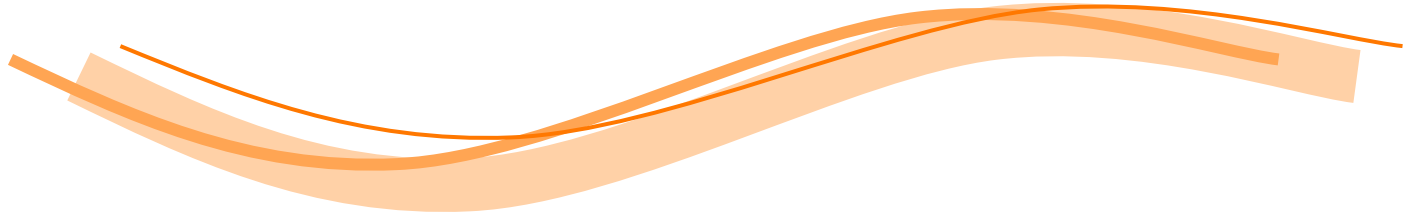




AUSTRIA





<p>AUSTRIA</p>	<p>Explore Austria and its history, music, culture and spectacular scenery!</p> <p>Vienna offers dazzling architecture, mouthwatering cuisine and inspiring music. It is a 21st century metropolis, teeming with coffee houses, restaurants, clubs and great shopping. Visit www.vienna.info and see for yourself.</p> <p>Salzburg, the birthplace of Mozart, is a living homage to the composer in a fairy tale like setting of romantic spires, baroque architecture and rolling green hills. Check it out at www.salzburg.info .</p> <p>And Graz, the cultural capital of Austria, has a vibrant lifestyle befitting a city with six universities and a strong Mediterranean flavour. Have a look at www.visitgraz.com .</p>
<p>Location</p>	<p>Austria is a landlocked country in Central Europe. It borders Germany and the Czech Republic to the north, Slovakia and Hungary to the east, Slovenia and Italy to the south, and Switzerland and Liechtenstein to the west</p>
<p>Geography</p>	<p>Austria is a largely mountainous country due to its location in the Alps. The Central Eastern Alps, Northern Limestone Alps and Southern Limestone Alps are all partly in Austria. Of the total area of Austria (84,000 km²), only about a quarter can be considered low lying, and only 32% of the country is below 500 metres. The high mountainous Alps in the west of Austria flatten somewhat into low lands and plains in the east of the country.</p>
<p>Name</p>	<p>Around 800 Charlemagne, the king of Franks and eventually Holy Roman Emperor, established a territory in the Danube valley known as the Ostmark (Eastern March). In 996 the Ostmark was first referred to as "Ostarrichi", a clear forerunner of the modern German word "Österreich", whose translation is Austria.</p> <p>The German name Österreich can be translated into English as the "eastern empire" or "eastern realm"</p>
<p>Population</p>	<p>Austria's population is around 8.3 million people. The population of the capital, Vienna, exceeds 1.6 million (2.2 million with suburbs), representing about a quarter of the country's population, and is said to constitute a "melting pot" of citizens mainly from Central and Eastern Europe but also the rest of the world. In contrast to the capital, other cities do not exceed 1 million inhabitants: the second largest city Graz is home to 250,099 people, followed by Linz with 188,968, Salzburg with 150,000, and Innsbruck with 117,346.</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>German is the official language of Austria, but since English is taught in the high schools, it's commonly spoken throughout the country,</p>

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	especially in tourist regions. Certain Austrian minorities speak Slavic languages, and Hungarian is commonly spoken in Burgenland
Currency	One Euro = \$1.52 Cdn (May 2014) The euro, the new single European currency, became the official currency of Austria and 11 other participating countries on January 1, 1999. However, the euro didn't go into general circulation until early in 2002. The old currency, the Austrian schilling, disappeared into history on March 1, 2002, replaced by the euro, whose official abbreviation is "EUR." The symbol of the euro is a stylized E: €. Exchange rates of the participating countries are locked into a common currency fluctuating against the dollar
Tipping	A service charge of 10% to 15% is included on hotel and restaurant bills, but it's a good policy to leave something extra for waiters and 2€ (\$2.40) per day for your hotel maid. Railroad station, airport, and hotel porters get 1.50€ (\$1.80) per piece of luggage, plus a 1€ (\$1.20) tip.
Government	Austria is a federal republic state with a parliamentary democracy. Austria consists of 9 independent federal states (Burgenland, Carinthia, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Tyrol, Vorarlberg and Vienna) with their own provincial governments. The federal legislation is exercised by the national council (Nationalrat) together with the Upper House of Parliament (Bundesrat) – the two chambers of Parliament. Austria is a member of the European Union, the United Nations as well as most UN organizations.
Documentation	Passports are required for Canadian citizens
Time zone	Austria operates on central European time, which makes it 6 hours later than Eastern Standard Time. It advances its clocks 1 hour in summer
Health	You'll encounter few health problems while traveling in Austria. The tap water is generally safe to drink, the milk is pasteurized, and health services are good.
Safety tips	No particular caution is needed other than what a careful person would maintain anywhere. Austria is a very safe country in which to travel. Austria operates on 220 volts AC (50 cycles). That means that Canadian-made appliances that don't come with a 110/220 switch will need a transformer (sometimes called a converter). Many Austrian hotels stock adapter plugs but not power transformers.

CLIMATE	
General climate	In Austria, the temperature varies greatly depending on your location. The national average ranges from a low of -13°C in January to a high of 20°C in July. However, in Vienna the January average is 0°C; for July, it's 19°C. Snow falls in the mountainous sectors by mid-November. Road conditions in winter can be very dangerous in many parts of the country. The winter air is usually crisp and clear, with many sunny days.

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	The winter snow cover lasts late December through March in the valleys, November through May at about 1,830m (6,000 ft.), and all year at 2,592m (8,500 ft.) or higher
Today's weather	In Vienna: 20C and sunny periods (8 May, 2014)
Best time to visit	Vienna experiences its high season from April to October, with July and August and the main festivals being the most crowded times. Bookings around Christmas are also heavy, as many Austrians themselves visit the capital during this festive time. Always arrive with reservations during these peak seasons. During the off season, hotel rooms are generally plentiful and less expensive, and there is less demand for tables in the more popular restaurants.

GETTING THERE	
Flying time	8 hours from both Montreal and Toronto
Cities	<p>Vienna: Austria's capital, the former hub of a great empire, and a province in its own right, Vienna is one of Europe's most beautiful cities. Images spring to mind of imperial palaces, the angelic voices of choirboys, the Spanish Riding School, and rich cakes served in cafes. In this former seat of the once-powerful Hapsburg dynasty, you follow in the footsteps of Schubert, Strauss, Brahms, Mahler, Mozart, and Beethoven, among others. Of course, the Blue Danube (even if it's not blue) cuts through the city that controlled a great deal of Europe for more than 6 centuries until it suffered humiliating defeats in both world wars of the 20th century. After a long, dreary slumber during the postwar years, Vienna has regained its old joie de vivre and is today one of Europe's most vital capitals. This economic power stands today at the crossroads of eastern and western Europe.</p> <p>Vienna is a city where imperial splendor and a hip modern lifestyle are combined with ease and elegance. The city seduces visitors with an intriguing blend of old and new in all areas of city life. A contrast of styles and materials defines modern Viennese architecture which blends into the cityscape and underlines the perfect mixture of old and new.</p> <p>Vienna has been home to many famous composers, such as "Waltz King" Johann Strauss, Beethoven and Mozart. The Vienna Philharmonic is one of the world's best orchestras and the Vienna State Opera one of the finest opera houses. But Vienna is more than waltzes, opera and classical music. It's also the city of electronic music and offers a large and varied program for clubbing fans. Rock and pop stars from all over the world perform here in front of beautiful historic backdrops.</p> <p>Art lovers can find excellent museums, fine art collections and world-renowned works of art in Vienna. The Museum of Fine Arts with its Breugels and the Albertina with its 1.5 million graphic works contain</p>

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countless exquisite art treasures. Many works by Austrian artists like Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele can be viewed in the Leopold Museum in the MuseumsQuartier – an exciting museum complex. And Klimt’s famous painting “The Kiss” is permanently on display at the Belvedere Palace.

Schönbrunn Palace, the former summer residence of the Habsburgs, is one of the most beautiful baroque palaces in Europe and a World Cultural Heritage. Some of its attractions are the Palm House, the Gloriette and Schönbrunn zoo – the oldest zoo in the world.

The historic center of Vienna has also been added to UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage list. Thus, St. Stephen's Cathedral, the Imperial Palace – here you can experience the daily life of the Habsburg family – and many other historic buildings are now recognized as being among the 700 outstanding cultural and natural monuments of mankind. Not far from the Imperial Palace the white Lipizzaner horses of the Spanish Riding School put on their performances.

In the pedestrian zone around St. Stephen’s Cathedral, dozens of designer flagship stores as well as tradition steeped Viennese shops, many of which once produced goods for the emperor himself, can be found. Cozy coffee-houses, trendy bars and typical Viennese restaurants are perfect places to relax in after a busy shopping spree. Alternatively, Viennese wines can be savoured at a typical “Heuriger” wine tavern.

Salzburg: A city rich with the splendors of the baroque age and the melodies of Mozart, Salzburg is one of Europe's premier architectural gems. It's also the setting for Austria's most prestigious music festival. Its natural setting is panoramic - hugging both banks of the Salzach River and "pinched" between two mountains, Mönchsberg and Kapuzinerberg. Many travelers come here to follow in the footsteps of Julie Andrews in the fabled 1965 musical The Sound of Music. The von Trapps and Mozart have put Salzburg on international tourist maps. Salt, the "white gold", originally gave the city its name. Situated on the northern edge of the Alps at the junction of ancient European trade routes, Salzburg is a city steeped in tradition that presents itself in the 21st century as a modern cultural center in the heart of Europe.

The facts and figures are as attractive as they are impressive. With a population of only some 147,000, Salzburg has more than 4,000 cultural events per year and some 20 baroque churches. The city's silhouette is unparalleled: Hohensalzburg Fortress, the baroque Cathedral, the Franciscan and Collegiate Church at the foot of the Mönchsberg and the mighty, legendary Untersberg in the distance.

Salzburg's most famous son still attracts music fans from around the world to the city. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, whose birthplace in

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Getreidegasse is one of the most often photographed buildings, was born in Salzburg on January 27, 1756. Over 350 of his most beautiful pieces were written here, laying the cornerstone for a unique career that made Mozart what he is today: undisputedly the world's most significant and most often played composer, whose music was to open a new chapter in music history.

Salzburg owes its international fame to the beauty of its picturesque surroundings and the unique charm of its cityscape, prompting UNESCO to list Salzburg's Old City as a World Heritage Site.

Innsbruck: The capital of Tyrol, Innsbruck (elevation 573m/1,880 ft.) is one of Europe's most beautiful cities. It has long been a center of commerce and traffic, as it lies at the junction of two important routes across the central Alps. In the eastern Alps, Innsbruck is about 30 minutes from the Italian border and 45 minutes from the German border. Today Innsbruck's beauty is protected by town planners who ensure that any new structures built in the inner city harmonize with the pre-existing Gothic, Renaissance, and baroque buildings. The name Innsbruck means "bridge over the Inn," which is the river that flows through the city. The city lies at a meeting place of the Valley of the Inn and the Sill Gorge. As long ago as 1180, a little settlement on the river was moved from the northern bank to the site of the present Altstadt (Old Town). In 1239, as a part of Swabia Bavaria, it was granted its own "rights and privileges," and in 1420, Innsbruck became the capital of Austria. The city was celebrated throughout Europe under the Hapsburg Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I. Under Maximilian, whose reign (1490-1519) signaled the end of the Middle Ages, Innsbruck reached the height of its cultural and political importance (it's still the cultural center of Tyrol). The city had a second imperial heyday some 300 years later, during the 40-year reign of Maria Theresia.

Olympic town: in 1964 and 1976 Innsbruck was the venue of Olympic winter games

Graz: Styria's capital, blends modern life and historical architecture. The city's legacy dates from prehistoric times, when its location at a ford across the Mur River was a major factor in its development. Romans, Slavs, and Bavarians all had a hand in shaping the town. Graz is a great place to stay because it's easy to make day trips into the countryside from here, and there's plenty to see and do. Visit the Schlossberg (castle), go hiking or hot-air ballooning, or visit one of the museums. If you're here in the fall, you might want to attend the Steierischer Herbst (Styrian Autumn) festival, which features contemporary art, music, and literature. The arts festival has a reputation for being avant-garde, presenting everything from jazz to mime. The city's name is derived

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	<p>from the Slavic word gradec, meaning "little fortress." A small castle was built on the hill, which is now the Schlossberg. The town is first mentioned in documents from the early 12th century. Graz has been ruled by many governments, including those of Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, the Babenbergs, and the Hapsburgs. The medieval town developed at the foot of the Schlossberg and some of the late-Gothic period structures remain. These buildings were constructed when Emperor Frederick III used Graz as a capital after the Hungarians forced him out of Vienna. The castle and the cathedral, along with the city's narrow-gable roofs and arcaded courtyards, all contribute to its charm.</p>
Distances	Vienna: to Salzburg 336km; to Linz 187km; to Graz 200km
Ferries	<p>Cruising the Danube (Donau): Johann Strauss took a bit of poetic license in calling the Donau "The Blue Danube," as it's actually a muddy-green color. But a Danube cruise is a highlight of any Austrian vacation. The legendary DDSG, Blue Danube Shipping Company, Friedrichstrasse 7, A-1010, Vienna (tel. 01/588800), offers mostly 1-day trips. On board, you'll pass some of the most famous sights in eastern Austria, including Krems and Melk. There are also river cruiselines that regularly ply the waters of the Danube, an experience that I thoroughly enjoyed recently (see my Travel Blog at: http://christalkstravel.blogspot.com/2008/11/vienna-austria.html)</p>
Trains	<p>Rail travel is superb in Austria, with fast, clean trains taking you through scenic regions. If you don't have a car, this is the preferred way to travel, as trains will take you nearly every place in Austria except for remote hamlets tucked away in almost-inaccessible mountain districts. Many other services tie in with railroad travel, among them car or bicycle rental at many stations, bus transportation links, and package tours, including boat trips and cable-car rides. Inter-City Express trains connect Vienna with all major cities in the country, including Salzburg, Klagenfurt, Graz, and Linz. A train trip from Salzburg to Vienna takes about 3 hours.</p>
Car Rental	<p>All drivers in Austria must have been in possession of a valid driver's license for at least 1 year before renting a vehicle. They must also present a valid passport when they sign the rental agreement. Drivers not in possession of a major credit card must pay in advance a minimum deposit, plus the estimated rental cost and the estimated tax. Cars rented from most rental companies can be dropped off in major cities of Germany for no additional charge. Drop-offs in Switzerland or Italy, however, require an extra charge, which can be quite high.</p>
Buses	<p>Buses (some of which also carry mail) cover a network of almost 30,500km of often very remote secondary roads. One of their primary functions involves retrieving passengers at railway stations for the continuation of journeys. Bus departures are usually timed to coincide</p>

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	with the arrival of trains from other parts of Austria. Buses are particularly helpful at the bottom of alpine valleys, where transit is needed to carry passengers from the local railway station up toward ski resorts and hamlets at higher altitudes. Children under 6 travel free on many of these buses, and children under 15 usually receive a 50% discount.
Passes	Rail Passes: if you plan rail travel just within Austria, consider the Austrian Railpass, available at most travel agents. You get 3 days of unlimited train travel in a 15-day period, with a choice of first class for \$160 or second class for \$109. Children 6 to 12 pay half the adult fare (free for 5 and under). Bonuses include 50% discount on most Danube steamers, 40% discount on bike rentals at rail stations, 10% to 15% on some rack railways, and 20% discount on steamers operating on Wolfgangsee.

ACCOMMODATION TYPES	All types of accommodation are available from castle hotels to pensions and chalets in the mountains.
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TARGET GROUPS	
Kids	<p>Austria is a great place to take your kids. The pleasures available for children (which most adults enjoy just as much) range from watching the magnificent Lipizzaner stallions at the Spanish Riding School in Vienna to exploring the country's many castles and dungeons. Another outstanding and kid-friendly Viennese attraction is the Prater amusement park, with its giant Ferris wheel, roller coasters, merry-go-rounds, arcades, and tiny railroad that loops around the park. Even if your kids aren't very interested in touring palace state rooms, take them to Schönbrunn, where the zoo and coach collection will tantalize. In summer, beaches along the Alte Donau (an arm of the Danube) are suitable for swimming. And don't forget the lure of the Konditorei, those little shops where scrumptious Viennese cakes and pastries are sold.</p> <p>Leave your children in safe hands at the City Kids Club Vienna: The City Kids Club Vienna at Kohlmarkt, the most exclusive part of the 1st district, is a kindergarten with a difference. In need of a short time-out for shopping, an exhibition or a business meeting? No problem – parents can leave their children in capable hands for a few hours, and with a clear conscience. The team at City Kids Club Vienna is professionally trained and multilingual (German, English, Russian), and the Club has plenty to offer the little ones too, such as entertaining interactive games, and healthy snacks and drinks. All kids aged between three and ten, including groups, are welcome.</p> <p>City Kids Club Vienna, Kohlmarkt 16/2/13, 1st district, Mo–Fr 10 a.m.–7 p.m., Sa 10 a.m.–6 p.m. or on request, www.citykidsclubvienna.at</p>

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Teens	There are lots of outdoor adventure opportunities to keep teenagers happy in the mountains: canoeing, windsurfing, canyoning, hiking, fishing, skiing and more
Romance	St. Wolfgang (Upper Austria): On the Wolfgangsee, one of Austria's loveliest lakes, St. Wolfgang lies in the mountains of the Salzkammergut. It's the home of the White Horse Inn (tel. 06138/23060), which served as the setting for Ralph Benatzky's operetta The White Horse Inn. Lying 50km east of Salzburg, the resort is a summer paradise, with lakefront beaches and cafes and hiking opportunities in all directions, plus skiing in winter.
Honeymoons & Weddings	What could be more romantic than a castle hotel with a view of snowcapped mountains and a serene lake below?
Seniors	Many Austrian hotels offer discounts for seniors. Mention the fact that you're a senior when you make your travel reservations.

UNIQUES	Driving on Top of the World on the Grossglockner Road (Land Salzburg): For the drive of a lifetime, you can take Europe's longest and most panoramic alpine highway, with hairpin turns and bends around every corner - the stuff Grand Prix is made of. It begins at Bruck an der Grossglocknerstrasse at 757m (2,483 ft.); continues through the Hochtortunnel, where the highest point is 2,507m (8,220 ft.); and ends in the province of Carinthia. The mountain part of the road, stretching some 22km, often at 1,983m (6,500 ft.), has a maximum gradient of 12%. You can drive this stunning engineering feat from mid-May to mid-November, although the road is safest from mid-June to mid-September. The views are among the greatest in the world.
Surprising	It took over 600 years to complete the famous Hohensalzburg Fortress in Salzburg: from 1077 to 1681.
History	<p>The area of today's Austria, that is the fertile Danube Valley and the Alpine valleys, were already settled in the Paleolithic Age (until approx. 8000 BC).</p> <p>The Romans arrived 200 BC and by 15 BC they dominated the entire area. The most important Roman settlement in Austria was Carnuntum (capital of the Roman province of Pannonia in today's Lower Austria) which became the center of the Roman fortifications along the Danube. Today there is an interesting Archeology Park with a museum and an amphitheatre.</p> <p>The Habsburgs: Rudolf I emerged with the crown, beginning six centuries of Habsburg rule in Austria. The centerpiece of their realm was the Imperial Palace in Vienna, today accommodating several museums (Treasury, Sisi Museum) providing a good overview of the Habsburgs. The Habsburgs increased their influence and power through strategic alliances ratified by marriages. Owing to premature deaths and/or childless marriages within the Burgundian and Spanish</p>

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	<p>dynasties into which his grandfather, Maximilian I (1493-1519), and his father had married, Emperor Charles V (1519-56) inherited not only the Hereditary Lands but also the Franche-Comté and the Netherlands (both of which were French fiefs) and Spain and its empire in the Americas.</p>
Books	<p>- Frommer's Austria – great for general travel in Austria - The Austrians: A Thousand-Year Odyssey by Gordon Brook-Shepherd looks at Austria's long history to explain its people: who they are, how they got there, and where they're going</p>
1000 Places to see before you die	<p>Bregenz Festival: floating arts festival on Lake Constance Durnstein and the Melk Abbey: 1000 year old Benedictine Abbey Old Graz: 190 km Se of Vienna, seat of the Hapsburgs Grossglockner Road: the “Road to the Glaciers” Lech and Kitzbuhel: world class skiing Salzburg Festival: Europe’s foremost music festival Vienna: “the grandiloquent watchman of history” Jan Morris The Opera Ball, Vienna: belle of all balls</p>
Must Sees	<p>Watching the Lipizzaner Stallions (Vienna): Nothing evokes the heyday of imperial Vienna more than the Spanish Riding School. Here, the sleek white stallions and their expert riders demonstrate the classic art of dressage in choreographed leaps and bounds. The stallions, a crossbreed of Spanish thoroughbreds and Karst horses, are the finest equestrian performers on earth. Riders wear brass buttons, doeskin breeches, and black bicorne hats. You can watch the performances, but you'll need to make reservations 6 to 8 weeks in advance.</p>

SPORTS ACTIVITIES	
Golf	<p>One of the country's most outstanding 18-hole courses is at the Murhof in Styria, near Frohnleiten. Others are the Igls/Rinn near Innsbruck, Seefeld-Wildmoos in Seefeld, Dallach on the shores of the Wörther See in Carinthia, Enzefeld and Wiener Neustadt-Foehrenwald in Lower Austria, and the oldest of them all, Vienna-Freudenau, founded in 1901. There are numerous 9-hole courses throughout the country. The season generally extends from April to October or November. For more information, contact Österreichischer Golf-Verband, Prinz Eugen-Strasse 12, A-1040 Vienna (tel. 01/50532450; www.golf.at).</p>
Fishing	<p>Austria is an angler's paradise, with many clear, unpolluted streams and deep rivers and lakes. You can try for trout, char, pike, sheatfish (monster catfish), and pikeperch in well-stocked mountain streams. In the right tributaries of the Danube, you might catch a huch, a land-locked salmon that's an excellent fighter and a culinary delight, usually fished for in late fall. All local tourist offices in every province offer information about local fishing conditions and can advise you of the best local outfitters. Fishermen generally need two permits - a</p>

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	<p>general license issued by the state for 58€ to 83€ (\$70-\$100) and, according to the province, a private permit from the local owner of the land. You can also write for information from Österreichischen Arbeiter-Fischerei-Vereine, Lenaugasse 14, A-1080 Vienna (tel. 01/4032176; www.fischerei.or.at).</p>
Horse riding	<p>Watching the Lipizzaner Stallions: Nothing evokes the heyday of imperial Vienna more than the Spanish Riding School. Here, the sleek white stallions and their expert riders demonstrate the classic art of dressage in choreographed leaps and bounds. The stallions, a crossbreed of Spanish thoroughbreds and Karst horses, are the finest equestrian performers on earth. Riders wear brass buttons, doeskin breeches, and black bicorn hats</p>
Hiking	<p>Hiking in the Zillertal Alps (Tyrol): This mountain paradise is the best place to hike in Western Austria. Instead of roads, you'll find footpaths winding through the scenic Zillertal Valley, east of Innsbruck. Alpine guides lead you to some of the most panoramic scenery you've ever seen. This alpine world is yours as you hike across mountain trails or ascend on lifts to higher elevations. You can even find year-round skiing at Tuxer Gletscher, a glacier.</p>
Cycling	<p>Biking Along the Danube: The Lower Danube Cycle Track is a biker's paradise. The most exciting villages and stopovers along the Danube, including Melk and Dürnstein, are linked by a riverside bike trail between Vienna and Naarn. As you pedal along, you'll pass castles, medieval towns, and latticed vineyards. You can rent bikes from the train or ferry stations, and all tourist offices provide route maps</p>
Skiing	<p>Skiing is world class in Austria and there a huge number of resorts to choose from. One of the best known is: St. Anton am Arlberg: This picture-postcard Tyrolean village sits at 1,304m (4,277 ft.), although its upper slopes climb to more than 2,801m (9,185 ft.). Massive snowfalls attract intermediate and expert skiers from all over. St. Anton lies at the eastern base of the Arlberg Pass. St. Christoph, 10km west, lies almost on the Arlberg Pass and is another chic winter enclave. Four major ski areas at St. Anton - Galzig, Valluga, St. Christoph, and Gampen/Kapall - are interlinked to form one big ski circuit.</p> <p>I personally learnt to ski as a lad at an Austrian resort: the pretty village of Pertisau. One of my favourite ski resorts in Europe is Ischgl/Galtur where the you can ski over the border into Switzerland.</p>

CULTURE	
Arts	<p>Great art galleries, unsurpassed musical events and imperial architecture make Vienna a world arts centre. Here are a couple of recommendations:</p>

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	<p>Kunsthistorisches Museum (Museum of Fine Arts), Vienna: Across from Hofburg Palace, this huge building houses many of the fabulous art collections gathered by the Habsburgs as they added new territories to their empire. One highlight is the fine collection of ancient Egyptian and Greek art. The museum also has works by many of the great European masters, such as Velásquez and Titian. Prices Admission 10€ adults, 7.50€ students and seniors, free for children under 6.</p> <p>Liechtenstein Museum, Vienna: The rare collection of art treasures from the Liechtenstein's princely collections went on display in 2004 in the royal family palace in the Rossau district. For the first time visitors can see this fabled collection of Raphaels, Rubens, and Rembrandts, one of the world's greatest private art collections. In 2003, a decision was made to open the palace and its treasures to the public. This meant restoring frescoes, relandscaping the gardens, and rejuvenating the palace. Art, such as works by Frans Hals and Van Dyck, are displayed in the neoclassical Garden Palace, which became Vienna's first museum when it opened its doors in 1807. www.liechtensteinmuseum.at</p>
Music	<p>It is said that at any time of the day or night in Austria, someone, somewhere is playing the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. You might hear it at an opera house, a church, a festival, an open-air concert, or more romantically in a Belle Epoque cafe performed by a Hungarian orchestra. Regardless, "the sound of music" drifting through Vienna is likely the creation of this child prodigy. Try to hear Mozart on his home turf, especially in Vienna and Salzburg.</p>
Films	<p>Reliving The Sound of Music: In 1964, Julie Andrews, Christopher Plummer, and a gaggle of kids imitating the von Trapp family filmed one of the world's great musicals. The memory of that Oscar-winning movie lingers on, as a steady stream of visitors heads to Salzburg just to take The Sound of Music tour. You visit the Nonnberg Abbey where the nuns sang "How Do You Solve a Problem like Maria?" as well as that little gazebo where Rolf and Liesl danced in the rain. There's also a stop at the Felsenreitschule (Rock Riding School), where the von Trapps gave their final performance.</p>
Museums	<p>Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna): This art gallery, across from Hofburg Palace, houses the stellar art collection of the Hapsburg dynasty. It's especially strong in the Flemish, Dutch, and German schools, with works ranging from Rubens to Dürer, Pieter Brueghel the Elder to Van Dyck. Also strong are the Italian, Spanish, and French collections, with works by Veronese, Caravaggio, and Tintoretto.</p>

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	<p>MuseumsQuartier (Vienna): Vienna launched its new millennium with one of the major cultural centers to open in Middle Europe in some 2 decades. Architecturally stunning, this complex contains a treasure trove of art, being especially strong in modern works. The three major museums to visit here are Kunsthalle Wien, Leopold Museum, and MUMOK (Museum of Modern Art Ludwig Foundation).</p> <p>Mozart's Geburtshaus (Salzburg): Music pilgrims flock to see the typical old burgher's house where Mozart was born. You can still see many of his childhood belongings, including a lock of hair from his egg-shape noggin, his first viola, and a pair of keyboard instruments. Mozart's first violin is also displayed. Even at the age of 4, he was a musical genius.</p> <p>Mauthausen (Upper Austria): The most unusual and horrifying museum in Austria lies 29km down the Danube from Linz. Mauthausen was a notorious concentration camp, used in World War II for the slaughter of Austria's Jews. It's estimated that some 200,000 victims were killed here. Visitors today can bear witness to this scene of holocaust.</p> <p>Tiroler Volkskunst-Museum (Innsbruck): In an abbey with 16th-century origins, this museum of popular art contains Austria's most impressive collection of Tyrolean artifacts. You'll see everything from mangers to monumental stoves from peasant's homes. The collections sweep from the Gothic decorative style through the Renaissance to the rich and opulent baroque era. The first floor contains models of Tyrolean houses.</p> <p>Landeszeughaus (Armory) (Graz): This armory, built between 1642 and 1645, displays 3 centuries of weaponry, one of Europe's great collections. Here you'll see some 30,000 harnesses, coats of mail, helmets, swords, pikes, and muskets of various kinds, along with pistols and harquebuses. There are richly engraved and embossed jousting suits and a parade of armor.</p> <p>Österreichisches Freilichtmuseum (Outside Graz): Sixteen kilometers (10 miles) from Graz in a wooded valley is one of Austria's great open-air museums. This museum of vernacular architecture, spread across 50 hectares (120 acres), features some 80 rural homes with ancillary buildings that have been reassembled. The site presents an excellent overview of the country's rural heritage, from a Carinthian farmstead to alpine houses from the Tyrol.</p>
Festivals	Danube Island Festival June in Donauinsel, Vienna

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	<p>Over three June days, the Viennese leave their beautiful buildings and make the islands of the River Danube tremble. More than 2000 participants appear on 19 single islands and 16 stages</p> <p>Salzburg Whitsun Baroque Festival May As a corollary to the main summer festival, there is a short festival over Whitsun weekend in Salzburg concentrating on baroque music.</p> <p>From mid-November, markets take over Vienna and the themed “Magic of Advent”, in front of City Hall is one of the main attractions. New Year’s Eve’s Imperial Ball at the Hofburg Palace is an unforgettable way to end the year.</p>
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ATTRACTIONS	
Beaches	<p>Austria's share of Lake Constance is a 27km long stretch of beautiful bathing beaches between the towns of Hörbranz und Gaißau, offering everything you need for restful and pleasant summer days. In summer, beaches along the Alte Donau (an arm of the Danube) are suitable for swimming.</p>
Wildlife	<p>In Austria there is a predominantly Central European fauna: deer, stag, rabbit, pheasant, fox, badger, marten, partridge. Native to the alpine regions are the chamois, groundhog, eagle and mountain jackdaw. Characteristic of the Pannonian fauna is the vast bird population in the reed beds of Lake Neusiedl (heron, spoonbill, scooper, wild goose, and many more). In recent years, Austria is home again to a small bear population, which can mainly be found in the heavily wooded southern and central mountainous regions.</p>
Parks	<p>No scenic thrill in all of Europe quite matches that available in the Hohe Tauern National Park, Europe's largest national park. Part of the Austrian Central Alps, the Hohe Tauern range cuts across Land Salzburg, Tyrol, and Carinthia. Molded during the Ice Age, these valleys are filled with pastureland, alpine heaths, vast expanses of snow and ice, forested bulwarks, fields of rock, and gargantuan alluvial and mudflow cones. The park is also home to numerous nearly extinct species. Much of this vast and remote area has never been explored, but parts are accessible by car or government-owned Bundesbus (the route goes from Bockstein to Badgastein and from Zell am Ziller to Krimml).</p>
Gardens	<p>Mirabell Gardens in Salzburg are gorgeous Baroque gardens studded with statues and reflecting pools with views of Hohensalzburg Fortress Botanical Gardens of the University of Vienna: These lush gardens contain exotic and sometimes rare plants from all over the world. Located in Landstrasse (3rd District) right next to the Belvedere Park, the Botanical Garden developed on a spot where Maria Theresa once</p>

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	<p>ordered medicinal herbs to be planted.</p> <p>When the weather is fine, Vienna's residents shun city parks in favor of the Wienerwald (Vienna Woods), a wide arc of forested countryside that surrounds northwest and southwest Vienna. If you love parks, you'll find some magnificent ones in Vienna. Within the city limits are more than 1,600 hectares (3,952 acres) of gardens and parks, and no fewer than 770 sports fields and playgrounds. You can, of course, visit the grounds of Schönbrunn Park and Belvedere Park when you tour those palaces.</p>
<p>Historical Sites</p>	<p>Schönbrunn Palace (Vienna): This palace of 1,441 rooms was the summer residence of the powerful Hapsburg family that ruled much of Europe. The great baroque architect J. B. Fischer von Erlach modeled his plans on Versailles, though he ultimately surpassed the French palace in size. Even so, Maria Theresia spoke of the palace as "cozy," where she could retreat with her many children and paint watercolors or work on her embroidery. The Hapsburg dynasty came to an end here when Karl I signed his Act of Abdication on November 11, 1918.</p> <p>Hofburg (Vienna): The winter palace of the Hapsburgs, Hofburg was the seat of an imperial throne that once governed the mighty Austro-Hungarian Empire. The sprawling palace reads like an architectural timeline of the Hapsburg family, dating from 1279 with subsequent additions continuing until 1918. Truly a city within a city, the Hofburg houses everything today from the offices of the president of Austria to the Spanish Riding School with its Lipizzaner stallions -- even the Vienna Boys' Choir.</p> <p>Schloss Esterházy (Eisenstadt): This castle in Eisenstadt, capital of Burgenland, was the seat of the Esterházy princes, a great and powerful Hungarian family that helped the Hapsburgs gain control of Hungary. The seat of their power was built around an inner courtyard and designed by Carlone, the Italian architect. Work started on the castle in 1663, but the design was subsequently altered over the years and later received the baroque treatment. The family invited Haydn here to work on his music, and in the Haydnsaal, the great composer conducted an orchestra for the family's entertainment.</p> <p>Residenz (Salzburg): The seat of the Salzburg prince-bishops, this opulent palace dates from 1120. Over the years, newer palaces were added to form an ecclesiastical complex. On the palace's second floor is a 15-room art gallery filled with the works of 16th- to 18th-century European masters. You can also walk through more than a dozen richly decorated staterooms. The Residenz fountain, which dates from</p>

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	<p>the 1660s, is one of the largest and most impressive baroque fountains north of the Alps.</p> <p>Hofburg (Innsbruck): This imperial palace, built in the 14th to 16th centuries, was the seat of Emperor Maximilian I. In the 18th century, Empress Maria Theresia made major structural changes, giving it a rococo appearance; the Giant's Hall is an architectural marvel of 18th-century Austrian architecture. In the palace's main hall hangs a portrait of Maria's famous youngest daughter, Marie Antoinette - with her head.</p>
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OTHER ACTIVITIES	
Shopping	<p>Visitors can spend many happy hours shopping or just browsing in Vienna's shops, where handicrafts are part of a long-established tradition of skilled workmanship. Popular for their beauty and quality are petit-point items, hand-painted Wiener Augarten porcelain, gold and silver work, ceramics, enamel jewelry, wrought-iron articles, and leather goods, among others.</p> <p>The main shopping streets are in the city center (1st District). Here you'll find Kärntnerstrasse, between the State Opera and Stock-im-Eisen-Platz (U-Bahn: Karlsplatz); the Graben, between Stock-im-Eisen-Platz and Kohlmarkt (U-Bahn: Stephansplatz); Kohlmarkt, between the Graben and Michaelerplatz (U-Bahn: Herrengasse); and Rotenturmstrasse, between Stephansplatz and Kai (U-Bahn: Stephansplatz). Other destinations are Mariahilferstrasse, between Babenbergerstrasse and Schönbrunn, one of the longest streets in Vienna (U-Bahn: Mariahilferstrasse or Schönbrunn); Favoritenstrasse, between Südtirolerplatz and Reumannplatz (U-Bahn: Südtirolerplatz); and Landstrasser Hauptstrasse (U-Bahn: Schlachthausgasse).</p> <p>The Naschmarkt is a vegetable-and-fruit market with a lively scene every day. To visit it, head south of the opera district. It's at Linke and Rechte Wienzeile (U-Bahn: Karlsplatz;).</p> <p>Right in the heart of the city, opening onto Stephansplatz, stands the supremely modern Haas House, designed by the renowned Pritzker Prize-winning Hans Hollein. You can see the mirror image of the cathedral reflected in its semicircular glass facade. Today, Haas House shelters a number of exclusive shops and boutiques, and also boasts a terrace restaurant with a panoramic view over the historic core.</p> <p>Antiques: Vienna's antiques shops constitute a limitless treasure trove. You can find valuable old books, engravings, etchings, and paintings in secondhand shops, bookshops, and picture galleries.</p> <p>Open-Air Markets Since the Middle Ages, Viennese merchants have thrived by hauling</p>

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	<p>produce, dairy products, and meats from the fertile farms of Lower Austria and Burgenland into the city center. The tradition of buying the day's provisions directly from street stalls is so strong, even today, that it discourages the establishment of modern supermarkets in the city center.</p> <p>The largest of the city's outdoor food markets is the Naschmarkt, Wienzeile, in the 6th District (U-Bahn: Karlsplatz), just south of the Ring. It occupies what was originally the riverbed of a branch of the Danube, which was diverted and paved over during the massive public works projects of the 19th century. It's the most popular and colorful of the markets, as well as the most comprehensive.</p>
<p>Nightlife</p>	<p>Viennese nightlife offers something for everyone. You can dance into the morning hours, hear a concert, attend an opera or festival, go to the theater, gamble, or simply sit and talk over a drink at a local tavern. The best source of information about the cultural scene is <i>Wien Monatsprogramm</i>, which is distributed free at tourist information offices and at many hotel reception desks. On Thursdays, <i>Die Presse</i>, the Viennese daily, publishes the major cultural events for the coming week. It's in German but might still be helpful to you.</p> <p>Vienna is the home of four major symphony orchestras, including the world-acclaimed Vienna Symphony and the Vienna Philharmonic. In addition to the ÖRF Symphony Orchestra and the Niederöster-reichische Tonkünstler, there are dozens of others, ranging from smaller orchestras to chamber orchestras.</p> <p>Music is at the heart of Vienna's cultural life. This has been true for centuries, and the city continues to lure composers, librettists, musicians, and music lovers. You can find places to enjoy everything from chamber music and pop to waltzes and jazz. You'll find small discos and large concert halls, as well as musical theaters. If you tire of aural entertainment, you'll find no shortage of theater, from classical to avant-garde. Below we describe just a few of the better-known spots for cultural recreation - if you're in Vienna long enough, you'll find many other delights on your own.</p>

<p>CUISINE</p>	
<p>Food</p>	<p>Austria's cuisine, often incorrectly equated with Viennese cuisine, is derived from the cuisine of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In addition to native regional traditions it has been influenced above all by Hungarian, Czech, Jewish, Italian and Bavarian cuisines, from which both dishes and methods of food preparation have often been borrowed. The Austrian Cuisine is therefore one of the most multi and transcultural ones in Europe. Goulash is one example of this.</p>

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	<p>Typical Austrian dishes include Wiener Schnitzel, Kaiserschmarrn, Knödel, Sachertorte and the imperial favourite Tafelspitz. Less well-known are the Cheese Danish and Salzburger Nockerln.</p> <p>Tafelspitz: No Austrian dish is more typical than the fabled Tafelspitz (boiled beef dinner) favored by Emperor Franz Josef. Boiled beef might sound dull, but Tafelspitz is far from bland. Boiled to a tender delicacy, the "table end" cut is flavored with a variety of spices, including juniper berries, celery root, and onions. An apple-and-horseradish sauce further enlivens the dish, which is usually served with fried, grated potatoes. The best Tafelspitz is served in Vienna, where the chefs have been making the dish for decades.</p>
Wine	<p>Austrian wine is little known in Canada but is excellent, particularly the white wines, and there are tours available of several wineries. Austria's diverse array of wines has made this country a genuine wine world treasure. The quality, the styles, the character and the expressions – they are truly individual. Of course, the wines also reflect the spirit of their winemakers, who carefully maintain respect for tradition, yet at the same time nurture vibrant innovation.</p> <p>The vineyards in Austria cover 51,000 hectares which, for the most part, lie in the east and southeast of the country. Amongst the wines produced here, white wines unquestionably make up the larger portion – cultivated in 70% of the vineyards are 22 white wine varieties permitted for high quality wine production. Nevertheless, red wine (13 varieties) has come to represent 30% of the vineyards in recent years.</p> <p>Austria as a wine producing country is divided into four wine-growing areas: 'Weinland Österreich' comprises the federal states of Niederösterreich (Lower Austria) and Burgenland with a total of 12 wine regions; 'Steierland' with its three Styrian wine regions, and 'Wien' (Vienna), Austria's capital, which comprises 700 hectares of vineyards. The other states of Austria are collectively referred to as 'Bergland Österreich' (mountain country Austria), where small vineyards are thinly scattered.</p> <p>The average harvest yields around 2.5 million hectolitres of wine, the largest part of which is consumed in Austria. Although Austrians consume 73% of their own production, exports have increased considerably over the past years.</p> <p>Austria has approximately 20,000 small wine producing estates, many of whose financial existence is based on the selling of wine directly on the premises.</p>
Restaurants	<p>Cosy coffee houses: Enjoy Viennese coffee and a typical Sacher Torte or Apple Strudel in a traditional coffee house, relaxing after a day's shopping exertions.</p> <p>Sacher Hotel Restaurant (Vienna; tel. 01/514560): A celebrity favorite</p>

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	<p>since the days of the Empire, this is the home of one of the world's most famous pastries, the Sacher torte. Against a flaming scarlet background, you can enjoy dishes that pleased emperors -- notably Vienna's famous dish Tafelspitz, the most savory and herb-flavored boiled beef you'll ever taste. Come dressed to the nines and prepare to enjoy a banquet fit for a king.</p> <p>Drei Husaren (Vienna; tel. 01/51210920): Drei Husaren has been a Viennese landmark for decades. It's a lavish, sophisticated setting in which to enjoy both classic and creative Viennese specialties. If money's no object, you might sample some of the 35 tempting items offered on a roving hors d'oeuvre cart. A meal here is nothing short of exquisite.</p> <p>Goldener Hirsch (Salzburg; tel. 0662/80840): Hospitality has been served up within its thick walls since 1407, but today the victuals are vastly improved and the clientele is a little more refined. Few other places are as elegant, and during the Salzburg Music Festivals, this is definitely the place to be. The chef prefers the grand bourgeois tradition and prepares meals with both a jeweler's precision and a poet's imagination.</p> <p>Stiftskeller St. Peter (Salzburg; tel. 0662/841268): This place was first mentioned in a document dating back to 803 and is Austria's oldest restaurant. It is also one of the most dazzling dining experiences in Salzburg. Choose between the fairly elegant, dark-wood-panel Prälatenzimmer (Prelates' Room) or one of several less-formal banqueting rooms. Along with other Austrian standards, you can dine on fish caught in local rivers and lakes. Personally recommended by Steve Kowch at CFRB!</p> <p>Restaurant Ferwall (St. Anton; tel. 05446/3249): Set in the high Alps near the Arlberg Pass, this place attracts some of the most discerning palates in Europe. Since 1972, this restaurant has been serving some of the finest fare in Tyrol, a traditional Austrian and international menu with innovative modern twists. The restaurant celebrates Tyrolean country life.</p>
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MORE INFO	
Brochures	Phone 416-967-3381 for Austria travel information
Websites	www.austria.info for Austria Tourism www.vienna.info www.salzburg.info www.innsbruck.info www.visitgraz.com

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES	Vienna; Saltzburg;
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	<p>Skiing at Pertisau, Ischgl and Galtur; Tyrol; Grossglockner Pass; Innsbruck; Zillertal</p> <p>Cruising the Danube and the Wachau Valley from Vienna to Melk Abbey</p>
Magic Moment	<p>We have climbed up above the River Danube west of Vienna to Melk Abbey, one of the most famous monasteries in the world. Situated high up on cliff, overlooking the calm waters of the Danube and the vineyards of the Wachau Valley, this Benedictine abbey was originally founded in 1089. For nearly a thousand years the monks have presided over this place of tranquility and learning, creating one of the greatest examples of Baroque architecture which is recognized as a UNESCO world Heritage Site. We enter a grand portico into an even grander courtyard. And the marvels keep on coming. The magnificent library is one of the greatest ecclesiastical treasures in the world, the frescoes, the paintings...but nothing prepares us for the sumptuousness of the Abbey Church in all its Baroque ornate splendor. As we stand in awe amidst the soaring columns and intricate works of art and devotion, it's one of those moments when time stands still...</p>

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