



Austria

Alpine peaks, imperial palaces, coffee houses and the music of Mozart, in the heart of Europe.

AT A GLANCE

Facts to know

CAPITAL

Vienna

POPULATION

About 9.2 million (1 January 2026)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

German, in its Austrian form. Burgenland Croatian, Slovene and Hungarian are also official in some areas

CURRENCY

Euro, since 1999 (notes and coins since 2002); before that, the Austrian schilling

AREA

About 83,900 km²

GOVERNMENT

Federal republic of nine states. The directly elected Federal President is head of state and the Federal Chancellor leads the government

HIGHEST MOUNTAIN

Grossglockner, 3,798 m, in the Hohe Tauern range

LONGEST RIVER

The Danube, about 2,850 km long in total, which crosses northern Austria on its way from Germany to the Black Sea

NEIGHBOURS

Eight: Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Austria has no coastline

DRIVES ON THE

Right

CALLING CODE

+43

A 45-minute trip to Austria

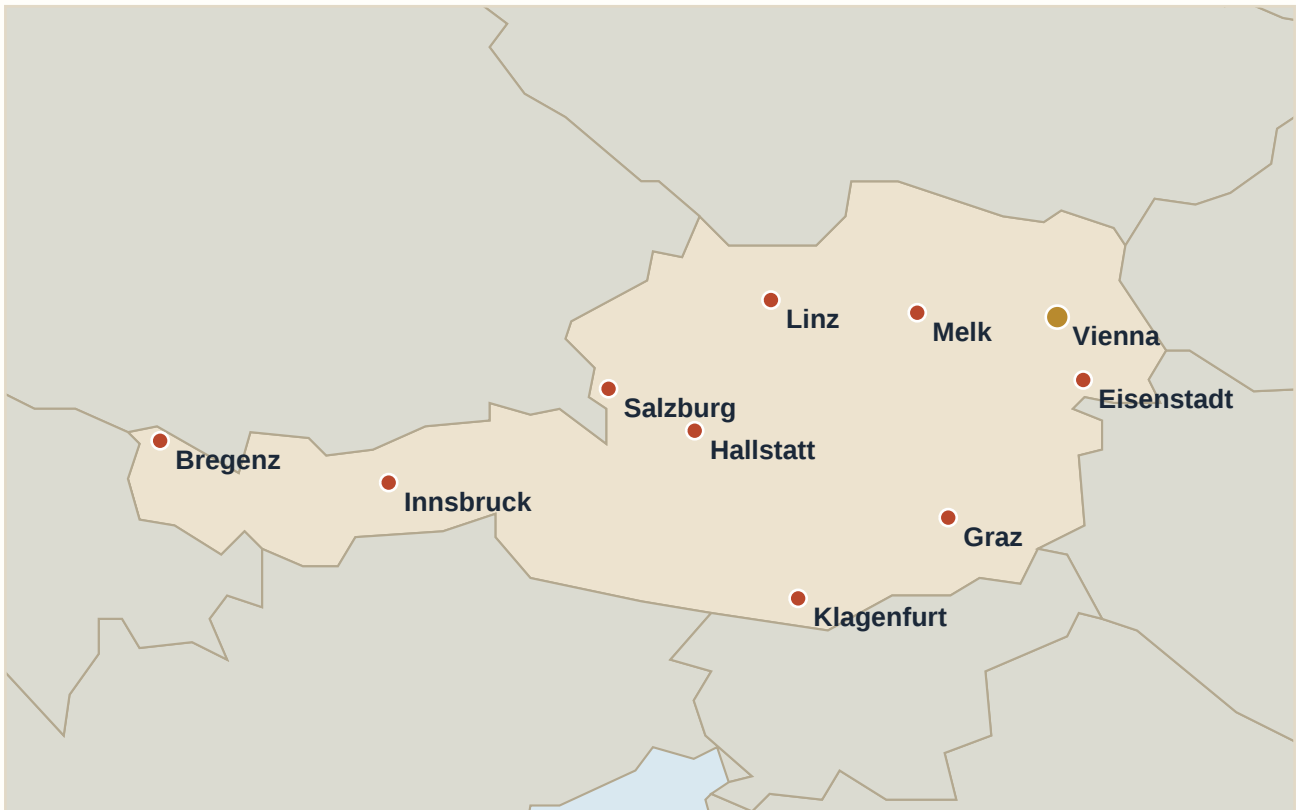
Everything you need is in this pack. No preparation beyond printing. Adapt the timing to your group.

0 to 5 min	Welcome. Show the map page and find Austria together. Ask: who has been there, or knows someone from there?
5 to 15 min	Read the facts at a glance, then three moments from the story: 800 BC: The Hallstatt culture; 1867: Austria-Hungary is created; 1995: Austria joins the European Union.
15 to 25 min	At the table: talk about Wiener Schnitzel and Tafelspitz. Idea: bring a small taste (bread, cheese, fruit, tea) if your kitchen can help.
25 to 30 min	Say it like a local: practise "Grüß Gott" (Hello (literally 'God greet you')), "Guten Morgen" (Good morning), "Guten Abend" (Good evening). Everyone says them together.
30 to 40 min	Quiz: read the questions aloud, or play the big-screen version at https://preview.worldstroll.com/countries/austria/group . No scores needed.
40 to 45 min	Talk about it (questions page), then stamp or sign everyone's passport page.

You will need

- This printed pack (one per table, or one each)
- Pens for the quiz
- Optional: a world map or globe, a small tasting, music from the country

Austria and its cities



- Vienna (Vienna): St. Stephen's Cathedral, The Vienna State Opera and the Ringstrasse, Traditional coffee houses, United Nations offices and many international organisations
- Graz (Styria): The Clock Tower on the Schlossberg, A UNESCO World Heritage old town and Schloss Eggenberg, The Kunsthaus, a striking modern art museum, UNESCO City of Design since 2011
- Linz (Upper Austria): Ars Electronica, a centre and festival for digital art, The Linzer Torte, European Capital of Culture in 2009
- Salzburg (Salzburg): Mozart's birthplace, The Salzburg Festival, Hohensalzburg Fortress, Filming locations of The Sound of Music
- Innsbruck (Tyrol): The Golden Roof, Winter Olympic Games in 1964 and 1976, The Nordkette mountains, reached by cable car from the city
- Klagenfurt (Carinthia): The Lindworm dragon fountain of 1593, The Wörthersee lake, Minimundus, a park of miniature world landmarks
- Bregenz (Vorarlberg): The Bregenz Festival's floating stage on the lake, with about 7,000 seats, The Pfänder mountain and its cable car, Lake Constance
- Eisenstadt (Burgenland): Schloss Esterházy, Joseph Haydn, Vineyards of Burgenland
- Hallstatt (Upper Austria): The salt mine, Part of the Hallstatt-Dachstein Salzkammergut World Heritage Site, The bone house with painted skulls

- Melk (Lower Austria): Melk Abbey, The Wachau valley, Boat trips on the Danube

A short history of Austria

From Iron Age salt miners to a great empire, two world wars, occupation and a new start as a neutral republic, Austria's story is the story of Central Europe.

800 BC **The Hallstatt culture**

Salt had been mined in the mountains above Hallstatt since the Bronze Age. From about 800 BC, the Early Iron Age culture found there spread across much of Central Europe. Archaeologists named the whole culture after Hallstatt, where a great prehistoric cemetery was discovered in 1846.

AD 996 **Ostarrîchi is first mentioned**

On 1 November 996, Emperor Otto III signed a deed giving land to the Bishop of Freising 'in the region commonly called Ostarrîchi', meaning 'eastern realm'. It is the oldest known written form of the name that became Österreich, Austria.

1156 **Austria becomes a duchy**

On 17 September 1156, Emperor Frederick Barbarossa raised the March of Austria to a duchy with a document known as the Privilegium Minus. Austria was given as a hereditary fief to the Babenberg family, its rulers at the time.

1278 **The Battle on the Marchfeld**

On 26 August 1278, Rudolf of Habsburg defeated King Ottokar II of Bohemia on the Marchfeld plain north-east of Vienna. In 1282 Rudolf made his sons dukes of Austria, and their descendants, the Habsburgs, ruled Austria until 1918.

1683 **The Battle of Vienna**

An Ottoman army besieged Vienna from July 1683, as it had already done once in 1529. On 12 September 1683 a relief army led by King Jan III Sobieski of Poland defeated the besiegers. The victory ended the Ottoman advance into Central Europe.

1740 **Maria Theresa begins her reign**

Maria Theresa, the only woman to rule the Habsburg lands in her own right, came to power in 1740 and reigned for 40 years. She fought long wars to keep her inheritance, reformed the state and, in 1774,

introduced compulsory schooling. She had 16 children, including Marie Antoinette.

1804 **The Austrian Empire is proclaimed**

On 11 August 1804, in answer to Napoleon making himself Emperor of the French, Francis II proclaimed the Austrian Empire and became its first emperor as Francis I. Two years later he gave up the old crown of the Holy Roman Empire.

1815 **The Congress of Vienna**

After Napoleon's defeat, the great powers of Europe met in Vienna from 1814 to redraw the map of the continent, chaired by the Austrian statesman Klemens von Metternich. The Final Act was signed on 9 June 1815.

1867 **Austria-Hungary is created**

After defeat by Prussia in 1866, the empire was reorganised by the Compromise of 1867 into a 'dual monarchy', Austria-Hungary. Emperor Franz Joseph was crowned King of Hungary on 8 June 1867, and each half had its own parliament and government.

1914 **The assassination in Sarajevo**

On 28 June 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne, and his wife Sophie were shot dead in Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb student. One month later Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, and the First World War began.

1918 **The republic is proclaimed**

As the war ended, the empire broke apart. Emperor Karl I gave up his part in government on 11 November 1918, and the next day a republic was proclaimed in Vienna. In the elections of February 1919, women in Austria voted for the first time.

1920 **The Federal Constitution**

On 1 October 1920, parliament adopted the Federal Constitutional Law, drafted mainly by the legal scholar Hans Kelsen. It was set aside under the authoritarian regime of 1934, restored in 1945, and is still the basis of Austria's constitution today.

1938 **The Anschluss**

On 12 March 1938 German troops entered Austria, and the next day it was annexed to Nazi Germany. Persecution of Jews and political

opponents began at once. More than 65,000 Austrian Jews were murdered in the Holocaust, and about 125,000 were forced to flee. Many Austrians supported the Nazi regime, and in 1991 Chancellor Franz Vranitzky formally acknowledged Austria's share of responsibility.

1945 **The Second Republic begins**

In April 1945 Soviet troops took Vienna, and on 27 April a provisional government under Karl Renner declared Austria independent again. The country and its capital were divided into four zones of occupation, run by the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain and France.

1955 **The Austrian State Treaty**

On 15 May 1955, the four powers and Austria signed the State Treaty at the Belvedere Palace in Vienna, restoring Austria as a sovereign state. The last occupation troops left in October, and on 26 October 1955 parliament declared Austria's permanent neutrality. That day is now the National Day.

1995 **Austria joins the European Union**

After a referendum in June 1994, in which about two thirds voted yes, Austria joined the European Union on 1 January 1995, together with Finland and Sweden. It adopted the euro in 1999.

What people eat in Austria

Austrian food mixes Alpine farm cooking with the kitchens of the old empire, from Hungary, Bohemia and northern Italy. The day starts with bread rolls, butter, jam, cheese and coffee. The midday meal was traditionally the main one, often a clear soup followed by meat and dumplings, and a mid-morning or afternoon snack is called a 'Jause'. Austria is famous above all for its cakes and pastries, best enjoyed slowly in a coffee house.

Wiener Schnitzel

Vienna

A thin escalope of veal, coated in flour, egg and breadcrumbs and fried in lard or clarified butter until the coating puffs up golden. It is served with a wedge of lemon and potato salad, parsley potatoes or a green salad.

Tafelspitz

Vienna

Beef simmered slowly with root vegetables and spices. The broth is often served first as a soup, then the sliced meat with roast potatoes, apple and horseradish sauce (Apfelkren) and a sour cream and chive sauce.

Kaiserschmarrn

Austria, especially the Alps

A thick, fluffy pancake made with whipped egg whites, torn into pieces in the pan, lightly caramelised and dusted with icing sugar. It is served with plum compote or apple sauce, as a dessert or a hearty lunch in mountain huts.

Apfelstrudel (Apfelstrudel)

Vienna

Thin layers of pastry rolled around sliced apples, sugar, cinnamon, raisins and buttered breadcrumbs, baked and served in slices dusted with icing sugar, often with whipped cream or vanilla sauce.

Sachertorte

Vienna

A dense chocolate sponge cake with a layer of apricot jam under a firm, shiny chocolate glaze. In Austria it is served with a spoonful of unsweetened whipped cream.

Linzer Torte

Linz, Upper Austria

A shortcrust tart made with ground nuts, butter and cinnamon, filled with redcurrant or raspberry jam and topped with a pastry lattice.

Salzburger Nockerl

Salzburg

A sweet, light soufflé of whipped egg whites, sugar and a little egg yolk, baked for a few minutes in three golden peaks and dusted with icing sugar.

Mozartkugel

Salzburg

A round chocolate sweet with a centre of pistachio marzipan, wrapped in nougat and coated in dark chocolate, named after Mozart.

Semmelknödel (Semmelknödel)

Austria and Bavaria

Round dumplings made from cubes of stale bread rolls soaked in milk, mixed with egg, onion and parsley and simmered in water. They soak up the gravy of goulash, roast pork or a creamy mushroom sauce.

Marillenknödel (Marillenknödel)

Wachau, Lower Austria

Sweet dumplings of potato or curd cheese (Topfen) dough, each with a whole apricot inside, simmered and then rolled in breadcrumbs toasted in butter and dusted with sugar.

Kärntner Kasnudeln

Carinthia

Large half-moon pasta pockets from Carinthia, filled with curd cheese (Topfen), potato and mint, sealed with a crimped edge and served with melted butter.

Kässpätzle (Kässpätzle)

Vorarlberg and Tyrol

Small soft egg noodles layered with strong mountain cheese, such as Bergkäse, and topped with crispy fried onions. In parts of Vorarlberg it is eaten with apple sauce.

Frittatensuppe (Frittatensuppe)

Austria

Clear beef broth with thin strips of pancake, sprinkled with chives. It is one of the most common soups to start a traditional Austrian meal.

Brettljause

Styria and the countryside

A cold platter served on a wooden board, called a 'Brettl': cured and smoked meats, bacon, cheese, spreads, horseradish, pickles and dark bread. In Styria it often comes with a salad dressed with dark green pumpkin seed oil.

Wiener Melange (Melange)

Vienna

The classic coffee of the Viennese coffee house, similar to a cappuccino but milder: coffee with steamed milk and a cap of milk foam. Like every coffee in a traditional coffee house, it comes with a glass of water.

Almdudler

Vienna

A sparkling herbal lemonade created in 1957 by the Viennese businessman Erwin Klein. It is drunk on its own or mixed with wine or beer.

GOOD MANNERS

At the table

- Before eating, people wish each other 'Guten Appetit', and around lunchtime colleagues often greet each other with 'Mahlzeit!'.
- When drinking together, wait until everyone has toasted with 'Prost' and look each person in the eye as your glasses touch.
- In a restaurant you ask for the bill: say 'Zahlen, bitte'. The server usually comes to the table to take payment.
- Tipping is usual but modest: round up or add about 5 to 10 percent, and tell the server the total you want to pay when you hand over the money.
- In a traditional coffee house it is fine to sit for a long time over one coffee and a newspaper. Your coffee comes with a glass of water.

Wiener Schnitzel

A thin escalope of veal, coated in flour, egg and breadcrumbs and fried in lard or clarified butter until the coating puffs up golden. It is served with a wedge of lemon and potato salad, parsley potatoes or a green salad.

Ingredients

- 4 veal escalopes, about 150 g each
- Salt
- 80 g plain flour
- 2 eggs
- 150 g fine dry breadcrumbs
- About 250 g clarified butter or lard, for frying
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges
- Parsley, to serve

Method

1. Put each escalope between two sheets of cling film and pound it evenly to about 4 mm thick. Season both sides with salt.
2. Put the flour, the beaten eggs and the breadcrumbs in three shallow dishes.
3. Coat each escalope first in flour, then in egg, then in breadcrumbs. Do not press the crumbs on, so the coating can puff up.
4. Heat the fat in a large frying pan until it is about 1 to 2 cm deep and hot (160 to 170°C).
5. Fry the schnitzels one or two at a time for 2 to 3 minutes on each side, gently shaking the pan so the fat washes over the top, until golden and the meat is cooked through.
6. Drain on kitchen paper and serve at once with lemon wedges, parsley and potato salad.

Kaiserschmarrn

A thick, fluffy pancake made with whipped egg whites, torn into pieces in the pan, lightly caramelised and dusted with icing sugar. It is served with plum compote or apple sauce, as a dessert or a hearty lunch in mountain huts.

Ingredients

- 4 eggs, separated
- 250 ml milk
- 125 g plain flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- A pinch of salt
- 2 tablespoons raisins (optional)
- 30 g butter
- Icing sugar, to dust
- Plum compote or apple sauce, to serve

Method

1. Whisk the egg yolks, milk, flour, 1 tablespoon of sugar and the salt into a smooth batter.
2. In a clean bowl, beat the egg whites with the rest of the sugar until stiff, then gently fold them into the batter.
3. Melt most of the butter in a large frying pan over medium heat, pour in the batter and scatter over the raisins. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes until the underside is golden.
4. Cut the pancake into quarters, turn each piece over and cook for another 3 to 4 minutes.
5. Tear the pancake into bite-sized pieces with two forks, add the last of the butter and a little sugar, and toss for 2 to 3 minutes until lightly caramelised and no wet batter is left.
6. Dust with icing sugar and serve warm with plum compote or apple sauce.

Semmelknödel

Round dumplings made from cubes of stale bread rolls soaked in milk, mixed with egg, onion and parsley and simmered in water. They soak up the gravy of goulash, roast pork or a creamy mushroom sauce.

Ingredients

- 250 g stale white bread rolls, cut into small cubes
- 250 ml milk
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 20 g butter
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- Salt and a pinch of nutmeg
- 1 to 2 tablespoons flour, if needed

Method

1. Warm the milk, pour it over the bread cubes and leave to soak for 15 minutes.
2. Soften the onion in the butter over low heat for 5 minutes.
3. Add the onion, eggs, parsley, salt and nutmeg to the bread and mix well with your hands. If the mixture is too wet to hold its shape, add a little flour. Leave to rest for 10 minutes.
4. With wet hands, shape 8 round dumplings.
5. Lower them into a large pan of salted water at a gentle simmer (not a rolling boil) and cook for 15 to 20 minutes, until firm and cooked right through.
6. Lift out with a slotted spoon and serve with goulash, roast pork or mushroom sauce.

Frittatensuppe

Clear beef broth with thin strips of pancake, sprinkled with chives. It is one of the most common soups to start a traditional Austrian meal.

Ingredients

- 100 g plain flour
- 200 ml milk
- 1 egg
- A pinch of salt
- A little butter, for frying
- 1 litre good beef broth
- Chopped chives

Method

1. Whisk the flour, milk, egg and salt into a smooth, thin batter and leave it to rest for 10 minutes.
2. Heat a little butter in a frying pan and pour in just enough batter to cover the base thinly.
3. Cook for about 1 minute on each side, until lightly golden and set. Repeat with the rest of the batter.
4. Let the pancakes cool a little, roll them up and slice them into thin strips.
5. Bring the broth to the boil. Put the pancake strips into soup bowls, pour the hot broth over them and sprinkle with chives.

Useful phrases

Grüß Gott

GRUESS GOT (the 'ü' is said with rounded lips) · Hello (literally 'God greet you')

Guten Morgen

GOO-ten MOR-gen · Good morning

Guten Abend

GOO-ten AH-bent · Good evening

Auf Wiedersehen

owf VEE-der-zay-en · Goodbye

Wie geht es Ihnen?

vee GAYT es EE-nen · How are you? (polite)

Danke schön

DAHN-keh SHERN · Thank you very much

Bitte schön

BIT-teh SHERN · You're welcome, or here you are

Entschuldigung

ent-SHOOL-dee-goong · Excuse me, sorry

Sprechen Sie Englisch?

SHPREKH-en zee ENG-lish · Do you speak English?

Ich verstehe nicht

ikh fer-SHTAY-eh nikht · I don't understand

Die Speisekarte, bitte

dee SHPY-zeh-kar-teh, BIT-teh · The menu, please

Eine Melange, bitte

EYE-neh meh-LAHNZH, BIT-teh · A Melange (milky coffee), please

Ein Glas Wasser, bitte

ine glahs VAHS-ser, BIT-teh · A glass of water, please

Zahlen, bitte

TSAH-len, BIT-teh · The bill, please (literally 'to pay, please')

Prost!

PROHST · Cheers!

Mahlzeit!

MAHL-tsite · Enjoy your lunch (a lunchtime greeting)

Wo ist die Toilette?

voh ist dee toy-LET-teh · Where is the toilet?

Wie viel kostet das?

vee FEEL KOS-tet dahs · How much does this cost?

Things you might not know

1. The carol 'Silent Night' was first sung on Christmas Eve 1818 in the church of St Nicholas in Oberndorf, near Salzburg. The priest Joseph Mohr had written the words in 1816, and the teacher Franz Xaver Gruber wrote the melody for that evening. It has been translated into about 300 languages.
2. The zoo at Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna was founded in 1752 and is described as the oldest zoo in the world that is still open.
3. The Vienna Boys' Choir goes back to 1498, when Emperor Maximilian I ordered six boys to sing at his court. Today about 100 boys aged 9 to 14 sing in four touring choirs named after Bruckner, Haydn, Mozart and Schubert.
4. The red-white-red flag is one of the oldest national symbols still in use; the earliest evidence is a seal from 1230. Legend says Duke Leopold V's white tunic was soaked in blood at the siege of Acre, except under his belt.
5. The German name of Austria, Österreich, comes from 'Ostarrîchi', 'eastern realm', first written in a deed of 996.
6. Viennese coffee house culture was added to Austria's national list of intangible cultural heritage in 2011. The listing describes coffee houses as places 'where time and space are consumed, but only the coffee is found on the bill'.
7. The Spanish Riding School in Vienna was first named in 1565. Its Lipizzaner horses are born dark and slowly turn white as they grow up. Its classical horsemanship has been on UNESCO's list of the intangible heritage of humanity since 2015.
8. Johann Strauss II's waltz 'The Blue Danube' was first performed in Vienna in 1867. The first performance was only a mild success, but today many Austrians treat it as an unofficial anthem.
9. Since 1 January 2012, Austria's national anthem has spoken of a 'home of great daughters and sons'; before, it mentioned only sons. Its melody was long credited to Mozart, but scholars now think it was written by someone else.
10. The song 'Edelweiss' is not an Austrian folk song or anthem. Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II wrote it in 1959 for the Broadway

musical The Sound of Music.

11. The film The Sound of Music (1965) was shot partly in and around Salzburg. The real von Trapp family left Austria in 1938 by train, not by walking over the mountains as in the film.
12. The Economist Intelligence Unit ranked Vienna the world's most liveable city in 2018, 2019, 2022, 2023 and 2024. As of 2026, it ranks second, behind Copenhagen.
13. When Austria joined the European Union in 1995, 23 Austrian food words, such as 'Marille' for apricot and 'Topfen' for curd cheese, were written into the accession treaty with the same legal status as the words used in Germany.
14. As of 2026, Austria has 12 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, from the historic centres of Vienna, Salzburg and Graz to the Semmering mountain railway and the Wachau valley.

TALK ABOUT IT

Questions for the group

- Have you ever been to Austria, or has someone in your family? What do you remember?
- Have you ever tasted Wiener Schnitzel or Tafelspitz? What is a dish you remember from a trip?
- The Austrian State Treaty (1955). Do you remember hearing about it? Where were you then?
- Austria joins the European Union (1995). Do you remember hearing about it? Where were you then?
- Have you seen Schönbrunn Palace, in person or in pictures? Which famous place would you most like to see?
- If you could spend one day in any city of Austria, which would it be and why?

QUIZ

How well do you know Austria?

Circle the right answer. The answers are on the last page.

1. Austria joined NATO in 1955, the year it declared its neutrality.

- A) True
- B) False

2. Besides the European number 112, which Austrian number calls an ambulance?

- A) 144
- B) 133
- C) 122
- D) 140

3. The Austrian State Treaty of 1955 was signed in Salzburg.

- A) True
- B) False

4. Which breed of horse performs at the Spanish Riding School in Vienna?

- A) Shetland pony
- B) Lipizzaner
- C) Arabian
- D) Clydesdale

5. In which city is the Golden Roof, a balcony covered with 2,657 gilded copper tiles?

- A) Vienna
- B) Graz
- C) Innsbruck
- D) Salzburg

6. Who composed the waltz 'The Blue Danube', first performed in Vienna in 1867?

- A) Johann Strauss II
- B) Joseph Haydn
- C) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- D) Franz Schubert

7. Salzburger Nockerl are savoury meat dumplings served in soup.

- A) True
- B) False

8. What is the usual way to tip in an Austrian restaurant?

- A) A 20 percent service charge is always added
- B) Leave 25 percent on the table
- C) Tipping is forbidden by law
- D) Round up and tell the server the total you want to pay

9. Which Austrian city hosted the Winter Olympic Games twice, in 1964 and 1976?

- A) Graz
- B) Klagenfurt
- C) Innsbruck
- D) Salzburg

10. In which small state capital did Joseph Haydn work for the Esterházy princes, and where is he buried?

- A) Bregenz
- B) Eisenstadt
- C) Innsbruck
- D) Linz

11. In which city was Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, shot in June 1914?

- A) Belgrade
- B) Budapest
- C) Sarajevo
- D) Vienna

12. The Bregenz Festival performs on a floating stage on Lake Constance.

- A) True
- B) False

Quiz answers

1. False

False. On 26 October 1955 Austria declared permanent neutrality, which rules out joining military alliances. That day is now the National Day.

2. A) 144

144 is the ambulance. 133 is the police, 122 the fire brigade and 140 mountain rescue.

3. False

False. It was signed on 15 May 1955 at the Belvedere Palace in Vienna.

4. B) Lipizzaner

The school's Lipizzaner stallions are born dark and slowly turn white.

5. C) Innsbruck

The Golden Roof is in Innsbruck's old town. It was finished in 1500 for Maximilian I.

6. A) Johann Strauss II

Johann Strauss II wrote it. Mozart, Haydn and Schubert all died long before 1867.

7. False

False. Salzburger Nockerl is a sweet, light soufflé baked in three peaks, said to stand for three hills of Salzburg.

8. D) Round up and tell the server the total you want to pay

Round up and tell the server the total you want to pay, usually about 5 to 10 percent more than the bill.

9. C) Innsbruck

Innsbruck hosted the Winter Olympics in 1964 and 1976, and the first Winter Youth Olympic Games in 2012.

10. B) Eisenstadt

Haydn lived and worked in Eisenstadt, the capital of Burgenland, and is buried in its Bergkirche.

11. C) Sarajevo

He and his wife Sophie were shot in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. A month later Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia.

12. True

True. The stage on the lake, the Seebühne, has seats for about 7,000 people.

Austria visa page

Name: _____ Date: _____



Next stops

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<https://preview.worldstroll.com/countries/austria>