

Austria

NATION OF MOZART AND 'THE SOUND OF MUSIC' IS INFUSED WITH A TIMELESS, IRRESISTIBLE CHARM

About Austria

Austria is renowned for its ski resorts and musical tradition. This country of 8 million is bordered by Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Germany, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and Italy.



When To Visit

Austria is the perfect year-round destination, with lots to do in the summer and the world's best skiing in winter.

Visa Requirements

EU nationals need only an ID card, citizens from a long list of countries need passports but not visas, while some visitors need visas even if they are just transiting. Check with the nearest Austrian embassy.

Getting There

There are six international airports, of which Vienna is the busiest. If already in Europe, taking a bus is the cheapest way in, while a train or car is the most comfortable. You can also take a boat, but this is expensive.

Bahrain Connection

Austria, like Bahrain, has a F1 history, being a former Grand Prix host. It's also a fairly popular winter destination for Bahrain residents.



Travel Tip
Dress conservatively, even in social situations. Dark suits and nice dresses are appropriate for concerts and the theatre.

THE OVERPOWERING IMAGE OF AUSTRIA IS THE ONE etched in the mind by *The Sound of Music*. The reality does not disappoint – Austria is one of those blessed countries with a charm that is truly unique.

The country boasts some of Europe's finest architecture as a walk through Venice will reveal, an unrivalled artistic and musical tradition that attains perfection in Salzburg, the birthplace of Mozart, and Innsbruck's snow-capped peaks remind us that it's near impossible to find finer skiing anywhere else. And if you're looking to kindle a romance, what's nicer than a leisurely boat ride on the Danube, past some of the finest scenery you could ever imagine!

Austria lends itself to walking, cycling and climbing as well as skiing and boating, with an extensive network of hiking and mountain routes carefully signposted and cross-referenced to detailed maps. Skiing facilities can be found in over 600 wintersport



One of the spires of the Salzburg's main cathedral.

PAGE OPPOSITE: Austrians indulge in some window shopping on a street in the centre of Salzburg.



1
Klampferer-
Gasse.

ROSKOPF

WOLFF

PAUL

A panoramic view of Salzburg with Fortress Hohensalzburg sitting majestically above all else. The fortress, which dates back to the 11th century, was once one of many bastions meant to protect the rich archbishops of Salzburg from enemies.



resorts between Brand in the west and Semmering in the east.

Austria's major cities are all infused with a historical magic, notably Vienna, littered with beautiful buildings, and Salzburg, with its stunning Baroque churches set before a backdrop of snow-covered peaks.

We visited an art festival in Salzburg, where we spoke to some of the artists who were very interested in our trip and learning more about Bahrain. Before we left,

we gave them copies of the *Visitor's Complete Guide to Bahrain*, a gesture they greatly appreciated.

Austria has a justifiable reputation for music, literature and the arts, but also boasts a gourmet culture. The legendary *Gemütlichkeit* – a relaxed enjoyment of life – is in evidence in the cafés, where the art of coffee-drinking has been raised to a high art.

Traditional Austrian food is stodgy, hearty fare of the meat-and-dumpling variety. *Wiener Schnitzel* is



Fast Fact
Austrians do not use first names when introductions are made, but after the initial meeting first names are often used.

Vienna's best known culinary concoction and it has become a favourite in restaurants around the world. It's a fried cutlet, usually veal, covered in a coating of egg and breadcrumbs.

The most famous Austrian dessert is the strudel, a baked dough filled with a variety of fruits and a sprinkling of raisins and cinnamon.

While summers are enjoyable and filled with activities visitors can join in, it is tempting to return here for the winter. Austria is one of Europe's ma-

ior destinations for winter sports, particularly skiing and, more recently, snowboarding. The Austrian Alps take up approximately 60 per cent of the country's surface area and there are more than 800 winter sports resorts, with ski runs stretching some 22,000km, and a further 16,000km of cross-country skiing trails.

That trip will have to wait.

For the moment, it's time to depart for Slovenia, as the Friendship Tour nears an end.