

Vienna – Enjoy Quality Of Life

Life is good in Vienna. What the Viennese have always known is now official — the 2010 Mercer study ranked Vienna again first in a survey of the best places to live. Why? The city has more green space than virtually any other. It is a place where you can relax — there are even parks in the heart of the city — or enjoy sport. The Austrian capital also has excellent infrastructure and is one of the safest major cities on earth.

From decorative flowerbeds to unspoiled nature – there is plenty to discover in green Vienna. It comes as no surprise that the Vienna Woods on the city's western fringes are referred to as the lungs of the city. This 1,350 square kilometer UNESCO biosphere reserve provides a unique habitat for countless plant and animal species. When taking a stroll in the Lainzer Tiergarten game reserve you shouldn't be surprised if a wild boar crosses your path. At Schönbrunn Zoo you will also encounter more exotic animals, and a treetop trail gives excellent views of the enclosures. There are countless vantage points elsewhere in the city including the Danube Tower, Kahlenberg and Cobenzl, all of which can be easily reached using public transportation.

Mountain bikers, cyclists, ramblers and cross country skiers love the range of signposted routes. The paths take in all kinds of terrain including steep hills and flat stretches along the Danube. For anyone with more time and energy there is the Rundumadum footpath (120km) which circles the city. You can also get a different perspective from the water. The “beautiful, blue” Danube is complemented by the New Danube with its outdoor recreation areas and skaters' paradise on Danube Island. The Old Danube is the ideal place to swim and sail in summer and ice skate in winter. The Danube Canal cuts through the center of the city and is transformed into a stretch of bars and restaurants each summer. If you continue along the banks of the canal you will come to the Prater park, a vast green space given to the Viennese by Emperor Joseph II. Highlights include the Heustadelwasser area with its boat hire services, the 4.5km long Hauptallee and the famous Wurstelprater amusement park. Vienna's trademark Giant Ferris Wheel is also impossible to miss. Farther east is the Lobau, a wetland wilderness in the Donau-Auen National Park.

The cityscape is also shaped by vineyards, which can best be discovered on the wine hiking trail between Neustift and Nussdorf. Vienna's vineyards are prized for their internationally acclaimed wine. No trip to the capital would be complete without a trip to a wine tavern where you can sit and leave your cares behind you while enjoying a drop of fine wine. Viennese drinking water has a particularly crisp and refreshing taste. This healthy spring water is yet another reason why Vienna is the world's true number one when it comes to quality of life.

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