

Travel like a local! Discover Austria's cities off the tourist trail

World-famous landmarks such as Schönbrunn Palace and St Stephan's Cathedral in Vienna, Salzburg's Mirabell Palace and Hohensalzburg Fortress, or the Golden Roof in Innsbruck – Austria's cities certainly do not have a shortage of bucket list sights. Add the many museums, galleries, concert venues, and picture-perfect historic centres, and holidaymakers will be busy exploring for days on end.

However, many travellers these days are looking for more than just ticking off sights during their holiday. They hope to get to know the real city away from the tourist trail and the TikTok hotspots, the locals, and their lifestyle – or, as we like to call it, the “Lebensgefühl”.

But where to start? Have a look below for some inspiration!

Vienna: Explore the city's lively neighbourhoods

[Vienna](#) is synonymous with variety. And the same can be said of its neighbourhoods, locally known as “Grätzel”, with each sporting its very own mix of architecture, urban feeling, culinary and shopping offerings and, above all, its unique charm and crowd. Exploring the different “Grätzel” is a great way to get a feel of what it's really like to live in Vienna.

[Freihausviertel](#), close to Vienna's historic centre, Karlsplatz and Naschmarkt, is a hotspot for the city's creatives and fashionistas, with modern galleries, trendy shops and traditional “Beisl” (the Viennese version of a gastropub). A local favourite is [Vollpension](#), a café where grannies bake their cakes according to family recipes and serve them in a homely setting. Nearby [Karlsplatz & Gusshausviertel](#) is dominated by Gründerzeit architecture, and home to the new [Wien Museum](#), documenting the city's history from Roman times to the present, as well as the baroque Church of St. Charles.

[Spittelberg](#), the revitalised Biedermeier district near [MuseumsQuartier](#) features small, romantic lanes, and countless restaurants, cafés, and bars, often with hidden “Schanigärten” (outdoor patios). [Witwe Bolte](#) is the district's oldest restaurant (it opened in the 18th century) and beloved for its traditional Austrian cuisine, while [Amerlingbeisl](#) tends to attract the younger crowd. Another interesting area is [Karmeliterviertel](#) in the second district, home to bustling Karmeliter Market, the centre of [Jewish life in Vienna](#), think kosher stores, restaurants, and bakeries. Karmeliterviertel is also home to Vienna's oldest baroque garden, the Augarten, and two world-famous institutions, the [Augarten Vienna Porcelain Manufactory](#) and the [Vienna Boys' Choir](#).

Salzburg: Check out contemporary art – and the famous local beer scene

The city of music – from Mozart to “The Sound of Music” – attracts visitors from around the world thanks to its cultural heritage. However, [Salzburg](#) also has lesser-known modern sides the locals enjoy on a daily basis – and holidaymakers can too!

The city's self-guided themed walking tours are a great way to venture out away from the tourist crowds. One especially worth highlighting is the [City Walk: Creative Salzburg](#), which takes visitors to unusual architecture, exciting museums, unusual art, and non-mainstream galleries, plus along the “Walk of Modern Art” with 14 original sculptures. More interested in Salzburg's drinks scene? Mozart's birthplace doubles as Austria's Capital of Beer with no less than eleven breweries! The [City Walk: Salzburg's Beer Culture](#) includes hotspots such as [Stiegl Brewery](#) (Austria's largest and most successful brewery since 1492!) and [Augustiner Bräu](#) in the Mülln district, a mecca for beer lovers.

Besides the art and the breweries, Salzburg's locals are also lucky to enjoy a variety of green spaces within walking distance of the city centre. However, if you want to get out of the city – without actually leaving it – take the cable car up to [Untersberg Mountain](#), a paradise for walkers, hikers, and those chasing the perfect sunset.

Innsbruck: Embrace the alpine-urban lifestyle and discover hidden gems

Living amidst majestic peaks, [Innsbruck](#)'s locals enjoy what can best be described as an alpine-urban lifestyle. It is in their DNA to make the most of both the city's amenities and nature right at their doorstep, with many of them loving everything outdoorsy. Hikers, mountain bikers or – in winter – skiers and snowboarders carrying their gear through the streets are a common sight in Innsbruck's town centre. And visitors are encouraged to embrace the local "Lebensgefühl" too. It is perfectly possible to check out sights in the morning, then hop on a cable car from the town centre to the [Nordkette](#) for the [Alpine and Urbane Perspective Walk](#) or just the vistas or join the locals for a round of [hiking, mountain biking or climbing](#).

In the city centre, the [Innsbruck food tours](#) with a local guide are highly popular, taking participants all around town to sample Tyrolean delights for four hours (there is also a 2,5 hour "Sweet Tour"). Innsbruck also has several self-guided walking tours, allowing visitors to explore highlights such as the [Huge Tower and Deep Ravines Tour](#) (taking in the Bergisel Ski Jump and Innsbruck's very own "canyon", the Sill Gorge), [Young Innsbruck](#) (trendy bars, shops, and independent culture hubs), or [Explore Modern Innsbruck](#) (for fans of contemporary architecture).

Graz: Sample through Styria's signature dishes and sip some local wines

Austria's second largest town [Graz](#) is a lively and artsy place with a Mediterranean vibe where the locals have truly mastered the art of Joie de vivre. The city is often dubbed as "Austria's Capital of Delight" – and sampling through all the local dishes is one of the best ways to experience and embrace the Styrian "Lebensgefühl".

While the signature foods such as Styrian pumpkin seed oil (used in all sorts of dishes from salads to ice cream sundaes), Styrian breaded chicken salad, and pastries are served throughout town, a [private local foodie tour](#) (for small groups from 6 people) takes holidaymakers straight to all the highlights and includes several dishes at different restaurants. Venturing out on your own? [Tagescafe Freiblick](#), [Geniesserei am Markt](#) and [Gut Schlossberg](#) rank high among the local favourites, while Graz' popular [farmers markets](#) are great for snacking in between sightseeing.

However, Styria isn't just famous for food, its wines are equally popular. Luckily, Graz is surrounded by vineyards that are easily accessible from the city. [South Styrian Wine Road](#) is one of the most famous regions, connecting charming little towns and, of course, vineyards.

As always, we are happy to assist you with additional information, images, and research trips to Austria. Please get in touch at pressuk@austria.info.

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