



A TRAVEL ZINE FROM VIENNA

An Artist's
Take on Vienna
featuring
The Erlkings



© The Erlkings, Julia Weseley

EDIT ORIAL



Dear Reader,

Have you ever wondered what it is about Vienna, what makes it the world's capital of music? More famous composers have lived here than in any other city. Why is that? What inspired them? In Vienna, it has been said, music is literally in the air. And today, young musicians still flock here from all over the world to hone their skills and find their stage.

The Erlkings. We've asked this talented music ensemble what they like best about Vienna and what it feels like to live here. The Erlkings responded with their personal tips – especially in music and the arts – as well as insights into this culturally rich city.

Enjoy a journey into 'their' Vienna. Then, come explore on your own!

See you in Vienna,

M. Kindl-Omuse

Marsa Kindl-Omuse
Editor, raised in Vienna





**„Life is
good
here.“**

// Thomas Toppler

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MEET THE ERL KINGS



Early on in his classical singing studies in Vienna, Bryan Benner, founder of The Erlkings, had a personal revelation: Franz Schubert's *Kunstlieder* (art songs), however cultivated and refined, have a great deal in common with ordinary folk songs and can be performed with a similar simplicity and directness. This discovery lies at the core of the The Erlkings' work.

A Vienna-based music ensemble, The Erlkings channel the great *Lied* composers of the past through today's acoustic singer-songwriters. Reinterpreting the songs of masters like Franz Schubert through a modern music vocabulary, they breathe new life into them with delightful English translations. The Erlkings combine voice, guitar, cello, tuba, drums, and vibraphones to create a new sound – one that even traditional art-song enthusiasts can enjoy as though hearing Schubert again for the first time.



The ensemble has performed at many of the world's most renowned *Lied* institutions: the Schubertiade in Hohenems, Austria; Wigmore Hall in London; Heidelberger Frühling; and the International Hugo Wolf Academy, to name a few.

FIND
THEM!



Read, Listen & Follow





SINGER
GUITARIST
POET
SONGWRITER

// Bryan Benner

From Florida, USA;
has lived in Vienna since 2011.

American-born troubadour Bryan Benner is the founder, translator, singer, and guitarist of The Erlkings. A passionate advocate for *Kunstlied* (art song), he has been living and working as an opera singer, folk singer, guitarist, and composer in Europe for more than 14 years. He is a graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, the Music and Arts Private University of Vienna (MUK), and the Conservatorio Statale di G. Rossini in Pesaro, Italy.

// Simon Teurezbacher

From Amstetten, Austria;
has lived in Vienna since 2013.

Simon studied tuba and music education at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, where he was introduced to various musical styles and genres. Whether it's a brass band or folk, pop, jazz or contemporary music – Simon's genre flexibility makes him a popular ensemble partner and he can frequently be found as a substitute in the big Viennese orchestras. With The Erlkings, Simon enjoys creating their harmonic groove and deep sounds, while discovering new approaches to the infinite world of song.



TUBA
MUSICTEACHER
METAL
CRAFTSMAN

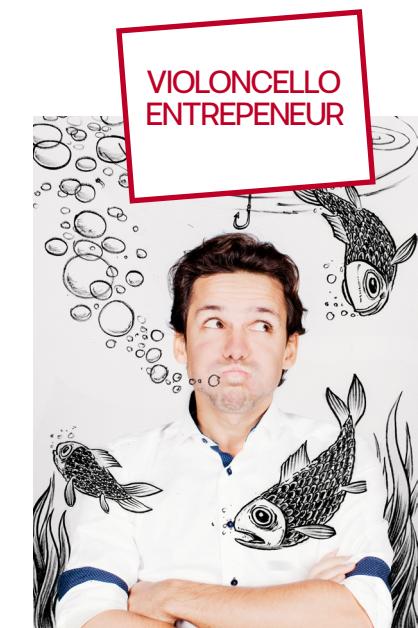


MUSICIAN
ACTOR
DIRECTOR

// Thomas Toppler

From Leoben, Austria;
has lived in Vienna since 2009.

A musician, actor and director, Thomas Toppler discovered his first passion – the drums – when he was 6 years old. He has a master's degree in percussion from the Kunsthochschule Graz, as well as a degree from École Philippe Gaulier theatre school in Paris. He has worked with the Wiener Symphoniker, Concentus Musicus, Wiener Kammerorchester, and Volksoper Wien, among others. Thomas is also the co-founder and director of the London-based theatre company Ship of Fools.



VIOLONCELLO
ENTREPRENEUR

// Ivan Turkalj

From Zagreb, Croatia;
has lived in Vienna since 1995.

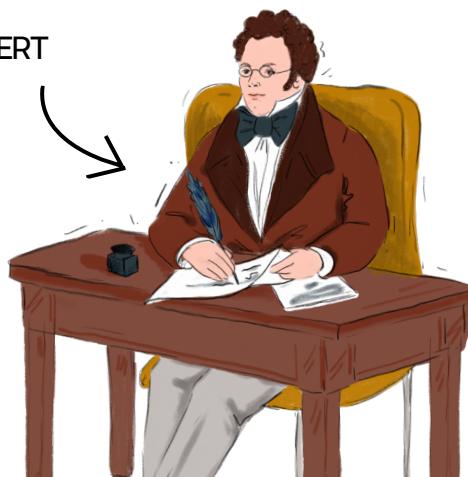
A cellist and music-technology entrepreneur, Ivan Turkalj loves to wander between different musical epochs and styles: From baroque to contemporary, from jazz to classical. He completed his musical education at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, the University of Music Würzburg, and the Zurich University of the Arts – studying modern cello, composition, baroque cello, and jazz cello. Throughout his career, Ivan has won numerous national and international competitions.

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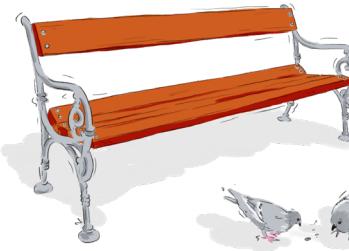
// NO. 2

LIFE AS AN ART IST IN VIENNA

SCHUBERT



Creative life in Vienna is rich, drawing on centuries of inspiration. How do today's artists thrive here? What inspires them, and perhaps more important, what are their artistic dreams? Let's ask The Erlkings.



Is it difficult to set foot in Vienna as an artist?

// BRYAN

All cities have their challenges and Vienna is no exception. As an American, the hardest thing was getting used to the slower pace of progress here. One really has to let ideas marinate before they will be accepted, but once the time is right there are countless opportunities.



© Österreich Werbung, Niklas Stadler

// SIMON

There are very many excellent artists here, and a big network is important. I was able to build up a large network during my studies at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, which is why I now know many people from different music genres. I really enjoy being able to play in so many different genres here in Vienna.



© Simon, The Erlkings

// THOMAS

Growing up here, I think one has to go abroad and become famous – like Mozart or Falco – to be accepted at home. Vienna was and still is the mecca of classical music, therefore a lot of musicians from all over the world come here. The level of professional musicians and competition is very high.

„Vienna is the mecca of classical music.“

// Thomas Toppler



© Österreich Werbung, Niklas Städler

Did you have some kind of musical awakening in Vienna?

My first time playing with an orchestra in the Musikverein concert hall was an incredible feeling!

// S

Two memorable moments: 2001 in the historic Konzerthaus listening to the Hagen Quartet playing "Die letzten Sieben Worte" by Joseph Haydn; and 2004 in the underground club Flex at 3am, dancing to a live Drum & Bass band with just double bass, drums and turntables. Both blew me away in every sense!

// I



© Österreich Werbung, Sebastian Stiphoult

// B The first time I went to a private Hauskonzert (house concert) in Vienna was a revelation. I had never experienced such high-quality music happening so casually in a private home! With drinks and snacks, no less. To me, house concerts continue to be Vienna's most important musical tradition and one I hope to help continue.



LISTEN TO
"DER KÖNIG IN THULE"



// T It was at Bryan's place in 2013, when he performed "Der König in Thule" for me. He introduced me to his view of *Kunstlied* (art song) and Franz Schubert, and completely dismantled the boundaries of *Kunstlied*. Of anything, actually! It was the most awakening moment!

What's the most unusual thing you have done or would like to do?



© Bryan, The Erlkings

SCHUBERT'S SPECTACLES



// B

I once booked a tramway for an afternoon and gave a several-hour concert as it drove around the city. It was hard to stand up and not fall over, but it was worth it.

// I

Playing one different Schubert song in each district of Vienna and in every house he lived in. Schubert wrote over 600 songs!



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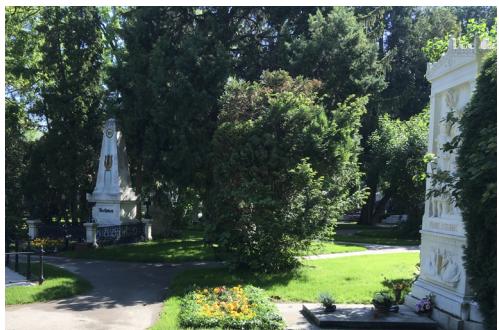
// T

Performing with The Erlkings in the techno-club Das Werk.

Playing Franz Schubert songs in an underground club is fantastic!

// S

Performing our new program called "Friedhofs-Nachbarn" (Neighbors in the Cemetery) at the graves of Franz Schubert and Ludwig van Beethoven in Vienna Central Cemetery. The two are buried right next to each other!



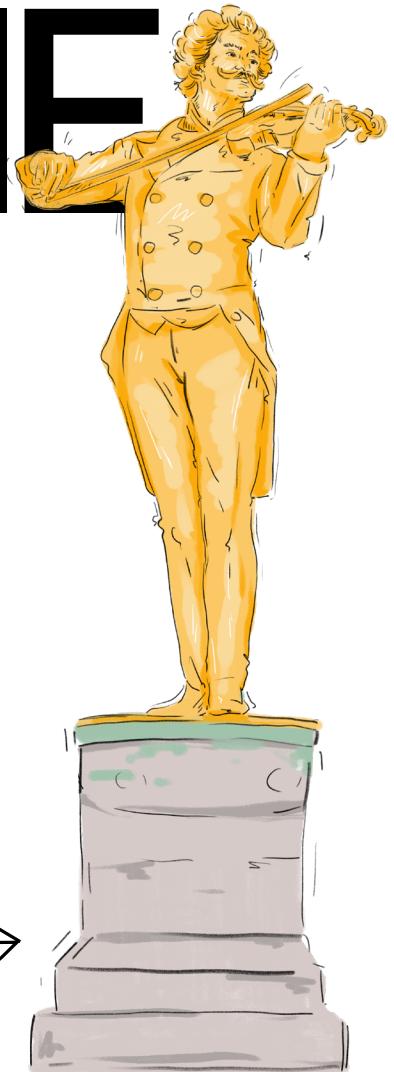
© Simon, The Erlkings

// NO. 3

MUSIC

IN VIE

NN



STRAUSS

Music is in Vienna's DNA, coursing through the cobblestones and coffeehouses. We still feel the vibrations and sense where the masters found their inspiration throughout the city. Young musicians like The Erlkings stroll the same streets, drinking in this musical legacy.



What do you think makes Vienna special for music?

// THOMAS

Maybe it's the good wine and the comfortable lifestyle that attracted many famous composers to create masterpieces. It's a big heritage for us musicians. We have to be proud of it, as well as continue this legacy, invent new things, and shape the future.

// BRYAN

It's hard to say what exactly, but one of the main reasons must be the audience here. Music thrives when you have an intellectually curious public that is ready to be both entertained AND challenged, which is exactly what I love about the Viennese audience.



© Cristian de Francia



© Bryan, The Erikins

// IVAN

Vienna feels like it's the centre for music from all around the world. A mix of styles is currently forming a new musical language in Vienna's underground music scene. Therefore, bigger music markets like Germany are looking to Vienna for inspiration. Does this make it THE music capital? For me, this was the reason to move back from Switzerland.

// MUSIC IN VIENNA



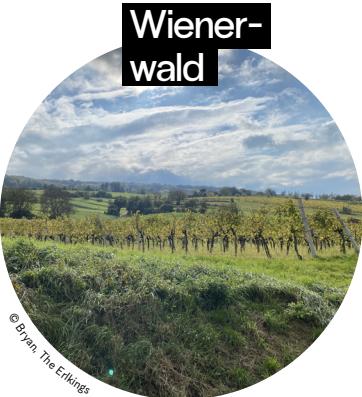
Schubert
statue

© Österreich Werbung, Niklas Städler

Where do you find inspiration for your music?

// S

There are many places that inspire me, among them are the historic halls of the Musikverein, Konzerthaus, and Vienna State Opera. Even the many statues of famous musicians and poets that are scattered throughout the city inspire me in my music.



© Bryan, The Erikins

// B

Whenever I feel I need to be surrounded by quietness, the Wienerwald (Vienna Woods) always offers me that. I like to imagine that some of my favourite composers would go for walks along the same paths as I do now, when they needed inspiration.



Porgy
& Bess

© Österreich Werbung, Niklas Städler

WOW!

// T

I get inspired by young musicians experimenting with cool new sounds in local clubs. There are my favourite jazz clubs Porgy & Bess and Jazzland in the 1st district. Then there's the electronic-music scene along the Danube canal, with clubs like Das Werk, Grelle Forelle and Flex. I like the energy of my generation that tries to invent new forms combining the knowledge of classical music, jazz and electronic.

Where do you listen to music?

// I

I really like to go to the MuTh, where we as The Erlkings play regularly. They present a broad variety of styles from children's shows, theatre, dance, film, pop, rock, classical concerts, basically anything you can think of. If you want to hear any new and upcoming Viennese acts, you go to the MuTh. Fun fact: It is the home of the Vienna Boys' Choir and geographically the exact centre of Vienna!

// T

One of my favourite clubs is the legendary jazz club Porgy & Bess. It was my second home for many years. As a student I wanted to perform there at least once in my lifetime. I am still very pleased that the first gig with The Erlkings took place there and I made my dream come true!



© MuTh, Helmut Karl Lackner

// S

I love to go to concerts of various genres. Among my favourites are the Musikverein and Konzerthaus, where the best orchestras from Vienna and all over the world perform classical music and different styles of chamber music.

// B

My favourite spot is Café 7Stern. It's a little cafe in the 7th district with a separate room called the Wohnzimmer (living room) for music and readings. It is small and intimate, and you never know what sort of treasure might be up on the stage any given night.



© Georg Cizek-Graf

If Vienna were a song, which one would it be?

// B

"Es lebe der Zentralfriedhof" by Austrian songwriting legend Wolfgang Ambros. It's about all the famous people from Vienna's central cemetery coming back to life for a big party. To me it's the perfect analogy for how alive history is in this city.



// T

If Vienna would be a song, then it's the "Frühlingsstimmenwalzer" (Voices of Spring Waltz) by Johann Strauss.



CLICK TO LISTEN

// I

"Wien ohne Wiener" (Vienna without the Viennese) by Georg Kreisler, an Austrian Jew who had to flee, then returned and composed funny yet socially critical songs. In this song he talks about what to hate and love about the Viennese people.

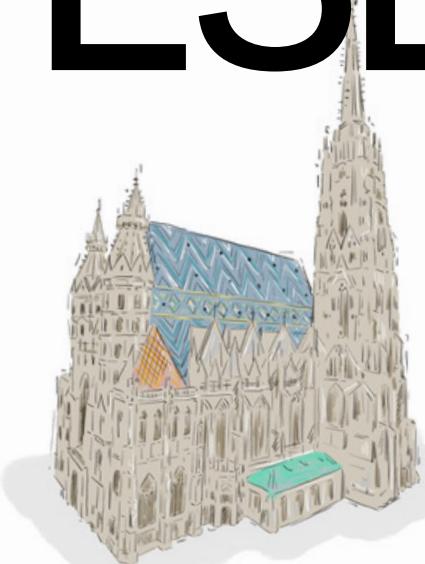


// S

For me, it's "Rock me Amadeus" by Falco. It describes very nicely the different sides that Vienna offers.

// NO. 4

TRULY VIENN ESE



ST. STEPHEN'S
CATHEDRAL

Clichés are never apt to describe a society as a whole. The Viennese do tend to exhibit characteristics though that hold consistent truths. In the city of Freud, expect a spectrum of attributes that might surprise you: so charming, yet quite moody; so dignified and stately, yet ironic and self-doubtful; so generous, yet rigid enforcers of the old. The Erlkings share with us a glimpse into this Viennese way of life.



What is a very
Viennese moment
for you?



© Österreich Werbung, Kara Mercer

// BRYAN

Going to the [Vienna State Opera](#) for € 2.50 and afterwards having a *Würstl* (hotdog) and a can of local beer at a sausage stand right behind the opera – while waiting in line with many other opera goers in gowns and tuxedos. Never done that anywhere else in the world.

// SIMON

When you sit in a [Viennese coffeehouse](#) and the waiter is in a bad mood. Happens very often and only in Vienna.

// THOMAS

Someone heavily complaining that the tram driver didn't wait for him although the next tram is around the corner.



// IVAN

Listening to someone who is really grumpy and then replying with a passive "passt scho!" (never mind). This will prevent you from getting into an argument, and if done the right way, everyone feels acknowledged and keeps going on with their lives.

Your favourite words in typically Viennese dialect?



- "Leiwand"
- "Schmäh"
- "Fesch"
- "Des moch ma scho"
- "Gmiatlich"
- "Jo ned hudln bei Ochtln"

**CLICK &
LISTEN**



// B *Leiwand* (cool), *Schmäh* (humour), and *fesch* (good-looking).

// I "*Des moch ma scho*" is an expression that I enjoy – especially in connection with music and the way things work in Vienna. No stress, everyone will do their thing, and in the end, all will sound and look perfectly.

// T *Gmiatlich* – it means "take it easy and enjoy whatever you are doing!" So, if a conductor says: "Let's play it again, but this time gmiatlich," you know what he means.

// S "*Jo ned hudln bei Ochtln*." In music, this means that you shouldn't rush at playing the eighth notes.

Are there any places where you feel especially connected to Vienna's history?



© Wien Tourismus – Christian Stemper

// B

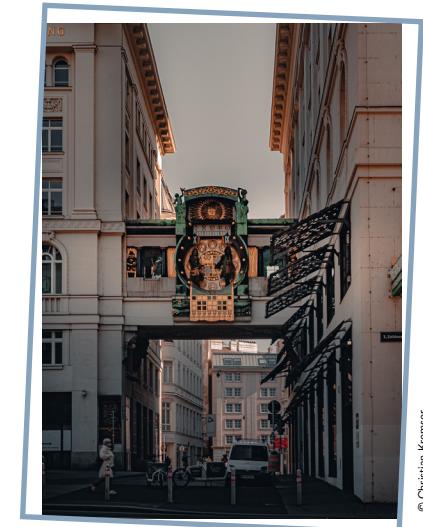
Walking along the Ring Boulevard in the first district, it's hard not to feel connected with Vienna's grand imperial past. Within 15 to 20 minutes, you walk past the *Votivkirche* (Votiv Church), *Rathaus* (City Hall), *Parlament*, the twin buildings of the *Natural History* and the *Art History* museums, and finally the enormous *Hofburg* (Imperial Palace), all along the same grand boulevard.

// T

Definitely the *Hohe Markt* in the first district. This market square still has the old cobblestones from the Roman times and was the centre of Vienna in the old days. It lies near the Danube channel, where boats brought the goods from western Austria into Vienna. There is also the historic *Ankeruhr*, which is a large clock that plays a *Glockenspiel* with historic figures on top of every hour. I like to be at here during the night, when it's quiet.

// S

My favourite spot is the block of residential buildings between *Grünangergasse*, *Blutgasse*, and *Nikolaigasse* in the first district. Enter the courtyards during the day, the buildings are from the 17th, 18th, and 19th century and truly a hidden treasure.



© Christian Kremsner



YUMMY!

Wiener Schnitzel. There are plenty of places with great schnitzel, but my secret spot is Reinthaler Gasthaus in Gluckgasse in the city centre. They have Austrian food, with its many influences from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Fun fact: it's just around the corner of Palais Lobkowitz, where Beethoven premiered his 3rd symphony.

Schweins-braten



// S I have three: Tafelspitz, Schweinsbraten, and Wiener Schnitzel at a traditional Viennese restaurant, where menus read like poems: like Wirtshaus Winklers zum Posthorn in the third district, right next to the Music University. The service is as unique as the food.

Your favourite Viennese dish?

// I Wiener Schnitzel at Santo Spirito – it's in the city centre, the food is great, the wine fantastic, and they constantly play brilliant recordings of classical music (really loud!). You can't find that quality anywhere else.

// B Knödl (dumplings). I must say I'm a knödl man myself, especially when they have a meat filling of some kind. In the 9th district, there is a restaurant called Rebhuhn that specializes in traditional Austrian dishes.

// T



„I must say I'm a knödl man myself.“

// Bryan Benner

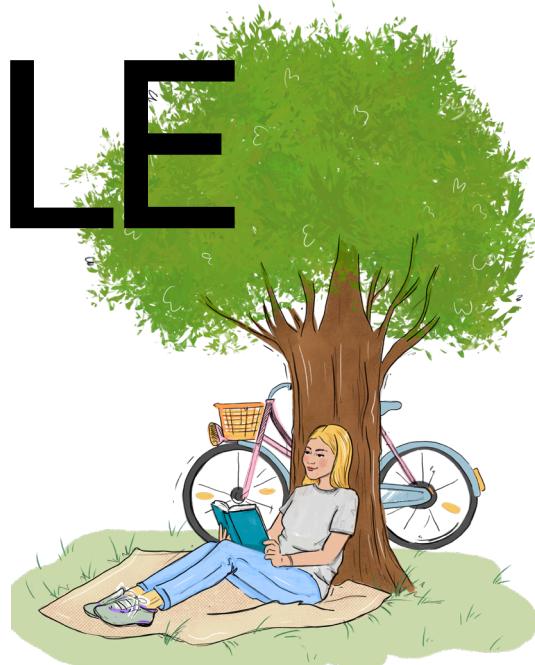


// TRULY VIENNESE

// NO. 5

UN WINDING VIENNESE STYLE

Vienna is urban, yet wonderfully verdant. Thanks to the many parks, forests and even agricultural land, it is the greenest model city in the world. Artists have their pick of spaces – natural and cultural – to boost their creative energy. So, where do The Erlkings choose to relax and refuel for their next big performance?



Why do you think Vienna has been elected 'most liveable city in the world' ten times in a row?

// Bryan

Everything in Vienna works: the public transportation, the clean streets, the theatres and cultural institutions. Of course, no place is perfect, but Vienna is pretty close.

// Thomas

Breakfast at a coffeehouse, biking with (one-hour free) public bikes along the Danube, going for a swim, then lunch at the Danube Canal, in the afternoon a museum, then dinner at a nice restaurant, later a concert with the Vienna Philharmonic, after the concert drinks back at the Danube Canal, going out dancing until sunrise, breakfast at a coffeehouse. Life is good here!



© Wien Tourismus/Peter Rigaud

// Ivan

Because of how the city has treated its people in the past 100 years and tries its best to make it liveable for everyone.

// Simon

The city is not too big and the important things for a pleasant life – like art, culture, music, and green spaces – are in very good balance here.



© Ivan, The Erlkings

„No place is perfect, but Vienna is pretty close.“

// Bryan Benner



What's your
favourite romantic
spot in Vienna?



© Österreich Werbung, Roxana Farca

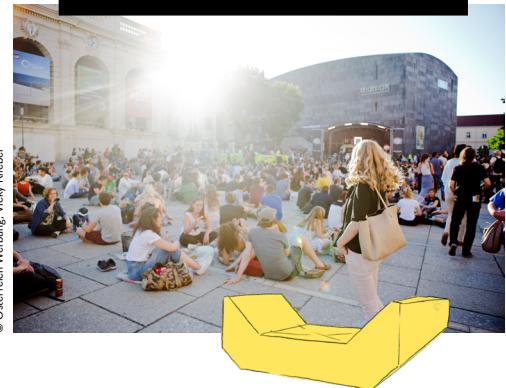
// I
The hills of Vienna's beautiful vineyards, looking down on the city during sunset!



© Wien Tourismus, Christian Stempel

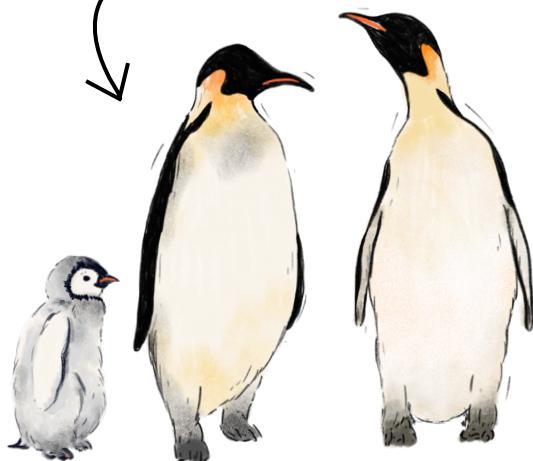
// B
Nothing beats a romantic walk along the Danube Canal, especially in the spring and summer when it's sunny and warm. Usually, there are musicians playing and places to enjoy food and drink that pop up along the water. And there are no cars!

Where do you like to hang out when you have an afternoon off?



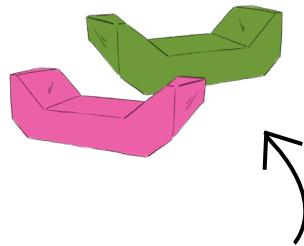
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VISIT US AT THE SCHÖNBRUNN ZOO



// B

I very much enjoy an afternoon in the MuseumsQuartier Vienna. There's a huge outdoor courtyard where you can eat, drink, and relax between visits to Vienna's greatest contemporary museums. Even in the winter it's filled with fun things to do and great places to hang out.



ENZI LOUNGES
@ MQ VIENNA

// T

Vienna has many public swimming pools, big ones with two to three pools, a restaurant or bar, and a lot of grass and trees around. My favourite is the Krapfenwaldl, which is located in the green hills of Vienna's vineyards with gorgeous views over the city.

// S

I have an annual pass to the Schönbrunn Zoo, the oldest zoo in the world, where I always like to go for walks with my family and friends.

Where in Vienna do you simply enjoy a quiet moment?

My favourite spot to relax is at the Donau Island (Danube Island).

It runs almost the whole length of the city and I can always find a spot by the water to enjoy some quietness, and even swim if it's nice out.

// B



Danube Island

© Österreich Werbung, Philipp Höcker



Augarten

© Wiener Porzellanmanufaktur Augarten GmbH

// T

I very much like to spend a quiet moment in the Augarten park located in the second district. It's my favourite park in Vienna and also home to the Augarten Porcelain Manufactory, the second-oldest in Europe, and the Vienna Boys' Choir, the world-famous school for young boys to become singers. Franz Schubert was one of them, by the way.



Vienna Woods

© Bryan, The Erklings

On a mountain bike tour through the Wienerwald (Vienna Woods) during the week. Monday to Wednesday everyone seems to work, so it's empty.

// I

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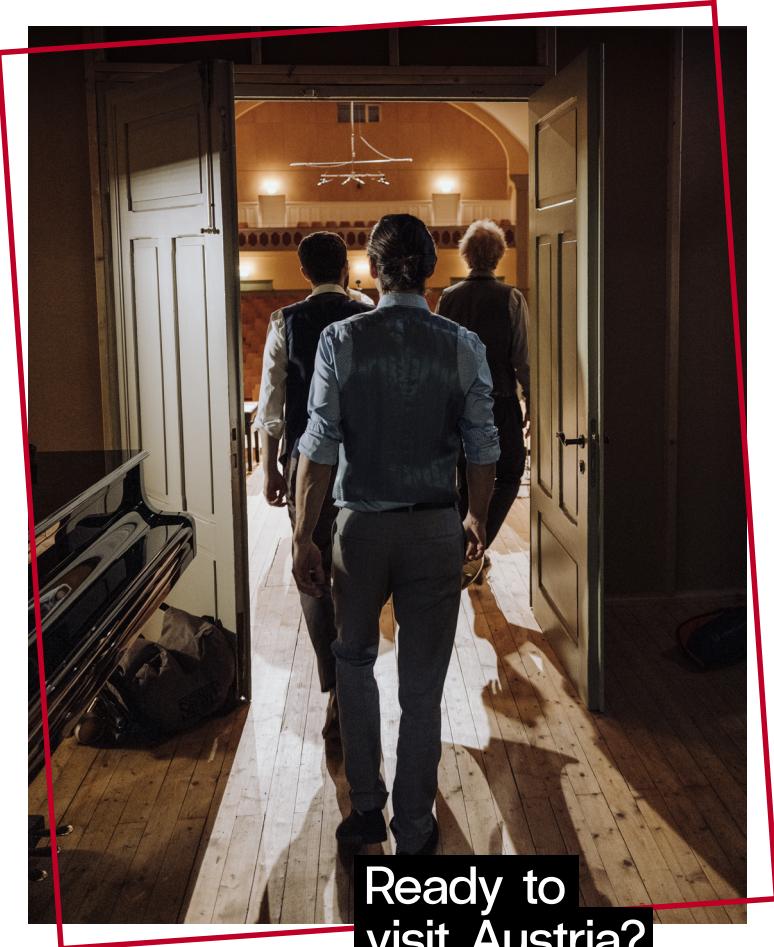
Published by Austrian National Tourist Office
Editor & Production Marsa Kindl-Omuse
Graphic Design Nicole Weber, Alexandra Scharner
Illustrations Carina Lindmeier
Publishing date July 2021

All information is subject to change.
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LET'S
GO!



Ready to
visit Austria?

Check out our website
for more ideas and tips
of how to visit Austria.

#feelaustria
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