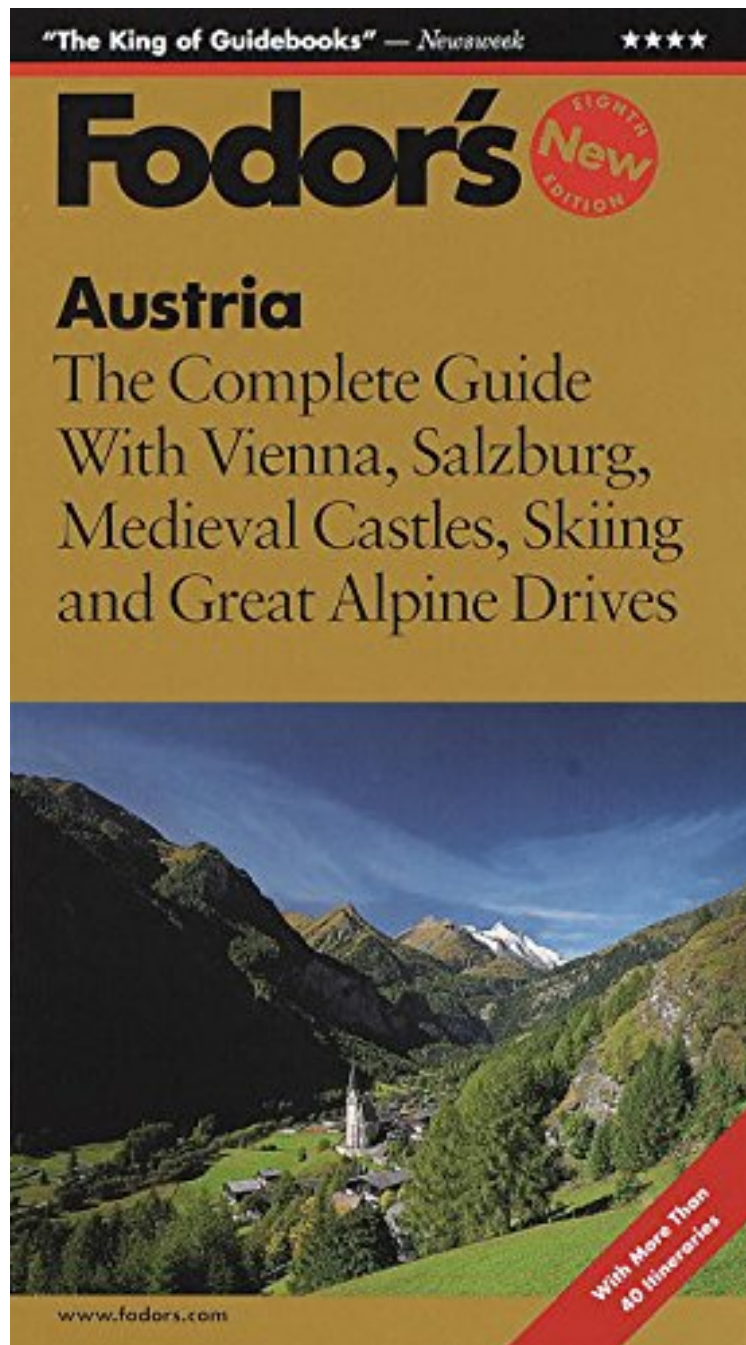


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From the Inside Flap Experienced and first-time travelers alike rely on Fodor's Gold Guides for rich, reliable coverage the world over. Smart travel tips and important contact info make planning your trip a breeze, and detailed coverage of sights, accommodations, and restaurants give you the info you need to make your experience enriching and hassle-free. If you only have room for one guide, this is the one for you. The best guide to Austria, packed with essentials Great drives and city walks -- Imperial Vienna, Mozart's Salzburg, Lake District resorts, Danube Valley abbeys Vienna side trips to the Wienerwald and the Wine District Outdoors in the Alps: hiking, golf, special skiing chapter Historic castles, music festivals, superb shopping for arts and crafts, waltzing at Vienna's New Year's balls Where to stay and eat, no matter what your budget Grand hotels, restored castles, cozy pensions and inns The best places for schnitzel, strudel, and Sachertorte -- top dining in every region, plus gemütlich coffeehouses Fresh, thorough, practical -- off and on the beaten path Costs, hours, descriptions, and tips by the thousands All reviews based on visits by savvy writer-residents 34 pages of maps, vacation itineraries, and more Important contacts, smart travel tips Fodor's Choice What's Where Pleasures Pastimes New Noteworthy German vocabulary and menu guide Complete index Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. This excerpt, from the Pleasures and Pastimes section, gives you a taste of what Austria has to offer and the sights and scenes that make it a great place to visit. Had you been in Innsbruck on August 13, 1993, you would have had a most graphic illustration of what music is to Austria. Suddenly all 23 church spires of the city started peeling away. It was a "city concert" for all the town's bells by the Spanish composer Llorenç Barber. It can happen in Austria: You're walking along thinking of nothing special, and you are suddenly hearing a concert, a recital, an orchestra rehearsing, a soprano going through her scales. You can sit in the Mirabellgarten in Salzburg enjoying coffee and cake, and listen to the opera singers rehearsing. You can be swimming in the Wörthersee in Carinthia and 20 minutes later attending a Brahms recital in Prtschach, where the great romantic composer spent time (and wrote his Fourth Symphony). That's musical Austria. It's not only Mozart whose music pours from churches and concert halls, even from the instruments of street musicians -- it's music in general that seems to be the spiritual fuel of the country. Wherever you go in Austria, you'll be confronted with classical, jazz, pop, folk, techno, punk, you name it. In summer, if you can't afford the prices of Salzburg and have not packed your best threads, then go to the more congenial Bregenz music festival, or explore the innumerable offerings of the Carinthian Summer in Ossiach. As for Vienna itself, no city can boast such a roster of fine composers and performers. From the huge Empire and beyond, they poured in in droves (assuming they were not born there) -- the better-known being Mozart (naturally), Beethoven, Schubert, Haydn, Johannes Brahms, Mahler, Richard Strauss, Johann Strauss the Younger (no relation), and Arnold Schnberg. Schnitzels, Strudels, and Sachertortes Food in Austria is extremely varied. All the gastronomic traditions of the old Empire have left their mark here, so be prepared for genuine Hungarian prklt (what we call goulash) and lecs (red pepper and tomato stew), and for heavenly Bohemian desserts. The Palatschinken are originally Hungarian as well, thin pancakes that can be stuffed around chocolate, marmalade, or a farmer's-cheese stuffing (Topfen). The national gastronomy itself includes lean spareribs and heavy-caliber bread or potato dumplings (also a Bohemian legacy) mixed with bacon or liver or stuffed with anything from cracklings (Grammel) to apricots (Marillen). In

Carinthia (and to an extent in Burgenland), you should try Sterz (also called polenta), filling and healthy cornmeal dishes that have roots in Italy and Slovenia as well. From western Austria comes Kaiserschmarrn, the "emperor's nonsense," eaten with cranberry jam. The Styrians have their salads, goat's and sheep's cheeses, their various soups, garlic soup, pumpkin soup (Krbiskremsuppe), and a basic soup of meat and root vegetables (Wurzelfleisch). In some friendly country Heuriger in Lower Austria, you can try blood sausage; Blunz'n, with mashed potatoes; or the standard Schweinsbraten, pork roast. And there is more: the famous Wiener schnitzel (veal scallop, breaded, deep-fried in fresh oil); Schinkenfleckerl (broad flat noodles with ham -- a Bohemian recipe), and the cheap but delicious Beuschl (lung and heart of beef in a thick sauce always served with a giant Kndel). Tafelspitz mit Kren is boiled beef fillet with horseradish. Venison (Wild) is a specialty that crosses restaurant class boundaries. A nice Rehrcken mit Serviettenkndel (saddle of deer with a bread dumpling cooked wrapped in cloth) at a four-star establishment is something to write home about. By the same token, you may find a robust Gamsgulasch (chamois goulash) in a rustic little hut near the summit of a Styrian mountain, or excellent smoked sausages and hams being offered by a Carinthian Almbauer at a few tables outside his summer farm in the mountains. You need not go thirsty either on your travels. Austria has excellent water, which can be drunk from the tap or straight from the spring at times, and that, good brewers will tell you, makes for excellent beer. Murau in Styria has a top brewery, with a fine restaurant attached. Some swear by Vienna's own Ottakringer. All the orchards in the country also make for terrific fruit juices. The new kid on the block for the past few years is elderberry (Hollunder), which comes in dry reds or whites and which -- like wine -- can be gespritzt, mixed with either tap water (stilles Wasser) or mineral water (Mineral). The Sommergespritzter is one-third wine, two-thirds water. Austria's wines range from good to outstanding. Don't hesitate to ask waiters for advice, even in the simpler restaurants, and as with the food, go for the local wine, if possible. For a light, dry white wine, try the Grner Veltliner. The Welschriesling is a slightly heavier, fruitier wine. In some areas, the wines have their own special names, for example, Styrians are particularly proud of their Schilcher, a generally dry ros. The reds, too, are well represented, especially in Burgenland. Blauer Portugieser, Traminer, and Zweigelt tend to be on the lighter side. For a slightly heavier red, select a Blaufrankisch or Blauer Burgunder. A novelty, if you happen to be traveling around Heiligenbrunn in Burgenland, is the powerful Uhdler, made of ungrafted vines that originally came from the United States to make European vines resistant to devastating phylloxera. The Austrian government prohibited making it because of its high alcohol content, but after Austria joined the EU in 1995, the prohibition was lifted.