

## **VIENNA, AUSTRIA**

Vienna is the city that gave waltz to the world. Mozart, Haydn, Strauss, Schubert, Brahms, and Beethoven are just a few of the many composers who lived and worked in Vienna. In addition to its rich musical history, Vienna is a culturally diverse and vibrant city. It is home to the Vienna Boys' Choir, the famous Lipizzaner stallions, and countless coffee houses (an integral part of Viennese life). Located in the heart of Europe, students may easily travel east to the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary and west to France, Italy, Spain, England, and Switzerland.

In general, Vienna is a remarkably safe city and, with common sense precautions, we feel no need for worry or concern about our safety. Obviously, students should avoid certain areas of town late at night (around the train stations, for example) and should not be out and about alone late at night in these areas.

Vienna is located in the Central European Time Zone (CET)

Standard Time = GMT+1      Summer Time = GMT+2

European clocks on STANDARD TIME

From the end of October to the end of March (dates vary each year) then on Summer (Daylight Saving) Time from the end of March to the end of October

### **Culture and Customs**

Austrians are generally friendly and courteous and it is easy to reciprocate with a spirit of warmth and cooperation.

It is customary to say hello ("gruß Gott") before asking someone you don't know a question or diving into conversation. Make every effort to speak German. It would be presumptuous to expect people of the host country to speak all of the languages of their guests. Austrians will make notable efforts to be of service, particularly when you honor them by attempting their language. If you are at a loss as to the etiquette of a situation, OBSERVE those around you for guidance.

It is important that you take care of how you dress. Though casualness is accepted, sloppiness in public is not. There is somewhat more reserve in European countries than American students are used to. When in public, keep conversation and laughter at reasonable levels. Speak quietly on busses and trams.

When dining out, observe the proper hours (for Dinner, 8 PM generally, 7 PM at the earliest), and allow ample time to be served and to enjoy the meal.

You have to bag your own groceries (and bring your own bags too!) in most stores. Bring some bags with you when you go shopping. A backpack works well for carrying things home too!

### **Politics**

Austria is a democratic federal republic. Legislative and executive powers are divided between the federal government and the nine states, with Vienna as the nation's capital.

The two major political parties are the [Austrian People's Party](#) - (ÖVP - Österreichische Volkspartei) and the [Social Democratic Party of Austria](#) - (SPÖ - Sozialdemokratische

Partei Österreichs). The former is a classical conservative movement, running on a platform of respect for tradition and stability of social order. The latter emphasizes the correction of social problems, government influence on an expanding and socially oriented economy, full employment, and increase in the standard of living. There are also smaller parties, yielding more limited power.

For more detailed information, see: <http://vienna.usembassy.gov/en/austria/gov.htm>

### **Religion**

According to the 2001 census, membership in major religions are as follows:

Roman Catholic Church: 74.0%

Lutheran and Presbyterian churches: 4.7%

Islamic community: 4.2%

Jewish community: 0.1%

Eastern Orthodox (Russian, Greek, Serbian, Romanian, and Bulgarian): 2.2%

Other Christian churches: 0.9%

Other non-Christian religious groups: 0.2%

Atheists accounted for 12% and 2% did not indicate a religious affiliation.

Generally, relations among the different religious groups in Austria are amicable. For more information, see: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2004/35439.htm>

### **Churches in Vienna that offer services in English:**

Vienna Community Church (offers non-denominational services

<http://www.viennacommunitychurch.com/>

English-Speaking United Methodist Church <http://www.esumc.at/>

### **Packing Tips**

Packing for a semester abroad can be difficult. It is important that you check with airlines regarding luggage restrictions and remember to save space in your luggage for souvenirs. No one can tell you everything that you should take, but from experience, we can give you some guidelines. In general we recommend that you pack:

1. Pack the absolute minimum that you may need. Every year people say they wished they'd have brought less and either 'made-do' or bought those things they really needed in Europe. Go over your packing decisions several times in the days before you leave and when in doubt...don't take it!
2. It is best to pack anonymous clothing. You have more freedom and safety when wearing clothes that don't immediately scream your nationality on the streets. Avoid logos and stereotypical clothing that will instantly identify you.
3. You will be walking more in Vienna and standing in some lines in the cold. The lightest way to stay warm is to bring layers of warm clothes which can be worn over your daily clothes.
4. Pack things that you can wear together. If everything you bring can be worn with everything else, you'll be able to save room and bring less.

5. It is important to have solid, comfortable shoes that are broken in. The one thing you don't want to spend the semester doing is breaking in a pair of new shoes. Pick several pairs to take along and make sure they are comfortable for long walks on hard pavement. You'll need warm shoes with some traction (for walking on snow and ice) for daily wear, as well as dressier, yet still warm and functional shoes for going out at night.

6. Europeans tend to dress up a bit more than we do in North Carolina. Instead of just a t-shirt, khakis and trekking shoes, they are more likely to wear a more stylish shirt, slacks and 'city' shoes. Of course, their dress also varies widely, and you have to decide whether or not you'd like to 'fit-in' with their styles or match those of the American backpackers you may encounter. You'll need to dress up for the theatre, opera, ballet, concerts, church, as well as to go out at night. Black seems to work the best at night, since it is classic and acceptable everywhere. You may not be admitted to many night places without dark shoes and dressy clothes.

7. Pack the absolute minimum. Every one tells you this, but it really makes a difference. A good strategy is to put everything you are thinking of bringing on an empty bed or table and then going over it time and again to see what you really need. With stores like the Swedish chain H&M and the Spanish chain Zara in Vienna, you can easily buy anything you need.

8. Perhaps one of the hardest decisions is your outerwear, since it must serve you in many different places under many conditions. It has to keep you very warm when it is very cold and at the same time be acceptable everywhere from the Vienna Opera to the local beer hall. Avoiding bright colored outerwear can help your coat fit in everywhere and of course being able to layer it with warm under jackets or sweaters extends its range.

### **Suggested Packing List**

- 1 large rolling or duffle bag to be used only for trans-Atlantic air travel
- 1 medium backpack as your second travel bag, also to be used for weekend trips. (Should be  $\frac{1}{4}$  empty when you leave to allow for trip purchases and have a small anti-pick lock.)
- 1 day pack (for computer, train food, camera, coat, etc.) but it should also have a small anti-pick lock
- 1 small case for your neck or under your shirt or waist or belt loop for monies, passport, cards, etc.
- 1 warm fleece style pullover or jacket for cool days indoors and outdoor wear and for layering with a jacket
- 1 good outer jacket which can be used for cold weather both in the city in the evening and daily. It can be layered with another jacket for extra warmth
- Gloves, scarves, warm hats
- 1 rain jacket for spring showers small umbrella is also useful in the city
- 2 or more warm sweaters dressy and casual
- 1 pair of walking shoes (light-hikers, dark athletic shoes, etc.)
- 1 pair black or designer shoes for city nights
- 1 pair sandals or flip-flops for around the house
- 5- 8 pairs of white socks

- 3- 5 pairs of dark socks
- 1 nightshirt (or big t-shirt also useable as a robe)
- Sweat or stretch pants for train rides and morning breakfasts (optional)
- 1 or 2 sets of long underwear (optional)
- 1 cap or hat (anonymous logo, optional)
- 1 swim shorts (for public indoor pools and spas)
- Regular/sun glasses
- At least 1 photocopy of your passport, credit cards and prescriptions for safety
- Class textbooks
- Portable music source and batteries (optional)
- Deck of cards and/or other small games like chess or hand-held video games (something is highly recommended for train rides)
- Camera and film (expensive there) or digital storage
- Power adaptor(s) for camera, music, etc.
- Small calculator (optional, useful to some)
- Wallet
- Comb or brush
- Wristwatch (not an expensive one)
- Address list or labels with addresses on them
- Alarm clock (or an alarm watch- usefully when away from the house)
- 1 or 2 pens
- Small medicine bag (Tylenol, Advil or aspirin (lots), prescription drugs, allergy pills, upset-stomach remedy)
- 1 bag with toiletries (shampoo, shaving materials, toothbrush, toothpaste, etc.) you can always buy more in Vienna
- Towel (regular or larger so you don't have to take house towels on weekend trips)
- 1 razor (extra blades) or disposables
- Tooth brush and paste
- Wash-cloth
- Contact lens solution, extra case, and extra lenses
- Cologne or perfume
- Febreeze for deodorizing clothes
- Bandages (for blisters) and antiseptic cream
- 1 personal journal (optional)
- WFU Student ID/ US Driver's license/ iNext Card
- Super absorbent towel – Thin and easily pack-able; you can buy them at REI or sports stores. Many hostels make you pay for the use of their towels or do not have them at all.
- Vienna PopOut Map- (made by Map Group) - It is the size of a postcard and unfolds like a popup book. Small, convenient and discreet. You can buy them at Barnes and Noble or at <http://www.maps.com/map.aspx?pid=2951>
- Decompression Bags- These are great for packing sweaters and jackets to bring over here. They can also be used as laundry bags when traveling on weekends.
- Sports clothing and equipment if you will participating in sports

#### **Additional Items for Men**

- 1 or maybe 2 pairs of comfortable pants like jeans (dark ones for nights)
- 1 or 2 pairs of long pants (like black/grey slacks)
- 2– 3 long sleeve dress shirts
- 1 tie (for theatre)
- 6-7 t-shirts (long and short sleeved) w/out U.S. logos (darker ones are more versatile)
- 10+ under shorts (more for fewer laundry days/ less to save weight and use our washers more)
- Belt (match dress shoes)

### **Additional Items for Woman**

- 2 or more warm sweaters dressy and casual
- 1 or 2 pairs of jeans (different colors...dark ones are most useable)
- 1 pair black pants – dress style, but widely useful
- Tops: a variety for warmth and both casual and more formal occasions
- 10+ pair of underwear (the more the better.... less laundry to do)
- 7 pairs of socks
- 1 or more pair of cheap earrings and a little other cheap jewelry
- 3-5+ bras (1 sport?)
- Hair accessories like barrettes/ponytail holders/scarves/belts
- Finger nail clippers and nail file
- A Purse that zips- Pick-pocketing is common in Europe
- Make-up if you wear it
- Feminine needs and deodorant for the duration

### **Items You Can Share with Classmates**

- Small hairdryer and/or curling irons and electrical converter
- adapter plugs if your bring your own gear from home like cameras and music players
- deck of cards and/or other small games like chess

### **Important Tips**

- Don't bring anything you would hate to lose.
- Each student will be responsible for transport of his own luggage throughout the semester.
- Keep the following items in your carryon bag: passport, visa, tickets, prescription medicine, glasses, money (For taxi rides to and from airports, phone calls, emergencies, etc...)
- To avoid problems when passing through customs, keep medicines in their original, labeled containers. Bring copies of your prescriptions and the generic names for the drugs.
- If a medication is unusual or contains narcotics, carry a letter from your doctor attesting to your need to take the drug. If you have any doubt about the legality of carrying a certain drug into a country, consult the embassy or consulate of Austria before you travel

## **ARRIVAL**

## **Getting to Vienna**

Round-trip travel to Vienna will cost between \$1,000 and \$1,500 (based on economy or charter flights and railpasses, including travel to a major US city from Winston-Salem or equivalent). In order to allow a diversity of travel arrangements before and after the program in Vienna, there is no group flight, though students may coordinate arrangements with friends if they like. Several kinds of economical flights are available; information about these may be obtained from a travel agent or from the sponsoring companies. Some additional websites where you may be able to find cheaper flights for students:

[www.sta.com](http://www.sta.com)

[www.studentuniverse.com](http://www.studentuniverse.com)

## **FINANCES**

The good news, of course, is that all of your major expenses have already been paid for. But you will need funds for the following things: meals each day, either at the house or out; weekend travel, local transportation (subways, buses, taxis); entrance fees to museums, etc.; entertainment (plays, concerts, opera, ballet, films, etc.); social expenses (discos, beer halls, clubs); personal expenses (snacks, toiletries, post cards, stamps, telephone calls) and purchases (gifts, souvenirs, etc.).

As always, it's a problem to know just how much money to bring along. Everyone spends differently and the exchange rates are variable from month-to-month.

### **Money Saving Tips**

1. Check with your bank regarding withdrawal fees and contact your credit card company to find out their policy on foreign transaction fees. These fees may not seem to be much but over the course of a semester they can add up quickly.
2. Eat a full and big breakfast each day. This is true both while at the house and away for weekends. Many students find that they can easily go until dinner with just a street snack after a large breakfast. Eating such a large breakfast at the house or in a hotel is a good way to save money since it costs much less (or is free in many hotels) than even a fast-food meal.
3. When you are out in the city or away on the weekend, eat one meal a day from the local markets and street vendors. Buy breads, cheese, fruit or whatever instead of eating in a sit-down restaurant. Or buy local fast food from street vendors. Both of these ideas are also really consistent with sampling authentic European food. On train traveling days, buy food that morning or the night before to eat on the train.
4. Bring your WFU Student ID card along. Many museums, theatres, etc. may give you student discount. Remember to ask for it every time you buy a ticket or pay an entrence fee.
5. Leave a bit early to sightsee or when going out at night and take public transportation or walk, which is cheaper than a cab. If you coming home late and need to take a cab (always a good idea and even necessary late at night), travel in a group and split the costs.

6. Check into day passes or group tickets for public transportation in large cities. You definitely will want a public transit card for Vienna right away, so that you have unlimited access to public transit at a better price than you'd pay with separate tickets. You also don't have to worry about buying tickets with the right cash each day.

7. If participants in the program plan to travel before or after the program, during the recess, or on the weekends, they will need to allow for the additional cost of transportation, lodging, and incidentals for such travel. Eurail passes, student identification cards, and dollarwise guides will help reduce costs.

We recommend that you use an ATM or debit card that belongs to the Cirrus or Plus networks for most of your cash needs while you're in Europe. Vienna and all of the other cities you'll visit have money machines where you can take local currency out of your checking account back home. We don't recommend traveler's checks since they are very expensive and inconvenient.

It is never smart to carry large amounts of money. Money should be kept close to your body, preferably in small pouches that can be concealed under clothing.

Many grocery stores do not accept US credit and debit cards. For most of your transactions, you may want to use cash. To avoid bank fees for non-bank ATMs and conversion fees, you may choose to take out about €200-400 at a time and put most of it in a safe place.

## **STAYING IN TOUCH**

### **Internet**

Skype has recently become a popular and cheap way to stay in touch with friends and family. You can download Skype at [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com) and have your family and friends do the same. It is free to talk from computer to computer and about 2 cents a minute to talk from your computer to a land-line phone. In order to use the program you will need to ensure that you have a headset that works with your computer. Generally it is important to have a tutorial with your parents and Skype before you leave.

### **Phone**

A phone card and PIN from AT&T, MCI, or Sprint is required to make long-distance calls from Flow House. Phone cards are another cost efficient option to stay in touch with your family and friends. Just be sure to watch time changes when making phone calls.

Many students chose to purchase cell phones when they arrive in Vienna. These phones are usually used to keep in touch with each other while in Europe and can prove to be very costly if used to make frequent calls home.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Fortunately for us, even the largest European cities are safer for pedestrians than most American cities. This means that you are less likely to be hurt by a weapon than at home. However, it doesn't mean that you don't have to be on guard for pickpockets,

petty thieves and rapists everywhere we go. As easily identifiable tourists, we are clearly targets for thieves. Here's what you can do to minimize your chances of being a victim.

### **Personal Safety**

The single most important thing you can do is to stay with other members of our group, especially at night. When you are alone, stay alert to where you are and who is around you. If you're not used to large American cities, be especially careful about traveling by yourself in Vienna and other large European cities.

When we are at hotels, sleep with your door locked, even if one of your roommates isn't in when you go to sleep. It can be better to accept the hassle of having to wake up to let someone in the room, rather than waking up and finding an unexpected guest visiting you.

More Americans die each year in Europe from automobile and bicycle accidents than by any other means. They are not passengers, but are hit as pedestrians. Learn to be especially alert to street hazards and who has the right of way. Many cities have bicycle paths between the pedestrian sidewalk and the auto traffic.

Keeping your nationality anonymous both by avoiding stereotypic American clothing and loud conversations in public places, can not only help keep you safe from those who may want to harm Americans, but can also give you the freedom to explore cultures without influencing them. Avoid places with a majority of American tourists for further safety.

Learn how to firmly and emphatically say 'NO' in each language. This is particularly valuable to women in our group who sometimes are bothered by the usually innocent, but persistent attention that some European men give them.

If you meet some great Europeans who you want to spend some time with, don't be afraid to do so. Your American instincts about people are probably as valid here as at home. Just to be on the safe side, you may want to make whatever you do with the Europeans, a group activity with other people from our group along. If you really want to be alone with one European, the safest thing to do is to let some of us meet him or her before you take off.

Don't be afraid to ask locals for help if you find yourself in a bad situation. Make an instant judgment about the people around you (a family group for example is usually a good choice) and ask in English for them to help you. If there aren't any people around you, what are you doing there?

### **Property Safety**

Don't advertise yourself as a walking jewelry store by bringing and wearing expensive jewelry and watches in Europe. Our general rule is not to bring anything that you couldn't bear to lose. You can relax and enjoy yourself a lot more if you are not constantly worried about being robbed.

On travel days, carry your money, driver's license, credit cards and other valuables in a safe place. This can be in a wallet that you keep firmly in your front pocket, in a special traveler's pouch which you wear around your neck (or under a piece of clothing) or at your waist. Check out various devices carefully (they are usually available in outdoor or

camping stores in the USA) to see which is most comfortable for you. Don't carry small valuables in a book bag, purse or loose fitting pocket, since they are vulnerable to theft. A moment's distraction by a professional thief and they'll be gone.

At night, don't carry any thing with you that you don't actually need. This means only enough money for the evening, some identification and a card from the Flow House or hotel with its name and address. Leave your passport, credit cards and driver's license safely back in your room or in your locked in your room or hotel safe. No place is perfectly safe, but your locked luggage is much safer than on your body late at night in a city. This small bit of forethought can save you from a theft when you may be most vulnerable.

Make photocopies of your passport, driver's license and credit cards. Keep one tucked in an out-of-the-way place in your luggage and leave the other with your family at home. If you have a loss, you can call home and they can more easily cancel your cards and take care of your driver's license. Also, if you lose your copy, they can give you the numbers you'll need to replace everything.

Don't leave any valuables lying about in your house or hotel room. When traveling, keep things in your luggage and lock your luggage when no one is in the room, with a small anti-pick lock.

If you find yourself in a strange situation with strangers surrounding you in a threatening way, hold onto your valuables and immediately leave the area. Don't let the surprise or your curiosity keep you there. Practiced thieves can be good at distracting you while finding and taking your valuables.

### **Safety Tips from the US State Dept.**

Your passport, cash and credit cards are most secure when locked indoors. When you have to carry them on your person, you may wish to put them in various places rather than all in one wallet or pouch. Avoid handbags, fanny packs and outside pockets that are easy targets for thieves. Inside pockets and a sturdy shoulder bag with the strap worn across your chest are somewhat safer. One of the safest places to carry valuables is in a pouch or money belt worn under your clothing.

Pack an extra set of passport photos along with a photocopy of your passport's information page to make replacement of your passport easier in the event it is lost or stolen.

Put your name, address and telephone numbers inside and outside of each piece of luggage. Use covered luggage tags to avoid casual observation of your identity or nationality. If possible, lock your luggage.

Don't use short cuts, narrow alleys or poorly lit streets.

Try not to travel alone at night.

Avoid public demonstrations and other civil disturbances.

Keep a low profile and avoid loud conversations or arguments.

Do not discuss travel plans or other personal matters with strangers.

Try to seem purposeful when you move about. Even if you are lost, act as if you know where you are going. Try to ask for directions only from individuals in authority.

Only take taxis clearly identified with official markings. Beware of unmarked cabs. If you go skiing or snowboarding be sure to keep on the designated ski paths and to monitor weather conditions carefully. Every year, a number of avalanche deaths occur in Austria's alpine regions. Many occur when skiers/snowboarders stray from the designated ski slopes. Leaving the designated slopes to ski off-piste may pose serious risks and may delay rescue attempts in case of emergency.

Travelers are targets of pickpockets who operate where tourists tend to gather. Some of the spots where such crimes are most frequently reported include Vienna's two largest train stations, the plaza around St. Stephan's Cathedral and the nearby pedestrian shopping areas (in Vienna's First District). There has also been an increase in thefts and pick pocketing on public transportation lines, especially on those lines coming in and out of the city center. U.S. citizens are advised to secure personal belongings and always take precautions while on public transportation and in public places such as cafes and tourist areas.

Persons violating Austria's laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Austria are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines.

For complete information, see [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_965.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_965.html)

## TRANSPORTATION IN VIENNA

### Trains Safety

If you don't have much experience riding trains, local commuter trains and subways, you'll want to remember the following safety suggestions:

1. Stay back from the safety line that is drawn about two feet from the track edge in each station. Particularly with a large backpack on, you may be vulnerable to being bumped (or worse) by an approaching train.
2. Don't walk across tracks at stations, even if it looks possible and especially if you are late for a train. It is almost always not allowed and dangerous.
3. Get on most trains at any door, not just the one others are using. With a group you may have to use more than one entrance in order to get on before the train (and especially subway) leaves. Before the train arrives, spread out along the platform so you will have easy access to a door and not get left behind.

### Cabs

The house is located at the intersection of Gustav Tschermark-Gasse and Hasenauerstrasse, one block from the Tuerkenschanz Park. Cab drivers are familiar

with Hasenauerstrasse and the Tuerkenschanz Park, but not with Gustav Tschermak-Gasse.

## BEFORE YOU GO

### Books

Students will benefit from having read as many of these as possible prior to the journey to Vienna.

Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin. *Wittgenstein's Vienna*  
Frederic Morton. *A Nervous Splendor*  
A.J.P. Taylor. *The Habsburg Monarchy*  
Barbara Jelavich. *Modern Austria*  
Joseph Roth. *Radetzky March*  
*Michelin Vienna*  
*Lonely Planet Austria*  
*Lonely Planet Eastern Europe*

### Movies

Movies filmed in or about Vienna that would be good to watch prior to your departure:

- *The Third Man* (1949)- Classic, Orson Welles film in which an American writer arrives in post-WWII Vienna only to find that the friend who waited for him is killed under mysterious circumstances.
- *Amadeus* (1984) - Classic movie about Mozart's life.
- *Before Sunrise* (1995) – A young American (Ethan Hawke) meets a French woman (Julie Delpy) on a train and they spend their only day together in Vienna.
- *Klimt* (2006) – John Malkovich plays the Viennese artist Gustav Klimt.
- *The Illusionist* (2006) - Set in turn of the century Vienna (though actually filmed in Prague) about a magician (Edward Norton) and class structure.