

Only in Salzburg – The UNESCO Bucket List

Since 1 January 1997, Salzburg's Old Town has been a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site. But how does one experience UNESCO? Select special features, curios and amazing things and the most aesthetic Instagram locations demonstrate that history often manifests itself in details and that Salzburg is a World Heritage Site in its own right, worthy of protection.

1. Fascinating Mirabell – palace, park, fountains and hidden faces

Mirabell Palace (1606) and its grounds is one of the main showpieces of the World Cultural Heritage. It was built by Prince Archbishop Wolf Dietrich von Raitenau for his family, however, today it is mainly as the seat of the municipal government. The marble hall on the first floor is open to the public and is considered the most romantic wedding hall in Europe. In the evenings it is used as a concert venue. The grand marble Georg-Raphael-Donner staircase leading up to the hall is remarkable – the majestically curved balustrade is lavishly ornamented with putti. Standing, sitting and reclining, they playfully accompany the bridal couples on their way to the wedding ceremony and many an anecdote connects the little angels with the newlyweds. The Pegasus Fountain (1661) in front of the castle is a picture-perfect photo spot. The root of the tail, the upper part of the head and the right front hoof of the winged horse are still original. On the way to the historic Dwarf Garden with its whimsical marble inhabitants (1690/91), it is well worth taking a careful look at the defensive wall: there are two women's faces integrated into it, presumably the remains of stone statues that were damaged in the fire in the castle in 1818.

- The Georg Raphael Donner Staircase is open to the public. The marble hall can be visited during the opening hours of the palace, except during weddings (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday).

2. A world of its own – the Marionette Theatre

Between the Mirabell Gardens and the Salzach River lies a microcosm: Salzburg's Marionette Theatre is a private institution where puppets such as the Queen of the Night, Rumpelstiltskin, Maria von Trapp or the Little Prince have been handmade and lovingly brought to life since 1913. The puppets are carved, painted, clothed and also restored here so they can exude their inherent charm in the many productions of operas and fairy tales. Their very own technique was included in the UNESCO list of intangible cultural assets in 2016. Visitors of all ages leave the performances beaming with joy – utterly disregarding these increasingly digital times. The magical feeling intensifies during a guided tour behind the scenes, which is offered before and after the afternoon performances and upon request.

- Salzburg Marionette Theatre, all year round, www.marionetten.at

3. A symbol of comfort: coffee house culture in Salzburg

If Salzburg's coffee houses could talk, they would tell the most beautiful anecdotes. There is one thing the typical Salzburger refuses to do without: a visit to a coffee house. In Austria, the café is more than a mere coffee house, it is a public living room where people feel

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comfortable and enjoy spending time. In Salzburg, you can indulge in the UNESCO-awarded old Viennese coffee house tradition in both a trendy and a classic way. The roots of Café Tomaselli, Austria's oldest existing coffee house, go way back to 1700. Since 1764, the café has been located in the prestigious house on the Alter Markt, owned by the Tomaselli family since 1852. In July 1860 the Kiosk was opened, a garden café next to the Residenz. From 1891, female guests were also granted access to the café in the ladies' salon on the 1st floor. After the end of the World War II, the US occupation forces took up residence in the Tomaselli and converted the old-established coffee house into the "Forty Second Street Cafe". Today, Café Tomaselli with its famous cake ladies is considered one of the most popular meeting places for locals and visitors alike. On the other hand, the UNESCO Old Town also offers the modern coffee-to-go at the former toll house on the left side of the Salzach between the Mozartsteg bridge and the Michaelstor. Bridge tolls were still collected here until the end of 1920.

- Salzburg coffee house tradition, www.salzburg.info/kaffeehauskultur
- *Café Salzburg. Places. People. Stories.*, 8 April to 4 September 2022, Salzburg Museum, www.salzburg-museum.at

4. Nine centuries of experience: the bakers of St. Peter's Abbey

Salzburg's culinary scene has many facets – for instance, the popular bread from the St. Peter's Abbey bakery, which has been around since the 12th century. At that time, a tunnel was cut through the Mönchsberg for the Almkanal to supply the town with water. Directly at the exit of this tunnel, the monastery of St. Peter built a flour mill and also found space there for the St. Peter's Abbey bakery which is still popular to this day. A small selection of specialities is on offer in the historic vault with the original wood-burning oven. In addition to the wood-fired natural sourdough loaf, there are brioche rolls and Tyrolean Vinschgerl, which are mixed rye bread rolls. If you visit the bakery in the late afternoon, you might find yourself looking at empty shelves, because they only produce a certain amount every day. Speaking of bread and St. Peter: the abbey church, also dating back to the 12th century, is home to the relatively inconspicuous "stone loaf", also called the "loaf in iron". Immediately to the right of the main portal, this sandstone loaf hangs on an iron chain and recalls the legend of a farmer's wife who, instead of going to church on a church holiday, baked bread. When she went to take it out of the oven, it had turned to stone as a punishment.

- St. Peter's Abbey Bakery, Monday to Saturday (Wednesday closed), www.stiftsbaeckerei.at

5. The Coronation of Mary

Attentive visitors to Salzburg will notice people walking slowly down the Franziskanergasse towards the Cathedral square and suddenly stopping. The marble and cast-lead statue of Maria Immaculata on the Cathedral square was commissioned by Archbishop Sigismund III von Schrattenbach between 1766 and 1771. The Virgin Mary stands on a globe and is surrounded by the four allegorical figures of Angel, Devil, Truth and Mother Church. If you move slowly towards the statue, you can experience a simple and amusing optical illusion: the crown held by two angels on the Cathedral façade descends onto Mary's head, thus crowning *Maria Immaculata* as *Maria Regina*.

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6. Modern art on old walls

The UNESCO title ensures that the important historic Old Town is preserved in its existing form. Nevertheless, Salzburg has found means and ways to set contemporary accents in the midst of its historic splendour. The *Walk of Modern Art*, for instance, leads to 14 permanently exhibited art projects on the most important squares of the Old Town. Numerous other works of art can be found on the façades and walls of the baroque buildings. Between 1980 and 1987, for instance, Friedensreich Hundertwasser added ceramic "tongue beards" to the outer façade of the Rupertinum on Max-Reinhardt-Platz. The building was first mentioned in 1350 and has been used as a museum since 1983. Since the opening of the DomQuartier in 2014, the entrance area of the Alte Residenz has been adorned with contemporary art: Austrian artist Elmar Trenkwalder installed more than 400 individual objects on the side walls and the barrel vault. The overall work appears to unite heaven and earth – especially through the blue "stars" on the ceiling. The Mozart quotation by Sylvie Fleury (2005) on the main building of the Mozarteum Foundation in the Schwarzstraße and the reliefs on the façade of the Haus für Mozart, created in 2006 by Salzburg artist Josef Zenzmaier, are further examples of the artistic bridges between past and present.

• At www.salzburg.info/creative you will find all the details about the *Walk of Modern Art*, other art in public spaces and the themed walk *City walk: Creative Salzburg*.

7. Come rain or shine: Salzburg's most beautiful weather station

Many a visitor (and some locals) will have wondered what the little gold-decorated house on the Alter Markt is all about. It is in fact a weather station that was built by the Salzburger Stadtverein [association for the preservation of the town] in 1888 and still functions today without electricity or digitalisation. The neo-Renaissance style weather column records the daily temperature (thermometer) and the daily atmospheric pressure (barometer). On a massive metal plaque on the plinth, apparently intended to last for eternity, is the message "*Altitude mark above the Adriatic Sea level 424.250*". On Saturdays, you may see hand-width sheets of paper being replaced so that the barograph and hydrographer can continue to draw their lines.

8. A guided tour of the town

The best way to explore a town is to engage with it. While some enjoy sitting in a café and taking in the atmosphere, others prefer to learn detailed facts on city tours. The daily "Fair-tours" walking-tours by Salzburg's tour guides take you to the most famous sights and give you a general overview of the UNESCO World Heritage town of Salzburg. Those who already know Salzburg a little and wish to gain more insight can learn something new on themed tours. The new themed walking tour "City Walks: UNESCO" provides the opportunity to stroll through the city at your own pace, while learning curious and surprising information as well as tips on the most beautiful photo spots.

- Daily city tour "Fairtours", www.fairtours.at
- Themed tours by Salzburg tourist guides, www.salzburg-guide.at
- Salzburg city walks with various themes, www.salzburg.info/city-walk

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9. Stay in an age-old hostelry

Many of the buildings in the baroque Old Town are now used for accommodation. The range is very wide: Hotel Goldener Hirsch offers 5* luxury, while the guesthouses of some monasteries offer functional simplicity. Hotel Stein is a historical example of this: it was first mentioned in a document in 1399 when it received official permission to cater for waggoneers and travellers. Between 1452 and 1870, the brewery brewed its own beer here, most recently under the name "Bräu am Stein". After World War I, the author and teacher Alois Grasmayr (1896-1955) bought the building and had two storeys added. The legendary roof terrace was opened and the establishment was renamed "Hotel Stein". The core of the building is late Gothic and originally consisted of two Salzach houses, which were combined in the middle of the 18th century and splendidly furnished. After the last renovations, which were completed in February 2018, some exposed building elements can be visited, most prominently an elaborate stucco ceiling on the 2nd floor.

- Religious accommodation and city centre hotels are listed at www.salzburg.info
- Hotel Stein, open all year, www.hotelstein.at

10. Following the trail of world heritage

The all-inclusive Salzburg Card is a key that opens many a historic door. One of the most important sights is Hohensalzburg Fortress. Whether by funicular or on foot: once you are inside the castle, you are immersed in the eventful history since its beginnings 1077. The prince-archbishops, who had a strong influence on the Province and the town, did not have their state rooms at the fortress, however, but in the Alte Residenz, which is now part of the DomQuartier. This Baroque centre, which opened in 2014, helps us to understand the significance of Salzburg in past centuries. Immediately afterwards, the architecture of the cathedral with its world-famous baptismal font (14th century), where the likes of W. A. Mozart were baptised, as well as concerts, works of art and walking tours, will delight visitors. Another way to get to know Salzburg is to take a trip on the *Amadeus* boat, which shows the historical town along the Salzach from a different perspective.

- Salzburg Card, www.salzburg.info/salzburg-card
- *Salzburg Unique – Selected Stories of Salzburg*, from 18 February 2022, Salzburg Museum, www.salzburg-museum.at

11. Explore Salzburg's "mediaeval underworld"

The Almkanal, which locals like to call "Alm", is now a local recreational area and meeting place for bathers, urban surfers and cyclists. It is worth mentioning, however, that the Almkanal is an extraordinary water supply system, dating back to the 8th century, when the first sections of the later canal network were established. With the help of this system, the town could be supplied with industrial and drinking water. The exciting history of the tunnel system can be explored during three weeks in September, when the tunnel is drained for necessary maintenance work – locally referred to as "Almabkehr". At that time the path inside the Mönchsberg, leading from the Brunnhausgasse directly to St. Peter's cemetery, is also accessible. Equipped with a torch, rain jacket and wellies, you can dive into the "Salzburg

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underworld". The path is 400 m long, the tunnels are a maximum of 2.20 m high and the ground is paved with marble slabs which, on closer inspection, are ancient repurposed gravestones.

• Almbkehr in the Stiftsarmstollen tunnel, dates for 2022 to be announced in summer, www.almkanal.at/stiftsarmstollen

12. Historical custom revived: trumpeters on the tower

If you stroll through the city centre on Sundays, you might hear distant trumpet music shortly before noon. This is the *Turmbblasen* at Hohensalzburg Fortress; a concert that takes every Sunday at 11:45 am. Historically, it was customary at almost all the important courts of Europe for trumpeters to warn of danger or accompany important occasions. This custom also existed at the court of the Prince-Archbishops of Salzburg since the Middle Ages, and in 1465 a trumpet tower was built on the Fortress. Until 1800, the sounds of trumpets and timpani were considered purely utility music, as these musicians were part of the "court entourage". This also explains why there are hardly any surviving compositions. In Salzburg, however, pieces of music for festive marches have been preserved in the archives of Nonntal Abbey. These marches were mainly composed by Salzburg court trumpeters and were performed at the Salzburg *Turmbblasen* on the Fortress. Many guests visiting Salzburg in the run-up to Christmas are also familiar with the *Turmbblasen* (every Thursday and Saturday at 6.30 pm) at the Christmas market on Domplatz and Residenzplatz.

• from the trumpet tower of Hohensalzburg Fortress, every Sunday 11.45 am., www.salzburg-burgen.at
• *Turmbblasen* at the Salzburg Christmas market on Domplatz and Residenzplatz, every Thursday and Saturday 6.30 pm., www.christkindlmarkt.co.at

Further Information:

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