |
| Food and Drink | 1 | - |

1: Milk is pasteurised and dairy products are safe for consumption. Local meat, poultry, seafood, fruit and vegetables are generally considered safe to eat.

Rabies is present in Austria, although there have been no incidents reported in recent years. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If you are bitten seek medical advice without delay. For more information consult the Health appendix.

Ticks often live in heavily afforested areas during the summer months in some of the more easterly parts of Austria and can create discomfort and, in very rare cases, serious infection to people who are bitten. Immunisation against tick-borne encephalitis is available and travellers likely to find themselves in these wooded areas should take a course of injections. The immunisation consists either of three different shots, which should be injected one year before leaving their country of origin, or of an injection after a tick bite, which is available from every doctor in Austria. For more information contact Baxter Healthcare Limited, Wallingford Road, **Compton, nr Newbury, Berks RG20 7QW (tel: (01635) 206 046; fax: (01635) 206 126).**

Health care: For UK nationals on a temporary visit to Austria, an E111 is not required - production of a British passport is sufficient to obtain medical treatment. For other EEA nationals (including Austrians), resident in the UK, an E111 is required. Visitors who are treated privately may receive a refund for part of the costs, up to the amount that would have been payable for public hospital treatment. Such refunds are available from Regional Health Insurance Offices (Gebietskrankenkassen) which also provide addresses of medical and dental practitioners. Referral to a public hospital will require an admission voucher issued by a doctor. In an emergency, UK nationals should show their passport to the hospital administration which will ascertain from the insurance office whether the costs of treatment will be met. The following emergency numbers are used: Police: 133; Ambulance: 144; Fire: 122.

| Special Precautions | Certificate Required |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Yellow Fever | |
| Cholera | |
| Typhoid and Polio | |
| Malaria | |
| Food and Drink | |

Travel - International

AIR: Austria has three national airlines, Austrian Airlines (OS), Lauda Air (NG) and Tyrolean Airways (VO).

Approximate flight times: From Innsbruck to London to is 2 hours and from Salzburg is 1 hour 50 minutes. From Vienna to London is 2 hours 10 minutes, to Los Angeles is 15 hours, to New York is 9 hours, to Singapore is 14 hours and to Sydney is 25 hours.

International airports: Vienna (VIE) (Wien-Schwechat) (web site: <http://www.viennaairport.com>) is 18km (11 miles) east of the city. Airport facilities include duty-free shops (0900-1900), banks (0800-1230 and 1330-1500), bureaux de change (0800-2300), post office (0730-2000), 5 restaurants (including 24-hour, self-service restaurant), 5 cafés (1 open 0600-2200 and the other 0900-1900), left luggage (24-hours), conference facilities (0700-2230), medical facilities, car hire, car park and nursery. Airport buses run between the airport and the city centre (Hotel Hilton) every 30 minutes 24 hours a day (travel time - 20 minutes); and between the airport and two stations (Vienna Westbahnhof and Vienna Südbahnhof) every hour (0530-2310) (travel time - 35 minutes). Rail service is available at frequent intervals (from 0500-2258) to and from Vienna Mitte (Central Station) and Vienna Nordbahnhof (travel time - 40 minutes). Local rail (S-Bahn) services also run to the Vienna railway stations of Südbahnhof

(travel time - 20 minutes) and Nordbahnhof (travel time - 35 minutes). Taxis are available to the city and can be found north of the Arrivals Hall, costing approximately EUR50. A chauffeur-driven car service is also available from the Arrivals Hall.

Buses also run to Budapest four times a day (travel time - 3 hours 30 minutes); to Bratislava (Slovak Republic) about 10 times a day (travel time - 1 hour 10 minutes); and to Košice (Slovak Republic) once a day on Monday and Friday (travel time - 9 hours 50 minutes).

Innsbruck (INN) (Kranebitten) is 5.5km (3.5 miles) from the city. Airport facilities include duty-free shop (0530-1830), currency exchange, restaurant (1000-2200), medical facilities and car hire. Bus services are available every 20-30 minutes to the city centre (travel time - 20 minutes). Taxi services are also available.

Salzburg (SZG) (Maxglan) is 4km (2.5 miles) west of the city. Airport facilities include duty-free shopping (0600-2200), currency exchange (0600-1800), post office (0900-1200 and 1400-1800), two restaurants and three snack bars (0800-2100), bar, left luggage, conference rooms (within the Airst Restaurant, 0700-2300) and car hire. Bus no. 77 departs to the city centre every 15 minutes on weekdays and every 30 minutes at the weekend (travel time - 20 minutes). Taxis are available from the front of the main building for approximately EUR10 (travel time - 15 minutes). Some hotels have courtesy coaches.

Klagenfurt (KLU) (Wörther See) is 4km (2.5 miles) from the city. Bus and taxi services are available.

Note: Airports have fixed charges for portering.

RAIL: Österreichische Bundesbahnen (ÖBB) (Austrian Federal Railways) operates a wide network of trains throughout and beyond Austria. International connections from Vienna include trains to Germany (Berlin), to the Russian Federation (Moscow, via Warsaw/Kiev and Minsk), to Romania (Bucharest, via Budapest), to Greece (Athens) or Turkey (Istanbul, via Belgrade) and to Italy (Venice, Milan or Rome). Austria is included in the Eurailpass and Eurail Youthpass schemes. Inter-Rail passes, which allow unlimited rail travel throughout Europe, are valid in Austria. The most common routes are from Calais to Innsbruck (Arlberg Express), from Ostend to Salzburg (no direct service in winter on this route) and from Ostend to Vienna (Austria Nachtexpress). For further details contact Österreichische Bundesbahnen, Elisabethstraße 9, 1010 Wien (tel: (1) 58000; web site: <http://www.oebb.at>).

The channel tunnel: The quickest route by train from the UK is through the channel tunnel with connections from Brussels or Paris to Austria. Eurostar operates direct high-speed trains through the channel tunnel from London (Waterloo International) to Paris (Gare du Nord) and to Brussels (Midi/Zuid). From London to Paris, the journey time is 3 hours; from London to Brussels the journey time is 2 hours 40 minutes. From Brussels there is a night train to Vienna leaving at 1910 and taking approximately 14 hours; from Paris (Gare de l'Est) there are two trains to Vienna, one at 0749 and another at 1749, taking approximately 15 hours. For further information, contact Eurostar Enquiries (tel: (0990) 186 186) or Rail Europe (tel: (0990) 848 848).

ROAD: There are numerous and excellent road links with all neighbouring countries. For information on traffic regulations and required documentation, see the Travel Internal section. Coach: Coaches run regularly to a large number of European destinations. Some tour operators offer package holidays to Austria by coach from the UK. A full list is available from the Austrian National Tourist Office (see address section).

The channel tunnel: Le Shuttle operates trains 24 hours per day through the channel tunnel between Folkestone in Kent (with direct access from the M20) and Calais in France. All vehicles from motorcycles to campers can be accommodated. Shuttles run every 75 minutes with three to four trains per hour at peak times. The journey takes approximately 35 minutes. For further

information contact Eurotunnel Customer Services (tel: (0990) 353 535). Car ferry: There are regular ferry services across the English Channel. The quickest and most practical route from London to Vienna is via the Dover-Ostend ferry (crossing time - 3 hours 30 minutes). The distance by road is approximately 1600km (1000 miles). It is one day's drive in summer, but can take longer in winter. Munich is four to five hours from Vienna; Milan and Zurich are a good day's drive.

RIVER: DDSG-Blue Danube Schiffahrt operates a passenger service on the Danube from Germany (Passau) to Vienna. For information and reservations, contact them at Friedrichstrasse 7, 1010 Vienna (tel: (1) 588 800; fax: (1) 5888 440; e-mail: info@ddsg-blue-danube.at; web site: <http://www.ddsg-blue-danube.at>). The German operator Wurm und Köck offers both passenger services and cruises to Linz. Overnight cruise packages from Passau to Linz include hotel accommodation for only slightly more than the regular one-way passenger fare. Evening and music cruises are available in the summer. For further information, contact Wurm und Köck, Untere Donaulände, 4020 Linz (tel: (732) 783 607 or 771 090; fax: (732) 771 0909; e-mail: wurm-köck@t-online.de). DDSG-Blue Danube Schiffahrt also operates a hydrofoil service from the Praterlande hydrofoil dock in Vienna to Hungary (Budapest) (travel time - 6 hours). Ardagger operates services between Linz and Germany (Krems) (tel: (7479) 64640; fax: (7479) 646 510). Brandner concentrates its services between Melk and Krems. For further information, contact Brandner at Ufer 50, 3313 Wallsee (tel: (7433) 25900; fax: (7433) 259 025; e-mail: schiffahrt@brandner.at; web site: <http://www.ms-austria.at>).

A regular hydrofoil service also runs three times daily during the summer months from Vienna to the Slovak Republic (Bratislava) (travel time - 1.5 hours). International rail tickets are valid on Danube river boats. More information on the above services, and connections to Yugoslavia (Belgrade), Turkey (Istanbul) and Ukraine (Yalta), can be obtained from the ANTO (see address section).

Travel - Internal

AIR: Vienna is connected to Graz, Klagenfurt, Linz and Salzburg by Austrian Airlines. Tyrolean Airways (VO) runs services from Vienna to Innsbruck. Rheintalfung (WE) also operates internal services. Charter: A number of companies offer chartering services for single- and twin-engined aircraft and executive jets.

RIVER/LAKE: A number of operators run cruises along the Danube, and from Switzerland (Bregenz) across Lake Constance. On some cruises a passport is needed; they last from one to eight days depending on the itinerary. These services run between spring and autumn. Ferries: There are regular passenger boat services from mid-May to mid-September along the Danube and on Austria's lakes. The Danube steamer services are run by DDSG Blue Danube Schiffahrt (tel: (1) 588 800) and private companies.

RAIL: Österreichische Bundesbahnen (ÖBB) (Austrian Federal Railways) runs an efficient internal service throughout Austria. There is a frequent intercity service from Vienna to Salzburg, Innsbruck, Graz and Klagenfurt, and regular motorrail services through the Tauern Tunnel. Information and booking can be obtained from railway stations or Austrian Federal Railways (see Travel - International for contact details). Local information can be obtained on (1) 1717. For bookings from the UK, contact Deutsche Bahn (German Rail) (tel: (020) 7317 0919); or Rail Europe (tel: (0990) 848 848). The most scenic routes are Innsbruck-Brenner, Innsbruck-Buchs, Innsbruck-Bruck an der Mur-Vienna, Innsbruck-Feldkirch-Innsbruck, Innsbruck- Garmisch-Zugspitze, Innsbruck-Salzburg-Innsbruck, Linz-Selzthal-Amstetten-Linz, Salzburg-Zell am See-Innsbruck, Salzburg- Gmunden-Stainach-Salzburg, Salzburg-Vienna, Salzburg-Villach- Salzburg, Vienna-Puchberg am Schneeberg- Hochschneeberg-Vienna, Vienna-Bruck an der Mur-Innsbruck, Vienna-Klagenfurt-Udine-Trieste. Railways have fixed charges for portering. Tickets can be

obtained from any station ticket office (Reisebüro am Bahnhof) or from most Austrian travel agents. For further information consult the Tourist Office. Discount fares: Throughout Austria, up to two children under six years who are accompanied or require no seat travel free and a third child qualifies for a 50% discount. Children aged 6-15 pay half fare. Senior citizens (women 60 and over and men 65 and over) may buy train and bus tickets at half price after purchasing an ID card for approximately EUR40. This ID card can be purchased at all Austrian railway stations. Austria offers a number of discount rail passes including the Vorteils card which costs approximately EUR90 and the Euro Domino and Euro Domino Junior, both valid for 3-8 days. The Austrian Rail Pass is available to foreigners. Reductions are also available for groups of more than six people. For more information, contact the Austrian Railways Head Office or enquire locally.

ROAD: Austria has an excellent network of roads. Traffic drives on the right. Free help is readily given by the Austrian Motoring Association (ÖAMTC) - for emergency breakdowns, dial 120. Tolls must be paid on all Austrian motorways. Tourists can purchase either 10-day or 2-monthly discs which are available at all major border crossings and at post offices. The weekly disc is valid for up to 10 days and costs EUR10 for cars up to 3.5 tons. The 2-monthly disc, valid for 2 consecutive calendar months costs EUR10 for cars below 3.5 tons. Heavy vehicles pay higher tariffs and motor cycles pay less. Seat belts must be worn and children under the age of 12 may not sit in the front seat unless a special child's seat has been fitted. Both driver and passenger on a motorcycle must wear helmets, and the vehicle must have lights on at all times. Speed limits are 50kph (31mph) in built-up areas (the speed limit in Graz is 30kph), 100kph (62mph) outside built-up areas and 130kph (81mph) on motorways. Bus and coach services are run by federal and local authorities, as well as private companies. There are over 1800 services in operation. Some 70 international coach services travel to or through Austria and 22 routes with timetables and prices can be found in the Austrian bus guide which can be consulted via the Austrian National Tourist Office. For a copy of the annually produced bus schedule contact Tollar (tel: (2236) 865 252; fax: (2236) 43154). Coach excursions and sightseeing tours run from most major cities. Car hire: There are car hire firms with offices in most cities, as well as at airports and major railway stations. Documentation: National driving licences issued by EU countries, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein are accepted, and enable holders to drive in Austria for up to one year. The minimum legal age for driving is 18. Car registration papers issued in the UK are also valid in Austria. A Green Card is compulsory.

URBAN: Vienna has an extensive system of metro, bus, light rail and tramway services. Most routes have a flat fare, and there are pre-purchase multi-journey tickets and passes. The Vienna Card costs EUR10 and entitles visitors to 72 hours of unlimited travel by underground, bus and tram. It also qualifies the holder to reductions at several museums and other tourist attractions in the city as well as shops, cafés and wine taverns. The card can be purchased at hotels or at Vienna Transport's ticket offices. Those trams marked schaffnerlos on the outside of the carriage do not have conductors, but tickets can be bought from machines on board. Tickets are available from newspaper shops or tobacconists called Trafik. The classic way to travel round the capital is by horse-drawn carriage (Fiaker); fares should be agreed in advance. There are bus systems in all the other main towns, and also tramways in Linz, Innsbruck and Graz, and trolleybuses in Linz, Innsbruck and Salzburg.

JOURNEY TIMES: The following chart gives approximate journey times (in hours and minutes) from Vienna to other major cities/towns in Austria.

AirRoadRail
Salzburg0.453.003.18
Linz0.452.001.54
Innsbruck1.105.005.20
Bregenz-7.007.58

Klagenfurt 0.504.004.25
Graz 0.402.402.45

8 ACCOMMODATION

It is advisable to make enquiries and reservations well in advance (especially for July, August, Christmas and Easter). Room reservations are binding for the hotel-keeper and for the guest or travel agency. Compensation may be claimed if reserved rooms are not occupied. Hotels, pensions and other forms of tourist accommodation are classified by the Federal Chamber of Commerce and Industry. See the Grading section below for details. For further information **contact the Austrian Hotel Association, Hofburg, Michaelertrakt, 1010 Vienna (tel: (1) 533 0952; fax: (1) 533 7071; e-mail: info@oehv.at; web site: <http://www.oehv.at>).**

HOTELS: 87% of 5-star hotels and 50% of 4-star hotels in Austria belong to the Austrian Hotel Association.

Grading: Classifications are according to the guidelines established by the International Hotel Association and relate to the facilities provided; 5-star for deluxe, 4-star for first class, 3-star for standard, 2-star for economy and 1-star for budget. The facilities offered are as follows:

5-star hotels: Private bathrooms with shower or bath, hand basin and WC with all bedrooms. Telephone, alarm bell, colour TV in all bedrooms. Room service, day and night reception and foreign languages spoken. Restaurant, bars, lifts and garage space (in the cities) in all hotels.

4-star hotels: Bedrooms with bath or shower, hand basin and WC. There is a telephone and alarm bell in all rooms, and TV in 50% of them. Room service and day and night reception, dining rooms, foreign languages spoken, lifts in all hotels.

3-star hotels: All new bedrooms and at least 70% of older bedrooms with bath or shower, handbasin and WC. Foreign languages spoken at reception. Lifts and dining room.

2-star hotels: 20% of bedrooms should have a bath or shower and WC. 30% should have at least a bath or shower. Toilet facilities may be shared. The dining room may serve as another public room. Some with reception and foreign language capability.

1-star hotels: All rooms have hand basins. Toilet facilities and showers may be shared. The dining room may double as a general public room.

Note: Some hotels may still be under the old grades of A, B, C, etc. Full information and hotel list is available from the Austrian National Tourist Office.

SELF-CATERING: Holiday apartments and chalets are available for rent throughout Austria. For full details contact your local travel agent or the following individual agencies:

Vienna: Ruefa Reisen GmbH, Mariahilfe Straße 120, 1070 Vienna (tel: (1) 52 5550; fax: (1) 5255 5224; e-mail: service@ruefa.at; web site: <http://www.ruefa.at>).

Burgenland: Blaguss Reisen GmbH, Untere Hauptstrasse 12, 7100 Neusiedl am See (tel: (2167) 8141; fax: (2167) 8872; e-mail: neusiedl@blaguss.at; web site: <http://www.blaguss.at>).

Carinthia: Kärntner Reisebüro, Neuer Platz 2, 9020 Klagenfurt (tel: (463) 56400; fax: (463) 564 0076; e-mail: travel@krb.at; web site: <http://www.krb.at>).

Lower Austria: Niederösterreichisches Landesbüro, Heidenschuss 2, 1010 Vienna (tel: (1) 534 020; fax: (1) 535 0319; e-mail: info@noltours.at).

Salzburg: Dr Degener GmbH, Ferdinand Hanus Platz 1, 5020 Salzburg (tel: (662) 80410; fax: (662) 804 150).

Styria: Steirisches Landesreisebüro, Hauptplatz 14, 8010 Graz (tel: (316) 826 456; fax: (316) 817 261; web site: <http://www.verkehrsbuero.at>).

Tirol: Tiroler Landesreisebüro, Tiroler Verkehrsbüro Gsmbh, Boznerplatz 7, 6020 Innsbruck (tel: (512) 598 850; fax: (512) 575 407; e-mail: reisebuero@tlr.at; web site: <http://www.tlr.at>).

Upper Austria: Oberösterreich Touristik, Khevenhüller Strasse 14, 4020 Linz (tel: 663 0240; fax: 663 025; e-mail: info@touristik.at; web site: <http://www.touristik.at>);

Vorarlberg: Peter Godula, rental of holiday apartments and chalets all over Austria. Pego, Sägeweg 1, 6700 Bludenz (tel: (5552) 65666; fax: (5552) 63801; e-mail: pego@ferienhaus.vol.at).

FARM HOLIDAYS: There are approximately 29,000 farmhouses with a total of 300,000 beds providing accommodation. Lists of farmhouses taking paying guests for most provinces in Austria are available at the Austrian National Tourist Office. Listings include farms as well as pensions and inns with an attached farming operation.

CAMPING/CARAVANNING: There are approximately 500 camp sites in Austria, all of which can be entered without any major formalities; approximately 160 sites are equipped for winter camping. Reductions for children are available, and for members of FICC, AIT and FIA. It is advisable to take along the camping carnet. Fees are charged on the usual international scale for parking caravans, motorbikes and cars. The parking of caravans without traction vehicle on or beside the public highways (including motorway parking areas) is prohibited. One can park caravans with traction vehicle beside public highways, if the parking regulations are observed. Some mountain roads are closed for caravans. For detailed information, contact the automobile clubs or Austrian National Tourist Office (see address section). The address of the Camping & Caravanning Club is Schuberting 1-3, 1010 Vienna (tel: (1) 713 6151; fax: (1) 711 993743; e-mail: campinggroup@oemtt.at).

Note: When camping in private grounds, permission from the landowner, police and municipal council is needed.

YOUTH HOSTELS: Youth hostels can be found throughout Austria and are at the disposal of anyone carrying a membership card of the International Youth Hostel Association. It is advisable to book in advance, especially during peak periods. For more details contact the Österreichische Jugendherbergsverband, Schottenring 28, 1010 Vienna (tel: (1) 533 5353; fax: (1) 535 0861; e-mail: oejhv-zentrale@oejhv.or.at; web site: <http://www.oejhv.or.at>).

DISABLED TRAVELLERS: There are hotels with special facilities for disabled persons in towns all over Austria. Hotel guides for disabled travellers (including a special guide for Vienna) are available from ANTO.

9 RESORTS & EXCURSIONS

Austria is not only famous for the world's premier skiing regions, but also for breathtaking scenery, magnificent mountains and established hiking trails. The western Federal Provinces Vorarlberg, Tirol and Salzburg Province are the most popular tourist regions, though the southern province of Carinthia (bordering Italy and Slovenia) is now taking a larger share of the trade owing to its mild climate and attractive lakes.

Austria lends itself to walking and climbing as well as skiing, with an extensive network of hiking and mountain routes carefully signposted and cross-referenced to detailed maps. Alpine huts between 915m and 2744m, with resident wardens in the summer, are for hire. Further information can be obtained from the Austrian Alpine Club (Österreichischer Alpenverein), **Wilhelm-Greil-Strasse 15, 6010 Innsbruck (tel: (512) 595 470; fax: (512) 575 528)**. Skiing facilities can be found in over 600 winter sport resorts between Brand in the west and Semmering in the east. Skiing enthusiasts of all ages and levels have a choice of more than 400 schools and top ski-instructors.

Vienna

The Austrian capital and one of the federal provinces is an important nexus for East-West trade and a frequent host to major congresses either in the Vienna International Centre (UNO City) or at the Austria Centre Vienna. Vienna is situated in the northeast of the country with the Danube running through the northern suburbs of the city. The Ringstrasse forms the boundary of the Inner City or Innenstadt, with its fine architecture, shops and hotels. An atmosphere of elegance and bygone style prevails in this area, which should be experienced on foot. Art Nouveau buildings, such as the Majolikahaus, line the streets of some suburbs, as Vienna was the birthplace of this then controversial style. The Austrian National Library at the Josefsplatz is regarded as an outstanding example of Baroque architecture. The Schloss Schönbrunn, home to the oldest zoo in the world, with its landscaped park, can be compared with the sumptuous palace at Versailles. Many fine art collections like those of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, containing the works of Breughel, Dürer and Titian and the Akademie der bildenden Künste (Hieronymus Bosch) are internationally renowned. Opulent balls run from New Year's Eve to Shrove Tuesday, the most famous being the Opernball. Spring sees the Festival of Vienna with concerts, operas and theatre performances. The Wiener Staatsoper itself offers a well-selected programme between September and June. Guided tours of the opera and the stage are held regularly during July and August, and at other times when the performance schedule permits it. Right behind the opera is the Hotel Sacher, famous the world over for its chocaholic's dream Sachertorte and other Viennese specialities. There are more than 50 museums open to the public, grand palaces, shops, antique markets, international choirs and orchestras, as well as fine restaurants and cosy coffee-houses, which are very much part of Austrian culture. The Habsburgs who ruled the country for six centuries resided in the Hofburg which has the Kaiser-Appartements and the Crown Jewels. Essential for any tourist is a visit to the Spanish Riding School in the Hofburg, where the famous white Lipizzaner stallions perform finely executed dressage manoeuvres to the music of Mozart and the Strauss family (closed during July and August). Immortalised in *The Third Man*, the Ferris Wheel is also a popular attraction. Vienna was the centre of the cultural Renaissance during the 18th and 19th centuries, and home not only to Mozart and to Strauss but also to Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Bruckner, Brahms and Mahler.

Excursions/sightseeing: Excursions/sightseeing: Vienna is ideal for art and music enthusiasts. The Vienna Boys' Choir and the Vienna Philharmonic are internationally renowned. Well worth a visit are the art collection at the Belvedere, the Chapel of the Hofburg, the Burgtheater (known as Die Burg), the Parliament, the Old Town Hall, the University and the Votive church along the Ringstrasse; as well as St Stephen's Cathedral and the churches of St

Charles and St Rupert. Not to be missed are the Augustinian Friars and the Capuchin church with the Imperial Crypt of the Habsburg family. Vienna has an abundance of museums including the Natural History Museum, the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts, the Museum of the 20th Century, the Museum of Modern Art, the Künstlerhaus, the Clock and Watch Museum and the Technology Museum. There are also memorial sites for Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Strauss and Freud.

Burgenland

Austria's youngest Federal Province in the easternmost part of the country is a popular tourist destination. The wooded hills in the south of the region form the foothills of the Alps. The northeast largely consists of expanses of the Central European Plain. The mild climate is especially well suited for the cultivation of wine.

Resorts: Resorts: Eisenstadt, Mengersdorf, Mörbisch, Neusiedl am See, Podersdorf, Raasdorf, Rust, St Margarethen, Bad Tatzmannsdorf and Illmitz.

Excursions/sightseeing: Excursions/sightseeing: The Esterhazy Palace, the Cathedral and the Haydengasse, as well as the Bergkirche and the Franciscan church are well worth a visit in Eisenstadt. A thoughtful atmosphere lies over the Jewish Cemetery and the former Jewish Ghetto. The region is dotted with interesting palaces and fortresses. In July and August Mörbisch hosts an operetta festival against the backdrop of the Neusiedl Lake. Not to be missed is the Local History Museum in Neusiedl am See. Raasdorf is the birthplace of Franz Liszt. Passion plays are staged every five years in St Margarethen. The nature reserve of Illmitz is ideal for hiking and walks. Bad Tatzmannsdorf is a noted spa.

Carinthia

Surrounded by Austria's highest mountain, the Grossglockner (3798m/12,457ft), and the Karawanken in the south, the lifestyle here is friendlier and the summers are warmer. The famous lakes reach water temperatures of 28°C (82°F), which earned Carinthia the European Environment Award for their superb water quality.

From the Wörther See to the National Park of Hohe Tauern, Carinthia offers a variety of excursions even in winter. At this time the lakes become skating rinks and the 10 ski resorts with 1000km (625-mile) pistes open their doors.

The Provincial capital, Klagenfurt, is full of tradition, with more than 50 arcades and the Lindwurm, a medieval dragon, forming part of the layout. Villach combines its flair with a hot spring.

Resorts: Resorts: Friesach, Heiligenblut, Millstatt, Obervellach, Ossiach, St Veit an der Glan, Villach, Klagenfurt, Velden and Pörtlach.

Excursions/sightseeing: Excursions/sightseeing: In Klagenfurt the Cathedral, theatre, concert hall, zoo with its reptile house, birthplace of Robert Musil, planetarium and several museums are worth visiting. The Wörther See has good beaches. The churches and monasteries of Gurk, Maria Gail, Maria Saal and Viktring are popular, as is the City Museum of Friesach. Carinthia has a rich legacy of churches, fortresses, palaces and museums - history is always close at hand.

Lower Austria

Lower Austria is the largest Federal Province, encompassing stark mountain scenery, the Alpine foothills, the Danube Valley with its vineyards and the hilly country north of the Danube with its meadows, lakes and ponds.

Resorts: Resorts: Baden bei Wien, Semmering (spa and ski resort), Bad Deutsch-Altenburg, Dürnstein, Krems an der Donau, Retz, Rohrau, St Pölten, Wiener Neustadt and Zwettl.

Excursions/sightseeing: Excursions/sightseeing: The spa of Baden has a casino, a summer theatre and a harness-racing (trotting) course, whereas Bad Deutsch-Altenburg boasts a museum and the Roman archaeological park Carnuntum. In Dürnstein, the castle ruins, the medieval town centre and church of the same epoch are part of every tour. The sights of Retz include subterranean wine-cellars, well-restored medieval city walls, windmills and a Dominican church. Rohrau, Joseph Haydn's birthplace is also worth a visit. The Provincial capital, St Pölten is home to a Cathedral, the bishop's residence, a Franciscan church, a church of the Carmelite Nuns, a museum and several Baroque patrician houses. The Austrian Military Academy (an old castle), the Cathedral, a Capuchin church and a former Jesuit church (now the city's museum) can be visited in Wiener Neustadt. Well worth a visit are the abbey, the library, the state rooms and the chapter house of Zwettl. Burg Rosenau hosts a Museum of Freemasonry. All over Lower Austria there are beautiful and interesting churches, abbeys, castles and palaces.

Salzburg Province

Salzburg is an elegant and spacious baroque city, set against a backdrop of breathtaking mountain scenery. The snow-capped mountains of the Hohe Tauern rise in the south whereas the north offers the hills and lakes of the Salzkammergut. All sights are within walking distance of the old city centre, overlooked by the fortress Hohensalzburg, which can be reached either by walking up through the narrow andwinding Festungsgasse or by taking the funicular. The Altstadt (the old city) was recently granted World Heritage status by UNESCO and has now largely been pedestrianised. Interesting sights include the Peterskirche (St Peter's Abbey, with cemetery and catacombs), the Domkirche and the Alter Markt (old market square). Salzburg's lively café culture is exemplified by the nearby Café Fürst, which takes credit for inventing the famous Mozartkugl, a chocolate ball with a hazelnut and marzipan filling. Salzburg's most famous son is probably Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart who is commemorated in the yearly Salzburger Festspiele which take place in the Grosse and Kleine Festspielhäuser (festival halls) as well as on the Cathedral square or in the University church. Mozart's birthplace (Mozart Geburtshaus) is in the Getreidegasse, also the city's main shopping street, while his residence (Mozart Wohnhaus) is on the market square. Both are museums, with the residence offering a particularly detailed insight into his life and work. Like Vienna, Salzburg contains fine examples of Baroque architecture which stands second only to music in the country's cultural history.

Resorts: Resorts: Badgastein (spa and winter resort), Bad Hofgastein, Grossgmain, Hallein, St Gilgen, Kaprun (glacier skiing in summer), Oberndorf and Zell-am-See.

Excursions/sightseeing in Salzburg: Excursions/sightseeing in Salzburg: The Franciscan church, the Nonnberg Convent, the Trinity Church, St Sebastian's Cemetery, the Church of Parsch, the Palace of the Prince-Archbishops, the carillon, the Town Hall, the Pferdeschwemme (a fountain), the festival halls, the Mirabell Palace with its landscaped gardens, the Mönchsberg and the Kapuzinerberg, several museums, the theatre, Hellbrunn Palace with the fountains, Leopoldskron and Klessheim Palaces, Maria Pein Pilgrimage Church, the Gaisberg and the Untersberg are ideal for tours and walks. In Salzburg Province the salt mines and the Celtic Museum of Hallein are well worth a visit. Irrsdorf near Strasswalchen boasts a wonderful carved gate. Further sights include the Castle Hohenwerfen, the open-air museum of Grossgmain and the Liechtensteinklamm as well as the Krimmler Waterfalls in the National Park Hohe Tauern, the oldest in Austria.

Styria

Styria is a popular and especially attractive holiday destination. In the Dachstein Gebirge overshadowing the Enns Valley, skiing is possible all year round. The south of the province is dominated by large vineyards. Styria also has a wealth of green pine forests suitable for rambles and hikes during the summer. In the Provincial capital Graz, one should plan a visit to the university and to one of the oldest museums in the world. The Styrian Armoury, housing a fine collection of ancient armour, and the Schloss Eggenberg, a 17th-century palace, are also not to be missed.

Resorts: Resorts: Graz, Bruck an der Mur, Eisenerz, Leoben, Murau, Oberzeiring, Piber, Schladming, Stübing/Gratwein, Bad Aussee and Ramsau.

Excursions/sightseeing: Excursions/sightseeing: The sights of Graz include several museums, the Herrengasse, Liberation Square, the Cathedral, the Mausoleum of Emperor Ferdinand II, the Leech Church, the pedestrian zone of the old quarter, numerous patrician houses, a 17th-century castle, Palais Attems, Castle Hill with the clocktower, the opera, the theatre and the Maria Trost Pilgrimage Church. Eisenerz boasts a fortified church. Any itinerary should include a visit to the museum and the Convent of Leoben and to the silver mine in Oberzeiring. The stud farm of the famous Lipizzaner breed of horse can be found in Piber. Old farm buildings and representative houses of all Austrian provinces are exhibited in the open-air museum of Stübing/Gratwein. The whole Province is scattered with churches, convents, palaces and castles.

Tirol

Situated in the heart of the Alpine region, it is the most mountainous region of all, with forests, hamlets and alpine pastures, beautiful valleys and mountain lakes. In summer it is a popular destination for hikes; in winter, all winter sports are on offer. Traditional Tirolean architecture is reflected in the villages, churches and castles.

Innsbruck: Innsbruck, the Tirolean capital and twice home of the Winter Olympics, is the centre of another internationally renowned ski complex comprising six major resorts. An 800-year-old university town, it has numerous fine buildings dating from Austria's cultural Renaissance in the 16th-18th centuries, and a 12th-century castle. For spectacular views over the town and southern Alps, take the funicular to Hungerburg and then the cable car to Hafelekar at 2334m (5928ft).

Resorts: Resorts: Innsbruck, Erl, Steinach am Brenner, Hall in Tirol, Kitzbühel, Kramsach, Landeck, Lienz and Matrei in East Tirol, Rattenberg, Seefeld in Tirol and Thiersee.

Excursions/sightseeing: Excursions/sightseeing: Do not miss the Golden Roof, the Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse, Helbling House, the City Tower, the Court Church, the Hofburg, the parish Church of St Jakob, the Maria-Theresien-Strasse, the Palace of the Diet, the Triumphal Arch, the Wilten Basilica, Mount Isel, the Ambras Palace, the Tirolean Museum, the Landestheater, a conference centre and the Seegrube at Innsbruck. Passion plays take place every five years in Erl. A sight not to be missed is the Mint Tower at the Hasegg Castle in Hall in Tirol. In Rattenberg, a medieval atmosphere prevails. A visit to the Cathedral Chapter of Stams and the basilica is recommended.

Upper Austria

The south of this Federal Province is dominated by the Salzkammergut lake district. The north offers a relaxed holiday in the many quiet villages and farms - the Mühlviertel. Rolling plains, densely wooded highlands and lush meadows are interspersed with rocks of natural granite. The Pyhrn-Eisenwurzen region is more mountainous, while Innviertel-Hausruckwald (in the west of

Upper Austria) is an area of endless farmlands, rivers and forests. The many spas and convalescence centres of this region offer treatment for a wide range of illnesses.

Resorts: Resorts: Bad Ischl, Hallstatt, St Wolfgang, Mondsee, Gmunden, Braunau, Schärding, Freistadt, Grein, Windischgarsten and Steyr.

Excursions/sightseeing: Excursions/sightseeing: A tour of the Province's capital Linz is not complete without seeing the Cathedral, the old quarter, the Palace Museum, Bruckner House, the Pöstlingberg and a visit to the many churches and monasteries, for example St Florian. The summer villa of Emperor Franz Josef can be found in Bad Ischl, as well as a salt mine and several museums. Hallstatt lent its name to a whole era; the Mondsee is one of the warmest lakes in the Salzkammergut. St Wolfgang does not only offer an impressive altar, but a steam railway as well. Gmunden, the Nice of Upper Austria, is known for its many cultural festivals. The old city centres of Braunau and Schärding old city centres are not to be missed. Freistadt has medieval forts, while Grein offers a navigation museum, Clam Castle and the old theatre. Steyr fascinates with its old inner city, its Working-World Museum and the pilgrimage church Christkindl.

Resorts: Resorts: Bad Goisern, Gosau, Obertraun and Grünau in the Salzkammergut and Hinterstoder, Windischgarsten and Spital am Pyhrn (region Pyhrn-Eisenwurzen).

Vorarlberg

Situated at the far western tip of Austria, the scenery of the Vorarlberg is dramatically diverse. The glaciers of the Silvretta mountain ranges drop dramatically to the shores of Lake Constance with its lush vegetation. Bregenz in the summer lends itself to bicycle tours, swimming, sailing or just sightseeing, whereas the winter season visitors populate the numerous slopes and hiking trails of the Vorarlberg.

Excursions/sightseeing: Bregenz: Excursions/sightseeing: Bregenz is noted for its Upper City with the Martin's Tower, the largest floating stage worldwide, the Congress Centre, the Mehrerau Abbey Church, the Vorarlberg Country Museum and the viewing platform on Mount Pfänder, where one can watch the flight of several birds of prey.

Feldkirch: Feldkirch: The historical old quarter contains the Cathedral St Nicholas, the Schattenburg housing the Local History Museum, and the National Conservatoire. In Levis, near Feldkirch, the Castle Amberg and the Hospital should not be missed. Tosters' sights include the castle ruin and the St Corneli Church with a 1000-year-old yew. Visitors should pay a visit to the famous Renaissance palace of Hohenems. The city is also known for the Jewish Museum and the only Jewish Cemetery in the Vorarlberg.

Schwarzenberg im Bregenzerwald: Schwarzenberg im Bregenzerwald: A picturesque, completely restored farming village, hometown of the painter Angelika Kauffmann. The Country Museum and the church are worth a visit.

Winter Sports Resorts

The most popular areas for skiing are the provinces of Tirol, Salzburg and Vorarlberg, with some well-known resorts in Carinthia, Styria and Upper and Lower Austria. Further details can also be found in the Sport & Activities section. The following is a list, in alphabetical order, of basic information on popular ski regions and resorts in Austria.

Alpbach: Alpbach: Picture postcard village. Skiing from Christmas to mid-March.

Arlberg: St Anton: Lively nightlife. Popular with younger people. Skiing from beginning of December to mid-April. St Christoph: Family resort though no nursery slopes. Holzgau: 3 nursery slopes. Lech: Skiing from beginning of December to end of April. Fashionable. Zürs: Skiing from beginning of December to end of April. Small, expensive town. Lift-pass sharing with Lech, St Anton im Tirol, St Christoph im Tirol, Stuben and Dalaas im Klostertal, with more than 100 lifts.

Axamer Lizum: Axamer Lizum: Snow guaranteed. A few nursery slopes. Evening entertainment in the hotel bars. Mutters: Picturesque village with breathtaking views. Good for families, skiers of all levels and non-skiers. Seefeld: Comparatively expensive. Skiing from end of December to mid-March. Good après-ski, impressive sports centre.

Badgastein Area: Badgastein Area Badgastein: Numerous downhill and cross-country ski runs. Spa and casino. Skiing from end of December to beginning of April. Bad Hofgastein: Quiet village, good school. Beginners and intermediates. Dorfgastein: Small and friendly. Well-equipped Alpine huts. Beginners and intermediates. Sportgastein: This new resort can be reached by car or bus from Badgastein. Joint ski-pass Gastein Super Ski.

Brandnertal: Brandnertal Bürserberg: Small village. Beginners and intermediates. Brand: Family resort. Selection of leisure activities (paragliding, horseriding, tennis).

Bregenzerwald: Bregenzerwald Warth: Skiing from mid-December to end of April. Near Lech, relatively unknown and secluded. Intermediates, good après-ski. Lift-pass sharing with Schröcken, Damüls, Au and the Großes Walsertal.

Innsbruck Area: Innsbruck Area Igls: Picturesque village. Perfect for intermediates. Bobsleigh events. Ice skating, curling and sleigh rides. Olympic course nearby. Good après-ski. Skiing from mid-December to mid-March. Innsbruck: Beautiful town with Baroque architecture. Music, theatre, discos, bars. Skiing from mid-December to mid-March. Free ski bus. Innsbruck Super Ski Pass offers skiing in Arlberg, Kitzbühel and Stubai glacier areas.

Ischgl Area: Ischgl Area Ischgl: Easy-going atmosphere, excellent après-ski, unsophisticated Tirolean village. Skiing from mid-December to mid-April. Galtür: Ideal for families and intermediates. Sports centre.

Kaiserwinkel Area: Kaiserwinkel Area Kossen: Small village. Wonderful scenery and dramatic views. Excellent cross-country skiing. Walchsee: Good cross-country skiing. Ice-skating, tobogganing, horse-drawn sleigh rides, swimming, tennis, horseriding. Schwendt: Horse-drawn sleigh rides.

Kitzbühel Area: Kitzbühel Area Kitzbühel: International resort. Olde Worlde atmosphere. Tea rooms and cafés. Good selection of après-ski. Skiing from mid-December to mid-March. Kirchberg: Something for everyone. Skiing from mid-December to mid-March. Kirchdorf: Relaxed village atmosphere. Ideal for beginners and intermediates. Cross-country skiing. Tobogganing. Lively après-ski. Kitzbüheler Ski Pass gives access to 64 lifts in the region. Kirchdorf Super Skipass covers St Johann, Steinplatte, Kitzbühel and Fieberbrunn.

Kleinwalsertal: Kleinwalsertal Hirschegg: Intermediates. Riezlern: Beginners and intermediates.

Montafon: Montafon Schruns: Skiing from December to end of April. Large skiing-regions, active nightlife. Gargellen: Skiing from mid-December to end of April. Relaxed, friendly and reasonable. Gaschurn: Skiing from mid-December to end of April. Friendly, family atmosphere. Partenen: Ideal for intermediates.

Nauders: Nauders: Small with vigorous nightlife. Skiing from mid-December to beginning of April.

Obergurgl Area: Obergurgl Area Hochgurgl: Small purpose-built resort for all skiers. Obergurgl: Skiing from beginning of December to end of April. Friendly and traditional.

Obertauern: Obertauern: Snow guaranteed. Excellent nightlife. Ski to hotels. Skiing from beginning of December to end of April.

Pongau: Pongau Flachau: Beginners and intermediates. A few difficult runs. St Johann in Pongau: Runs of all difficulties. Large school. Wagrain: Beginners and intermediates. Quiet though good nightlife. Filzmoos: Tranquil, friendly atmosphere. Beginners and intermediates. Altenmarkt: Several runs. Joint ski-pass Salzburger Sportwelt Amadé.

Saalbach/Hinterglemm: Saalbach/Hinterglemm Hinterglemm: Spacious new resort. Intermediates. Saalbach: Larger and more expensive, though established. Artificial snow-making and Austria's largest cable car. Good entertainment for non-skiers.

Schladming: Schladming: Unpretentious and friendly. Good shopping. Good though restricted nightlife.

Schneewinkel Area: Schneewinkel Area St Johann in Tirol: Old market town. Beginners and intermediates. Good nightlife. Tennis, health centre, ice-skating, night tobogganing, cross-country skiing. Fieberbrunn: Quiet family resort. Oberndorf: Good cross-country skiing. Tobogganing and horse-drawn sleigh rides. Waidring: Ideal for beginners and intermediates. Good ski school. Excellent for children. Cross-country skiing, skating, tobogganing, curling. St Ulrich: Lakeside town. Hochfilzen: Ice-skating and tobogganing. Schneewinkel Pass gives access to 54 lifts.

Serfaus: Serfaus: Quiet après-ski. Reasonable prices. Easy slopes. Skiing from mid-December to mid-April.

Sölden Area: Sölden Area Sölden: Skiing from beginning of December to end of April. South-facing sunny resort. Hochsölden: Secluded. South-facing slopes.

Stubaital: Stubaital Fulpmes: Good après-ski. Neustift: Pretty village, ideal for non-skiers. Skiing from mid-December to mid-March.

Tux Glacier Area: Tux Glacier Area Hintertux: All-year-round skiing. All levels. Madseit: Small village surrounded by woods. Juns: Old comfortable houses. Lanersbach: Social and cultural centre of area. Intermediate and advanced with nursery slopes. Vorderlanersbach: Tirolean village. Magnificent views. Super Ski Pass covers the entire Tux and Ziller valley.

Wilden Kaiser Area: Wilden Kaiser Area Söll: Skiing from mid-December to mid-March. Nightlife informal and lively. Ellmau: Ideal for intermediates. Downhill and cross-country runs for beginners and intermediates, sledging. Going: Small village. Hopfgarten: Rustic hamlet. Itter: Good school. Picturesque surroundings, cosy nightlife. Westendorf: Very good après-ski. Skiing from mid-December to mid-March. The Wilder Kaiser Brixental Ski Pass covers the largest ski circuit in Tirol, including Ellmau, Scheffau, Söll, Itter, Hopfgarten, Westendorf, Going and Brixen.

Wildschönau: Wildschönau Niederau: Modern resort. Skiing from mid-December to beginning of April. Night skiing. Very popular, vigorous nightlife. Auffach: Perfect for intermediates. School. Friendly and professional. Oberau: Baroque church. Night skiing. Ideal for beginners, a favourite for school trips. Thierbach: Idyllic hamlet.

Zell-am-See Area: Zell-am-See Area: Skiing from mid-December to mid-March. Active nightlife. Kaprun: Skiing from Christmas to end of March. Good glacier-skiing. Guaranteed snow. Joint ski-pass Europa Sportregion.

Zillertal: Mayrhofen: Popular. Skiing from mid-December to mid-March. Zell am Ziller: Small resort. Skiing from mid-December to mid-March. Restricted après-ski. Finkenberg: 3 nursery slopes, 19 for intermediates. Ice-skating, curling, bowling, tobogganing. Good après-ski. Good ski school, especially for children. Fügen and Hochfügen: Well laid-out, though few slopes. Gerlos: Suitable for skiers of all levels. Very good school. Cross-country runs of high standard.

Zugspitzarea: Ehrwald: Easy nursery slopes, ideal for family-skiing. Lermoos: Skiing from Christmas to beginning of April. Good après-ski and leisure activities.

10 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

Winter Sports: Winter Sports: Austria is one of Europe's major destinations for winter sports, particularly skiing and, more recently, snowboarding. The Austrian Alps take up approximately 60% of the country's surface area and there are more than 800 winter sports resorts, with ski runs stretching some 22,000km (13,750 miles), and a further 16,000km (10,000 miles) of cross-country skiing trails. Every year, Austria hosts a number of prestigious international ski competitions and in 2001, the Alpine Ski World Championships will take place in St Anton, Tyrol (starting on January 29). Besides skiing, many other types of winter sports can be enjoyed, such as tobogganing, sleigh rides, curling or skating. For a selective list of Austria's ski resorts and facilities, see Winter Sports Resorts in the Resorts & Excursions section. Full details of skiing packages and tours, resort information, snow reports and winter sports events can be obtained from the Austrian National Tourist Office (see address section), which also publishes several brochures, some of which, such as the 'Winter Tour Finder', can be ordered directly and free of charge from the internet.

Walking tours: Walking tours: During summer, when the snow has melted, the Austrian Alps offer a vast network of hiking trails through varied landscapes, ranging from forests and green slopes to glaciers and rocks. Many rivers and lakes are suitable for swimming or fishing (the latter requiring a permit available from the local authorities). Detailed walking maps can be obtained either from ANTO or from local tourist offices. Guides can be hired locally. Footpaths are recognisable by red-white-red markings displayed on trees and rocks. Interesting routes include the Salt Road, once used by Austria's salt merchants, from the salt mines in the Salzkammergut, through the Mühlviertel, via many historic towns and as far as the border with the Czech Republic; and the Styrian Timber Road, giving travellers an insight into the uses of wood. Near Vienna, a network of city paths (Stadtwanderwege) lead through the Vienna woods or the nearby Danube wetlands. The Vorarlberg's alpine pastures are well suited for gentle walks while the Hohe Tauern National Park is popular for more demanding trekking. Accommodation is widely available along the paths in the form of hotels, inns or mountain huts.

Mountaineering: Mountaineering: Mountaineering and climbing are widely available throughout the Alps. For details of climbing associations and specialist operators, contact ANTO. Climbing tours are often combined with hang-gliding, which has recently gained in popularity and can be practised in many locations in the mountains.

Cycling: Cycling: Austria's infrastructure for cyclists is excellent. There are clearly marked cycling routes both in the cities and throughout the countryside. Tourist offices can provide detailed

touring maps and the Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) offers substantial services to cyclists. Practically all local trains allow bicycles to be carried in the baggage car. For long-distance trains, cyclists should look out for a bicycle symbol next to the train number if they wish to take their bike. The ÖBB also offers a bicycle rental service (Fahrrad am Bahnhof) at 100 Austrian railway stations where visitors can rent bicycles directly from the station at a reduced fee. Along the cycling paths, many hotels and inns have lockable bicycle racks and other facilities for cyclists. Austria's mountains offer extensive and challenging trails for mountain biking. For further information on planning either an organised or independent cycling tour, contact ANTO; or Radtouren in Österreich, c/o Salzburger Land Tourismus GmbH, Postfach 1, 5300 Hallwang bei Salzburg (tel: (662) 6688; fax: (662) 668 866; e-mail: info@sztour.co.at; web site: <http://www.radtouren.at/rad>).

Horseriding: Horseriding: There are many hotels and guest houses specialising in horseriding holidays (Reitferien). Horses can be hired for short or longer periods and packages frequently include riding instruction. The brochure Reiten in Österreich ('Riding in Austria') is available from the ANTO.

Wine tours: Wine tours: The ANTO has singled out three wine routes through Austria's main wine-growing regions - Lower Austria, Southern Styria and the Burgenland. In Lower Austria, a whole area in the northeast is known as the Weinviertel (wine quarter), where Kellergassen (wine cellars and wine-press buildings located outside the villages in the hillsides) and Buschenschanken (small wine taverns) can be visited. The Wachau region, a section of the Danube Valley approximately 50km/32 miles from Vienna, is reputed for its Riesling wines and the wine village of Gumpoldskirchen. Southern Styria enjoys a moist, warm climate and its token wine is the Schilcher, a type of rosé. The Burgenland produces more than a quarter of Austria's wines and is known for sweet wines such as the Ausbruch. Most wine estates and cellars welcome visitors. Further information can be obtained from local tourist offices or ANTO. See also Food & Drink in the Social Profile section.

11 SOCIAL PROFILE

Food & Drink: Traditional Austrian dishes are Wiener Schnitzel, boiled beef (Tafelspitz), calf's liver with herbs in butter (Geröstete Leber), Goulash, Kaiserschmarrn, Palatschinken and Salzburger Nockerln, as well as various types of smoked and cured pork. Viennese cuisine is strongly influenced by southeast European cuisine, notably that of Hungary, Serbia, Romania and Dalmatia. Many of the simpler meals are often made with rice, potatoes and dumplings (Knödel), with liquid sauces. The main meal of the day is lunch. Mehlspeisen is the national term for cakes and puddings, all of which are wonderfully appetising. There are more than 57 varieties of Torte, which are often consumed with coffee at around 1500. Open all day, the Austrian coffee shop (Kaffeehaus) is little short of a national institution and often provides the social focus of a town or neighbourhood.

Drink: Spirits such as whisky and gin, together with imported beers, tend to be on the expensive side, but local wines (often served in open carafes) are excellent and cheap. Most of the wines are white (Riesling, Veltliner) but there are also some good red wines from Baden and Burgenland, as well as imported wines from other European countries. Generally the strict registration laws mean that the quality of the wine will be fully reflected in its price. Obstler is a drink found in most German-speaking countries, and is made by distilling various fruits. It is usually very strong, and widely drunk as it is cheap and well flavoured. Most bars or coffee houses have waiter service and bills are settled with the arrival of drinks. All restaurants have waiter service.

Note: There are no national licensing laws in Austria, but each region has local police closing hours. Most coffee houses and bars serve wine as well as soft drinks and beers.

Shopping: High-quality goods such as handbags, glassware, chinaware and winter sports equipment represent the cream of specialist items found in Austria. A 20% to 32% value-added-tax (called MwSt) is included in the list price of items sold. Shopping hours: Shops and stores are generally open Monday to Friday from 0800-1800 (with a 1- or 2-hour lunch break in the smaller towns). Some shops are open until 1930 on Thursday and on Saturday opening hours extend until 1700.

Nightlife: Viennese nightlife offers something for every taste: opera, theatre and cabaret as well as numerous discotheques, bars and nightclubs. There are cinemas of all types, some of them of architectural interest, showing films in different languages. A good way to spend a summer evening is in one of the beer gardens found all over Austria. The wine-growing area around Vienna features wine gardens (Heurigen) where visitors can sample local wines in an open-air setting.

Special Events: For a full list of events celebrated in Austria in 2000, contact the Austrian National Tourist Office (see address section). The following is a selection of special events held in Austria in 2001:

Jan 26-Feb 4 2001 Mozart Week, Salzburg. Feb 3-25 Winterträume, Vienna. Apr 16-26 10th Vienna Spring Festival. Apr-Jun and May-Oct Salzburg Angel Concerts, Special Exhibition 2001. May 6-17 Vienna Music Festival. Jun 1-4 International Baroque Days, Melk Abbey. Jun 8-Jul 15 International Dance Summer, Innsbruck. Jun 22-Jul 29 The Styrian Festival, Graz. Jun 28-Jul 10 Jazz Festival, Vienna. Jul-Aug Music Film Festival, Vienna. Jul 20-Aug 20 Bregenzer Festspiele 2001, Bregenz. Jul-Sep Operetta Festival, Bad Ischl. Aug 'KunstWasser' Music Festival, Zell am See. Aug 16-19 International Chopin Festival, Gaming Charter House. Aug-Sep International Folk Festival, Hallein. Sep International Music Festival 'Brahms', Styria. Sep 1-6 Ars Electronica: Festival of Art, Technology and Society, Linz. Sep 9-30 Linz Bruckner Festival. Sep 15 Opening of Museum of Modern Art; Foundation Ludwig, Museum Quarter, Vienna. Sep 20 -Oct Baden Beethoven Days. Sep 21 Opening of Leopold Museum, Vienna. Nov Salzburg Jazz Autumn.

Social Conventions: Austrians tend to be quite formal in both their social and business dealings. They do not use first names when being introduced, but after the initial meeting first names are often used. Handshaking is normal when saying hello and goodbye. It is considered impolite to enter a restaurant or shop without saying Guten Tag or, more usually, Grüss Gott; similarly, to leave without saying Auf Wiedersehen can cause offence. Social pleasantries and some exchange of small-talk is appreciated. If invited out to dinner, flowers should be brought for the hostess. The Church enjoys a high and respected position in Austrian society, which should be kept in mind by the visitor. It is customary to dress up for the opera or the theatre. Tipping: Widespread, but large amounts are not expected. On restaurant bills a service charge of 10-15% is included, but it is usual to leave a further 5%. Attendants at theatres, cloakrooms or petrol pumps, expect to be tipped EUR1-2. Railway and airports have fixed charges for portering. Taxi drivers expect EUR1-2 for a short trip and 10% for a longer one.

12 BUSINESS PROFILE

Economy: Austria has enjoyed steady and stable growth with fairly low inflation and unemployment since 1955. It is one of the most prosperous countries in the world. Manufacturing, including mining, accounts for nearly 30% of GDP. Since World War II, much of

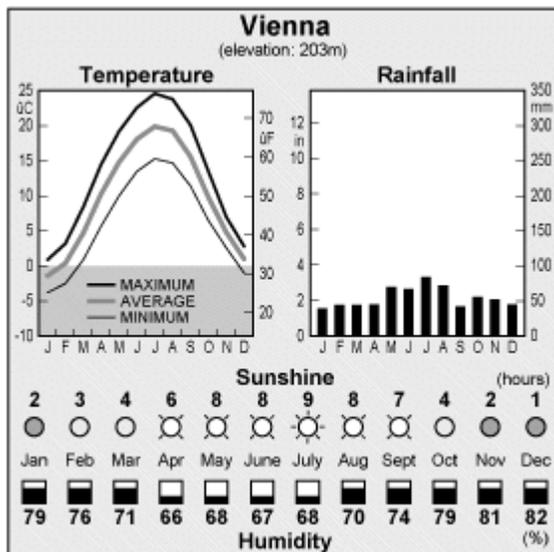
the country's industrial capacity has been in state hands and is only gradually being relinquished; given the relative success of those enterprises under the wing of the state holding company, OIAG, this is not surprising. Iron and steel, chemicals, metal working and engineering all fall into this category. Agriculture has proved equally successful with domestic products meeting 90% of the country's food needs. Crops include sugar beet, potatoes, grain, grapes, tobacco, flax, hemp and wine. Austria has moderate deposits of iron, lignite, magnesium, lead, copper, salt, zinc and silver. Although there are some oil reserves and an extensive hydroelectric programme, Austria must import the bulk of its energy requirements. Austria was a member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) until joining the EU on January 1, 1995. This may be seen as a natural development from Austria's recent export patterns: EU members account for 68% of imports and 63% of exports. Germany is Austria's largest trading partner by a considerable margin, followed by Italy, France and the UK and, outside the EU, Switzerland. The previously substantial trade with both the USA and the former USSR has fallen as a proportion of the total in recent years. After implementing austerity measures to cut government spending, Austria was able to meet the criteria for membership of the single European currency and joined it upon its inception at the beginning of 1999.

Business: Austrians are quite formal in their business dealings. A working knowledge of German will be very advantageous. Best times to visit are the spring and autumn months. Office hours: 0800-1230 and 1330-1730 Monday to Friday.

Commercial Information: The following organisation can offer advice: Wirtschaftskammer Österreich (Austrian Federal Economic Chamber), Wiednerhauptstrasse 63, 1045, Vienna (tel: (1) 501 050; fax: (1) 5010 5250; e-mail: wkoe@wkoe.wk.or.at; web site: <http://www.wk.or.at>).

Conferences/Conventions: Austria has 31 conference venues, including over 20 in Vienna and a floating conference centre, the MS Mozart, on the river Danube. The provincial capitals of Salzburg, Innsbruck, Graz, Linz, Bregenz, Klagenfurt and Eisenstadt also offer convention venues, as do several health and spa resorts. Furthermore there are 71 hotels in Austria which specialise in the conference/convention field. For more detailed information, contact the Austrian National Tourist Office (see address section).

13 CLIMATE



Austria enjoys a moderate continental climate: summers are warm and pleasant with cool nights, and winters are sunny, with snow levels high enough for widespread winter sports.

Required clothing: European clothes according to season. Alpine wear for mountain resorts.

14 HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

History: Austria's history since the 13th century is bound up with that of the Habsburg family. The region was conquered by Charlemagne and remained as a part of the Holy Roman Empire. By the 16th century, the Habsburgs had gained a firm grip on the title of Emperor, although their power owed less to this often empty distinction than to the extensive family lands, many of which were to be found in Austria. Under Charles V, Austria was part of a vast empire, but after Charles' abdication in 1556 the Spanish and Germanic parts of his lands were separated, passing to his son and his brother respectively. The Holy Roman Empire as a political unit became more and more fragmented, leading one 18th-century observer to comment that it was 'neither holy, nor Roman nor an Empire'. It was formally abolished in August 1806, Francis II having already assumed the title of 'Emperor of Austria'; much of the northern and eastern parts of the Empire had by this time been absorbed into Prussia. During the 17th and 18th centuries, Austria, and in particular Vienna, became one of the major centres of the cultural renaissance associated with the terms 'Baroque' and 'The Enlightenment'; the musical achievements of this period are particularly notable. The Austrian Empire (by this time the Austro-Hungarian Empire) came to an end after the First World War and Austria was declared a republic. In 1938 it was incorporated into the Third Reich, but was liberated in 1945 and established as a republic once again under the protectorship of the allied powers. Full independence was restored in July 1955, since when Austria has been governed according to an orthodox Western European model. The major parties, the ÖVP (Österreichische Volkspartei - Austrian People's Party) and the SPÖ (Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs - Social Democratic Party) of Austria, enjoyed an effective monopoly of Austrian politics until the 1980s which saw the rise of the far right and environmentalists. The decade also brought unusual and unwelcome international attention to Austria when the former UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim stood for the presidency: although a largely titular post, the presidency carries great symbolic significance. The controversy concerned Waldheim's role during the second World War, in which he served as a German army intelligence officer, and his alleged knowledge of and complicity in mass deportations and executions. Dogged by the allegations throughout his 6-year tenure, Waldheim stood down in May 1992. His replacement at the election which followed was ÖVP candidate, Thomas Klestil, who was re-elected to a second term in April 1998. The Waldheim affair came soon after the first appearance of the far-right party Die Freiheitlichen (originally known as the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ) - Austrian Freedom Party) as a major electoral force. With neither since able to secure an overall majority, they have consequently combined in coalition governments in order to exclude the Die Freiheitlichen. The administration which held office between December 1995 and the autumn of 1999 was typical of this pattern. Chancellor Franz Vranitzky led the Government from 1995 until his unexpected resignation in January 1997, at which point he was replaced by Finance Minister Viktor Klima. The belief that Die Freiheitlichen had peaked electorally was proved wrong in October 1999 when its vote increased once again to 27%. Once again, the SPÖ and ÖVP combined to exclude it, but, unable to secure a majority, they were forced in January 2000 to admit Haider's party into government. The consequences for Austria may be serious: the Israeli Government has already declared that it will have no dealings with a government containing Haider or his colleagues. The success of Die Freiheitlichen is attributable to uncertainty, mainly about Austria's future in the EU and about immigration, and disillusion with the two main traditional parties.

Government: Austria is a federal republic with bicameral legislature: the 183-member National Council is elected for four years; the 64 members of Federal Council do not have fixed terms. The President, elected for a 6-year term, is head of state. Executive power is held by the Chancellor, normally the leader of the largest party in parliament, who leads a cabinet of ministers.

15 OVERVIEW

Country Overview: Austria, located at the heart of Western Europe, is famous not only for its premier skiing regions but also for breathtaking scenery, magnificent mountains and established hiking trails. The western Federal Provinces Vorarlberg, Tirol and Salzburg Province are the most popular tourist regions.

The hilly terrain lends itself to walking and climbing as well as skiing. Alpine huts between 915m and 2744m, with resident wardens in the summer, are for hire. Skiing facilities can be found in over 600 winter sport resorts between Brand in the west and Semmering in the east. Skiing enthusiasts have the choice of more than 400 schools and top ski instructors.

The capital, Vienna, is situated in the northeast of the country with the Danube running through the northern suburbs of the city. The Ringstrasse forms the boundary with the Inner City or Innenstadt and both are famed for their striking architecture, shops and hotels.

Austrian dishes include Wiener Schnitzel, boiled beef (Tafelspitz), calf's liver with herbs in butter (Geröstete Leber) and Goulash.

Local wines are excellent, cheap and mostly white (Riesling, Veltliner).

Austrian nightlife is relatively quiet and civilised. One of the best ways to spend an evening is in one of the wine gardens (Heurigen) found outside the towns. Or, like native Austrians, visitors may prefer the theatre and opera.