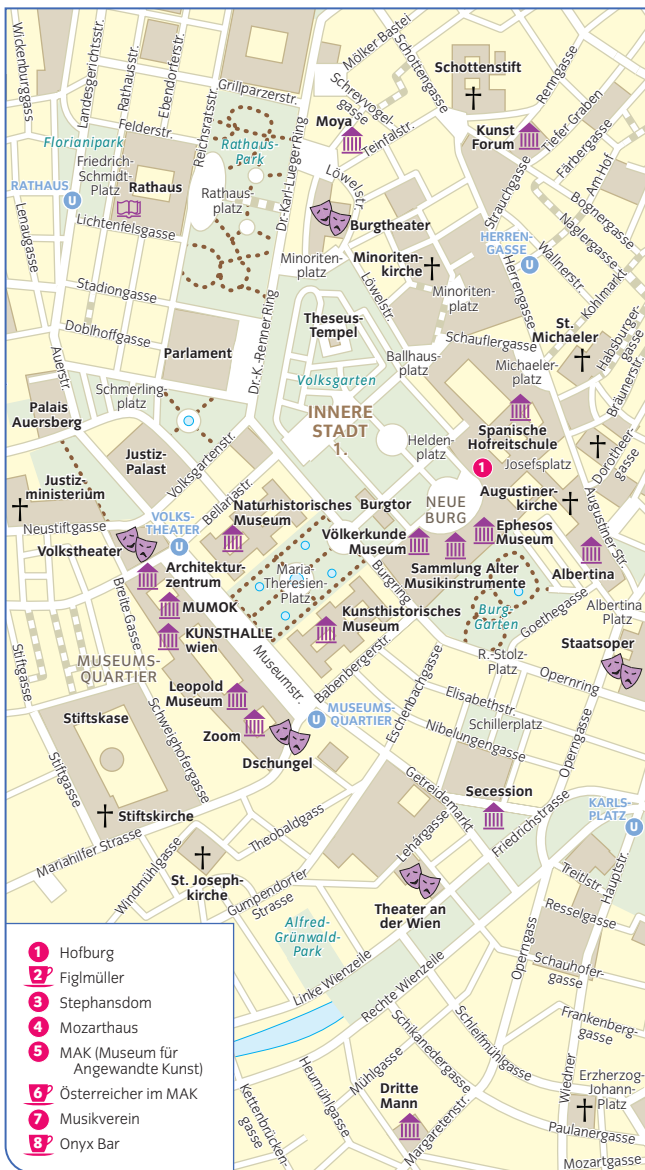


1

# The Best Full-Day Tours



## The Best of Vienna in One Day





**Where better to start exploring Vienna than at its historic heart?** On this tour you can soak up the atmosphere of imperial Vienna; admire the Stephansdom (St Stephen's Cathedral and national emblem of Austria); tuck into the finest schnitzels in town; and take a reverential peep inside Mozart's only surviving Viennese home . . . all in a single day. **START: Hofburg (U-Bahn 3 Herrengasse).**

**1 ★★★ Hofburg.** Home to the powerful Habsburg dynasty which ruled Austria for six centuries, the grandiose Hofburg buildings are a remarkable long-term record of Viennese lifestyle and architecture. Don't be put off by the daunting tally of 18 wings, 19 courtyards, and 2,600 rooms. This rambling complex has been manageably packaged into neat clusters of attractions. The Sisi Museum vividly portrays the moving life of Vienna's beloved empress, Elisabeth of Bavaria (1837–98). The Imperial Apartments include the study, waiting room, and audience room of Sisi's husband, the Emperor Franz Joseph I (1848–1916). Sisi's exercise room contains some surprisingly modern gym apparatus. The Hofburg's first bathroom (which wasn't installed until 1876) featured the latest rage—a linoleum floor, while its tiny tiled closet was considered the last word in luxury at the time. Elsewhere within the vast Hofburg

complex, make sure you don't miss the Schatzkammer (Treasury), a glittering hoard of Habsburg jewels amassed over more than a millennium, and the celebrated Spanische Reitschule (Spanish Riding School), where magnificent and beautiful Lipizzaner stallions cavort to Viennese waltz music. 🕒 1–4 hr. **Hofburg.** [www.hofburg-wien.at](http://www.hofburg-wien.at). **U-Bahn 3 (Herrengasse).** See p 28–31 and p 44, bullet 5.

**2P ★★★ kids Figlmüller.** Don't miss this cozy little restaurant, tucked down a narrow arcade. It's much visited by tourists and often very crowded, but it reputedly serves the best schnitzels in Vienna, bigger than a dinner-plate. These are traditionally accompanied by a mixed salad and wine from the owner's own vineyard in Grinzing (see p 103). Booking is essential. **Wollzeile 5.** ☎ 01 512 6177. \$\$.

*The Hofburg's central courtyard.*





## Sisi—A Tragic Empress

The eccentric, reclusive, and beautiful Empress ‘Sisi’ was born Elisabeth, Duchess of Bavaria, in 1837. At the tender age of 15, she agreed to marry her cousin, Franz Joseph of Austria, and took up residence in the Hofburg. Thrust unwillingly into the public eye, she hated imperial life and declined to fulfill the traditional roles of empress, wife, and mother. Her eldest child died aged two, and her fourth child committed suicide. She eventually became estranged from her husband, wrote increasingly melancholic poetry, and travelled incessantly. In 1885 she wrote: ‘I am a seagull, of no land, I call no shore my home, I am bound to no place, I fly from wave to wave.’ She was assassinated in Geneva in 1898 by an Italian anarchist, who later remarked: ‘I wanted to kill a royal. It did not matter which one.’

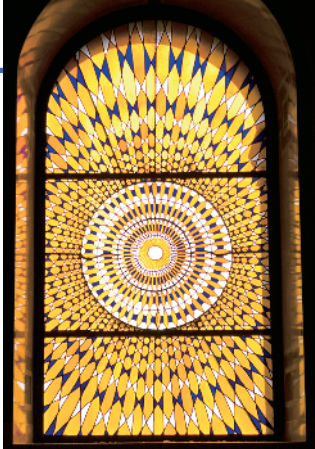
**3 ★★ Stephansdom.** The Viennese affectionately call their majestic cathedral the ‘Steffl’. Dominating the city center, its skeletal spire towers 137m above the rooftops. Literally and figuratively, it represents a high point in Viennese Gothic architecture. The cathedral is now a national emblem. Its graceful pillars and lofty ribbed vaulting were described by architect Adolf Loos as ‘the most spiritual church interior in the world’. Take the elevator (and your camera) up the north tower for exceptional views of the city center and the cathedral’s eye-catching yellow, blue, and green rooftop, which consists of a quarter of a million brilliantly glazed tiles. The Stephansdom’s ‘Pummerin’ (Boomer) bell is Austria’s largest and heaviest. It is used just once annually—to ring in the New Year. Beethoven discovered the totality of his deafness when he realized he could no longer hear the bells. The square in front of the cathedral was once a marketplace. Medieval measuring marks are still visible in the masonry by the main west entrance. Two are ancient measures of length (the shorter ‘Bohemian’ and the longer ‘Viennese’ ell), while another indicates

the correct size for a loaf of bread.

 **1hr; go early on weekdays or during the evening to avoid the tour groups. Stephansplatz 3.**  **01 515 52 3520. [www.stephanskirche.at](http://www.stephanskirche.at). Free admission. Mon–Sat 6am–10pm, Sun 7am–10pm. Elevator daily 8.30am–5.10pm (€4.50 adults,**

*St. John Capistrano rallied the people to crusade in 1454 from this pulpit, to hold back the Muslim invasions of Christian Europe.*





Stained glass window in the Museum of Applied Arts.

€1.50 kids). U-Bahn 1/3 (Stephansplatz).

**4 ★★ kids Mozarthaus.** There's no escaping Mozart's association with Vienna—from *Mozartkugeln* chocolates to ticket touts dressed in his typically flamboyant style. Of his fourteen addresses across the city, only the Mozarthaus remains—a most desirable residence even in Mozart's time. On arrival in Vienna in 1781, he wrote to his father 'This is a magnificent place here and the best place in the world for my profession'. He lived in this apartment from 1784 to 1787. They were his happiest and most productive years, during which time he composed countless chamber works and his opera *The Marriage of Figaro*. Here, Mozart's career reached its peak, but a taste for the highlife, especially gambling, ruined him. Just four years later, he died a pauper, buried in a mass grave in St Marx cemetery. It's well worth getting an audio guide here (there's a special one for kids too). Start at the top of the house and work your way down. Although lacking any of the composer's personal possessions, the house vividly portrays his life and times, through period furnishings

and musical memorabilia. 🕒 1hr. Domgasse 5. 📞 01 512 1791. [www.mozarthausvienna.at](http://www.mozarthausvienna.at). €9 adults, €7 concessions, €7 students, €3 kids 3–12 (free under 3), €18 family (2 adults, 3 kids under 15); audio guides for adults and kids are included in the price. Daily 10am–7pm. U-Bahn 1/3 (Stephansplatz).

**5 ★★ Museum für Angewandte Kunst (MAK).** The Applied Arts Museum is one of Vienna's most eclectic museums, showcasing eight centuries of Austrian decorative arts and design. Treasures range from Renaissance jewelry and Biedermeier furniture to the world's first fitted kitchen—the *Frankfurter Küche* (Frankfurt Kitchen). The rooms are arranged in chronological order from the Gothic era to the present day. Highlights include the Jugendstil (the German equivalent of the Art Nouveau movement) rooms, where the evolution of chair design is cleverly shown through a series of shadow screen silhouettes; and the exquisite Arts and Crafts exhibits from the Wiener Werkstätte

The view from Mozart's window down 'Bloody Alley'.





Musikverein façade.

(see p 35). Allow time to visit the superb museum shop, full of design objects, arty gifts and weird and wonderful gadgets and gizmos. 🕒 **1hr**; *the museum gets very crowded on Saturdays, when admission is free.* **Stubenring 5.** ☎️ **01 711 36-0.** [www.mak.at](http://www.mak.at). €7.90 adults, €5.50 concessions, €6.30 with Vienna Card, €11 family ticket (free under 6). **Tues 10am–midnight, Wed–Sun 10am–6pm.** U-Bahn 3 (Stubentor).

**6** ★★ **Österreicher im MAK.**

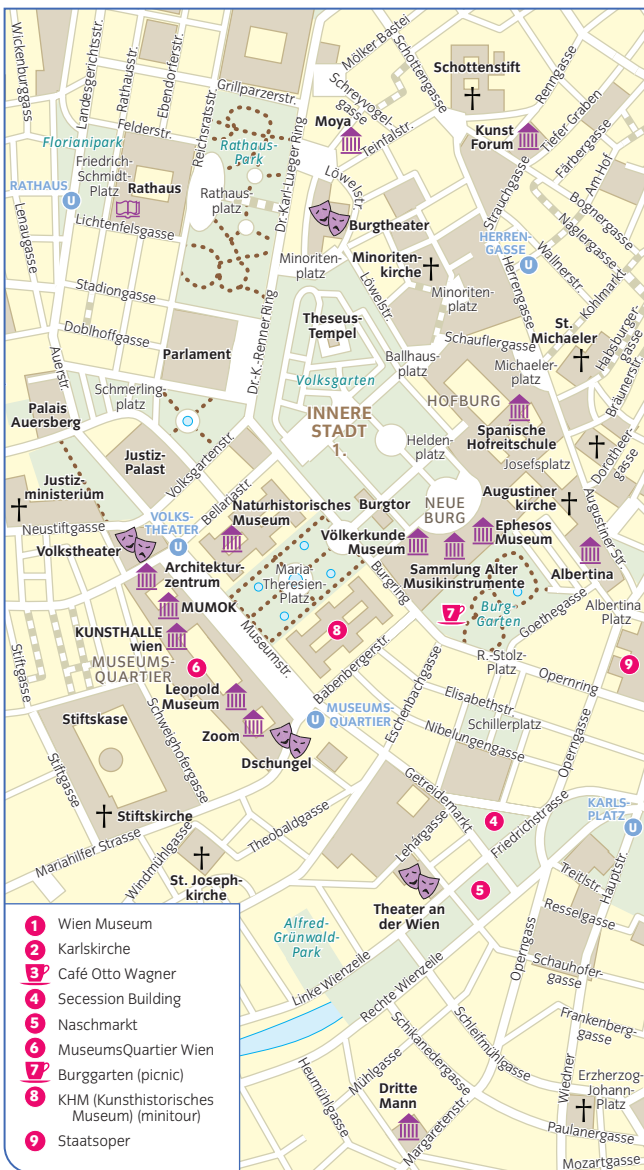
This ultra-stylish, minimally furnished museum café with its elaborate coffered ceiling and big windows is the perfect venue for an early evening meal. Resident chef Helmut Österreicher's light, experimental cuisine offers a refreshing twist on the usual Viennese repertoire. If the weather's fine, ask for a table in the garden. **Stubenring 5.** ☎️ **01 7144 0121.** \$\$.

**7** ★★ **Musikverein.** If you can get to only one concert in Vienna, make sure it's at the Musikverein—the city's most prestigious classical

music venue. Each year, the sumptuously decorated Golden Hall hosts Vienna's celebrated New Year's Day concert, performed by its world-famous resident orchestra, the Vienna Philharmonic (see p 137). An awe-inspiring roll-call of former concert directors includes Johannes Brahms, Herbert von Karajan and, more recently, Leonard Bernstein, Claudio Abbado and Riccardo Muti. The building itself, designed by Theophil Hansen in Greek Renaissance style, with lavish use of terracotta capitals, balustrades, and gilded statuary, was opened in 1870 for the Viennese Society of Friends of Music. **Bösendorferstrasse 12.** ☎️ **01 505 8190.** [www.musikverein.at](http://www.musikverein.at). **Tickets €4 (standing room)–€85.** U-Bahn 1/2/4 (Karlsplatz).

**8** ★★ **Onyx Bar.** Enjoy a nightcap at this sleek rooftop bar in the curvaceous, hi-tech Haas Haus building (see p 63). The cocktail menu is almost as impressive as the photogenic views of the Stephansdom steeples. **Stephansplatz 12.** ☎️ **01 5353 9690.** \$\$.

## The Best of Vienna in Two Days







**O**n your second day, you can start to get to the heart of the city. This tour unwraps more of Vienna's remarkable history and its dazzling art treasures, with a relaxing interlude to soak up the atmosphere and flavors of the Naschmarkt (Vienna's most colorful market). Some of the world's finest museums and art galleries await you after a snack or picnic lunch in the park. In the evening, a visit to the opera rounds off a perfect day. **START: U-Bahn 1/2/4 Karlsplatz.**

**1 ★★ Wien Museum.** Don't let the ugly exterior of the Vienna Museum put you off. Inside, three floors trace the history of the city from the Neolithic Age to the mid-20th century, illustrated by some of its finest treasures. My favorite exhibits are the early maps and large-scale models of Vienna, showing vividly how the city has grown over the centuries. A clear overview of Vienna's eventful past makes exploring the city infinitely more rewarding. 🕒 *1hr.* 📍 *Karlsplatz.* 📞 *01 505 8747-0.* 🌐 *www.wienmuseum.at.* 💰 *€6 adults, €4 concessions, €3 students, €13 family card (free on Sun).* 🕒 *Tues–Sun 9am–6pm.* 🚇 *U-Bahn 1/2/4 (Karlsplatz).*

**2 ★★ Karlskirche.** This church is one of the most accomplished examples of the European baroque style, and deserves a close look both inside and out. Commissioned by Emperor Karl VI for the citizens of Vienna, this architectural masterpiece served to assert the Habsburg claim to European supremacy after the Siege of Vienna in 1683, when the Turks were finally driven from the empire. *See p 67, bullet 5.*

**3 Café Otto Wagner.** Sit and watch the world go by in one of the former city railway stations (see p 33, bullet 2), designed by pioneering Jugendstil architect Otto Wagner in 1899, now converted into a delightful café. *Karlsplatz.* 📞 *01 505 9904.* 💰.

**4 ★★★ Secession Building.** This unusual white block was created in 1898 by Otto Wagner's student, Joseph Maria Olbrich, as a 'Temple of Art'—a celebration of the 'Secessionist' artistic movement—reflecting the fluid, functional yet decorative style of a new generation of artists (led by Gustav Klimt) who rebelled against the meaningless excesses of Viennese ornamentation. An inscription above the door proclaims 'Der Zeit ihre Kunst, der Kunst ihre Freiheit' ('To the age, its own art; to art, its own freedom'). Garlands and floral patterns adorn

*Karlskirche's imposing dome dominates the skyline.*





Watch the world go by at the Café Otto Wagner.

the façade, while the entrance is decorated with a golden tree and the heads of the three Gorgons (representing architecture, sculpture, and painting). The crowning glory, however, is a dome of gilded laurel leaves—supposedly symbolizing the interdependence of art and nature—which has earned the Secession Building the affectionate nickname the ‘Golden Cabbage’. The airy interior remains true to its original purpose, hosting exhibitions of contemporary art. In the basement, Klimt’s Beethoven frieze is essential viewing (see p 33, bullet 3).

🕒 30min. Friedrichstrasse 12. ☎️ 01 587 5307. [www.secession.at](http://www.secession.at). €6 adults, €3.50 concessions (free under 10). Tues–Sun 10am–6pm, Thurs until 8pm; guided tours (in German) Sat 3pm, Sun 11am. U-Bahn 1/2/4 (Karlsplatz).

5 ★★★ **kids Naschmarkt.** The colorful Naschmarkt is Vienna’s largest and liveliest market—a must for all food lovers and perfect place to look for picnic provisions. Mouth-watering displays of seasonal produce—fruit, vegetables, flowers, fish, cheese, and wine—give visitors an extraordinary culinary tour around the world. It stands in the valley of the River Wien, a site once

occupied by medieval vineyards and an 18th-century milk market. Traditional wooden stalls lend it an old-fashioned air. It also has a dazzling choice of eateries to suit all tastes and budgets, ranging from the snack bars which kick-start market traders with early-morning caffeine shots to seafood brasseries that seduce city sophisticates with platters of oysters. The Karlsplatz end tends to have the smartest (and most expensive) Viennese-run stalls, along with luxury delicatessens and elegant pavement cafés. This gives way to a less formal multi-ethnic

*Tempting displays at the Naschmarkt draw crowds of shoppers daily.*



section, selling exotic produce and spices from all over the world. Further west (near Kettenbrückengasse), a popular farmers' market takes place on Fridays and Saturdays (Mar–Oct), and a Saturday morning fleamarket hawks a jumble of antiques, clothing, and bric-a-brac to bargain hunters. 🕒 1hr. *Naschmarkt. Stalls: Mon–Fri 8am–6pm, Sat 6am–1pm; snack bars: times vary, some open until 10pm or 11pm, closed Sun. U-Bahn 1/2/4 (Karlsplatz), U-Bahn 4 (Kettenbrückengasse).*

6 ★★★ **kids Museums-Quartier Wien.** Built as 'an urban cultural oasis' and housed within former riding stables dating from baroque times, this huge museum complex is one of the great success stories of contemporary Vienna. Several art galleries surround a vast central courtyard. The Leopold Museum contains Austrian art from the 19th and 20th centuries; MUMOK is the nation's largest modern-art museum; and the Kunsthalle stages temporary art exhibitions. Add to this an architecture center, a kids' museum, and a cluster of shops, open-air restaurants, cafés and bars, and you have one of the most popular cultural venues in town for locals and visitors alike (see p 74). 🕒 1–6hr. *Museumsplatz 1.* 📞 01 523 81-1730. [www.mqw.at](http://www.mqw.at). *U-Bahn 2 (Museumsquartier).*

*Egyptian friezes adorn the walls of the KHM.*

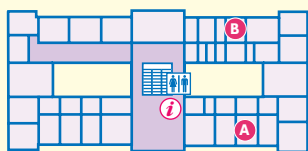
7 ★ **kids Picnic lunch in Burggarten.** Join Mozart, Goethe, and other sculpted luminaries in this shady park (see p 58, bullet 2) and tuck in to your Naschmarkt picnic; or snatch a sausage with crusty bread and a dollop of mustard from the Wienerwurststand by the main entrance to the park. *Burgring, opposite Eschenbachgasse. No phone. \$.*

8 ★★★ **Kunsthistorisches Museum (KHM).** Vienna's superlative Museum of Fine Arts occupies a monumental Renaissance-style building on the Ringstrasse. It contains the Imperial collection assembled over centuries by the Habsburgs, who were keen patrons and avid collectors of art. It's a staggering haul of treasures from all around the world, displayed in room after room on three floors. There's far too much to see properly in a single visit, be sure to see the Old Master paintings in the Gemäldegalerie (Picture Gallery) on the first floor.

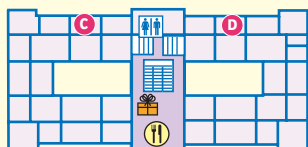
9 ★★★ **Staatsoper.** The State Opera holds a special place in the hearts of the Viennese, and is recognized by music-lovers everywhere as one of the world's most illustrious opera-houses. You can visit the interior, with its grand staircase and plush red-and-gold auditorium, on a guided



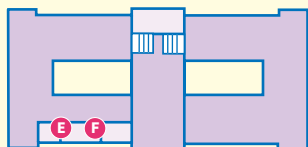
## Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR



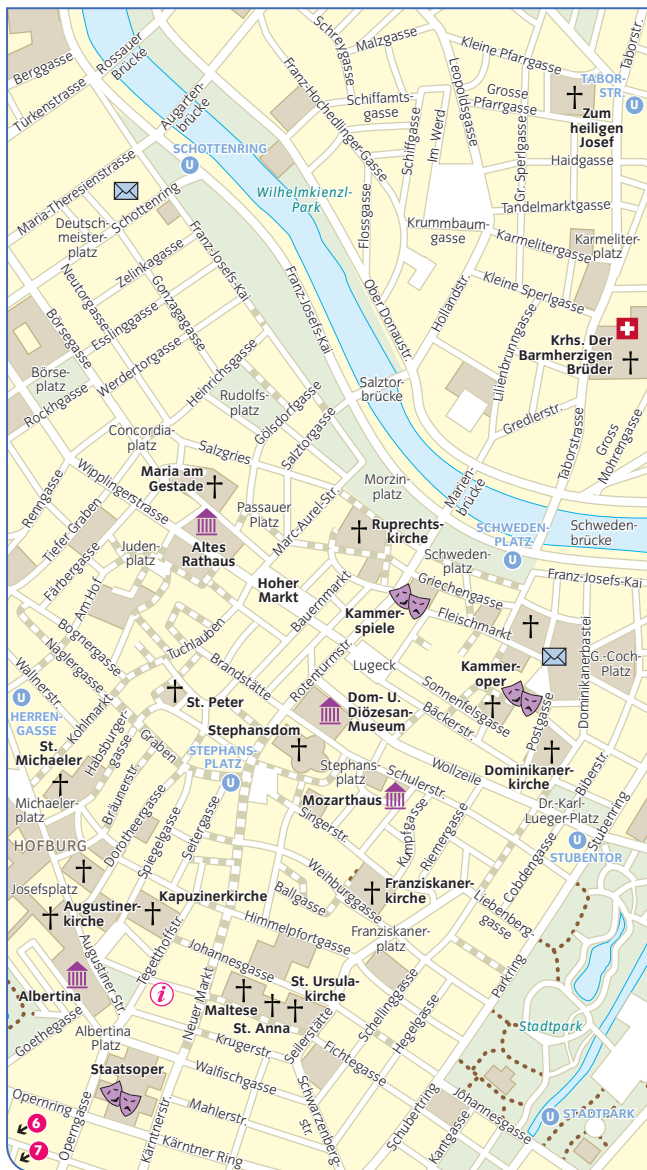
Start on the ground floor in the **8A** **Ancient Egyptian collection**, to see the mummies (Room I), Ka-Ni-Nisut's ancient tomb (Room II), the statue of King Thutmosis III and a charming blue ceramic hippopotamus (both Room IX). In **8B** **Greek and Roman Antiquities**, look out for the impressive 2nd-century mosaic of *Theseus and the Minotaur* (Room XII), exquisite Roman cameos (Room XVI), and rare textiles (Room XVIII). The first-floor picture gallery represents all the major schools of European art and many of the world's greatest artists too. **8C** **German, Flemish, and Dutch paintings** include Brueghel the Elder's *The Seasons* cycle (Room X), Dürer's *Madonna with the Pear* (Room 16),

Rembrandt's *Large Self-Portrait* (Room 21), and Vermeer's *The Art of Painting* (Room 22). **8D** **Italian and Spanish paintings** feature Archimboldo's extraordinary *Seasons* and *Elements* paintings (Room 7), and Velazquez's portrait of the eight-year-old *Infanta Margarita Teresa in Blue Dress* (Room 10), who married Leopold I just seven years later. The paintings of early 18th-century imperial palaces and Viennese views by Canaletto's nephew Bellotto commissioned for the Empress Maria Theresa (Room VII) are especially fascinating. The second floor contains one of the world's most extensive **8E** **coin collections** and over 1,000 **8F** **miniature portraits** collected by Emperor Ferdinand II.

tour. Even if you wouldn't normally consider seeing an opera, you may well be lured by the glitz and glamour of the Staatsoper. If you do, try to make Mozart your first performance.

🕒 **40min** tour (start times vary but are usually advertised on a board at the entrance daily). **Opernring 2.**  
☎ **01 514-44 7810** (box office). [www.staatsoper.at](http://www.staatsoper.at). Tram 1/2/D/J (Oper).

## The Best of Vienna in Three Days





**A**fter two days of art, architecture, history, and culture, today's trip takes in some of the city's best-loved attractions, including the famous Prater Riesenrad (ferris wheel), some eccentric modern architecture, the city zoo, and Schönbrunn, the most-visited palace in Austria. It requires an early start and a bit of stamina, but you will be well rewarded for your efforts. Don't forget your camera!

**START: U-Bahn 1 (Praterstern).**

**1** ★★★ **kids Prater (Riesenrad).** See p 98, bullet **4**.

**2** ★★ **kids Danube Canal cruise.** The Danube, Vienna's lifeblood since Roman times, was partly canalized at the end of the 19th century to reduce flooding in the built-up areas of the city. A mini-cruise provides an entirely new perspective of the city. The DDSG (Blue Danube Shipping Company) offers two short trips or a round tour. My favorite route is Strecke A (Stretch A), which takes just under two hours (starting from Schwedenplatz), and passes some of Vienna's lesser known but nonetheless intriguing sights.

**3** ★★ **kids Hundertwasserhaus.** You can't fail to spot the quirky Hundertwasserhaus! With its

*The Prater amusement park—fun for all the family.*

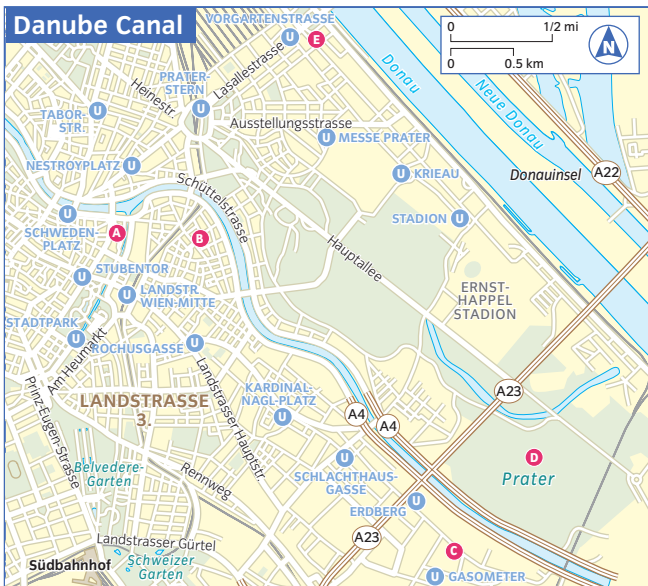


*See the sights by boat.*

ividly-colored patchwork façade, gleaming gold onion-domes, distinct lack of straight lines (even inside) and tree-clad roof, this building stands out among the dull Austro-Hungarian empire architecture that surrounds it. Designed by Austrian artist, Friedensreich Hundertwasser in 1986 as a public housing complex, it provoked fierce debate among the Viennese who described it as 'an unbearable display of new-money pomposity.' Now it is a much loved part of the Viennese cityscape. **Löwengasse** (on the corner of Kegelgasse). [www.hundertwasserhaus.at](http://www.hundertwasserhaus.at). Tram N (Hetzgasse).

**4** ★★★ **kids KunstHausWien.** Just round the corner from the Hundertwasserhaus is one of my favorite





The first eye-catching sight on this tour is the cupola of the **2A ★ Sternwarte Urania**. Built in 1910, this Austria's oldest astronomical observatory and also contains a cinema, puppet theater and a café with superb canal vistas. Further east, look out for glimpses of the **2B ★★★ KunstHausWien** (See p 22, bullet **4**), designed by Vienna's radical architect, Hundertwasser. Beyond lies a curious structure known as the **2C ★ Gasometer**. These four rotund brick towers were used to store the city's gas supply from 1899 to 1969. In the 1990s, they were converted into 615 apartments, a vast shopping center, and leisure complex. As you pass through the massive Freudenau lock

on to the New Danube, you'll see the gravel beaches of the Donaueinsel (Danube Island) to your right and the **2D Prater** park (see p 96) on your left. Look out for three Prater landmarks: the Buddhist pagoda; the Ernst Happel Stadium (venue of the Euro 2008 football tournament); and the Riesenrad (see p 98, bullet **4**). The tour ends at the Reichsbrücke, a bridge near Mexikoplatz. The most prominent building on this square is the multi-turreted **2E Franz-von-Assisi-Kirche**, built in 1898 by Emperor Franz Joseph I to commemorate his golden anniversary. **DDSG Information Desk, Handelskai 265.** ☎ 01 58880. [www.ddsg-blue-danube.at](http://www.ddsg-blue-danube.at). U-Bahn 1 (Vorgartenstrasse).

museums—the KunstHausWien. This is not your usual museum experience but rather an adventure of creative architecture, and the chance to

experience the extraordinary range of Hundertwasser's creative genius, which encompassed art, graphics, models, tapestry, kites, sculpture,



*KunstHausWien, designed by the undeniably eccentric Friedensreich Hundertwasser.*

even postage stamps. His brightly colored paintings are as distinctive as his architectural constructions. The building (a converted furniture factory) features all the artist's characteristic trademarks—vivid colors contrasting with black and gold;

shiny, irregularly shaped pillars; a roof garden and no straight lines (even the floor is uneven). When it was created in 1989, critics described it as 'tasteless', resembling 'a half-melted slab of liquorice'. Come and see what you think.

🕒 *1hr. Morning is the quietest time to visit; avoid weekends if possible.*

*Untere Weissgerberstrasse 13. ☎️ 01 712 0495. [www.kunsthauwien.com](http://www.kunsthauwien.com). €9 adults, €7 concessions, €3 kids. €20 family. Daily 10am–7pm. Tram N/O (Radestzkyplatz).*

**5** ★★★ **kids KunstHausWien**

**Café.** As you might expect from Hundertwasser, this café is quirky and informal, with a delightful shaded patio area. Its simple menu includes a good choice of vegetarian dishes. *Untere Weissgerberstrasse 13. ☎️ 01 712 0495. \$–\$.*

**6** ★★★ **kids Schönbrunn Palace & Park.** *See p 104.*

**7** ★★ **kids Schönbrunn Zoo.** *See p 108, bullet 7. ●*

## Hundertwasser

**When the flamboyant Friedensreich Hundertwasser (1928–2000)** left the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts in 1948 after just three months of study, it seemed unlikely that he would become one of Austria's most celebrated (albeit controversial) artist-designers. He felt that design was stagnant ('our real illiteracy is our inability to create') and in an effort similar to the Secessionist movement 100 years previously, he strove to find harmony between nature and the creativity of man. His style frequently reflected two of his beliefs in particular: that 'the straight line is alien to mankind' and 'our whole life proceeds in spirals'. He made his mark on Vienna with the Hundertwasserhaus, the KunstHausWien, and one of Vienna's oddest tourist attractions—the Fernwärme—Europe's brightest municipal rubbish incinerator out at Spittelau (*U-Bahn 6 Spittelau*).