



PROGRAM COUNTRY: AUSTRIA



STS – more than 50 years of experience in student exchange programs all over the world



Austria is famous for its natural splendour. Towering peaks overlook crystal lakes and thick green forests. Did you know that the world's toughest downhill skiing race, Hahnenkamrennen, is organised in Kitzbühel, Austria, every year? Don't

forget your skis and your boots!

COUNTRY INFORMATION

Area: 83 856 square kilometres.

Population: approximately 9 million.

Capital: Vienna.

Language: German.

National holiday: 26 October.

Austria is probably most known for being a residence of classical music. In the 18th century Salzburg became the centre of baroque music. It was in Salzburg where Mozart was working, even if he also spent time in Vienna. Vienna was like a musical magnet, where everything was done to the accompaniment of stimulating waltzes. This was where classical music thrived and where composers from all over Europe went on pilgrimages.

The country is also famous for its incredibly beautiful cities and villages. Much of the older architecture dates from the 17th century and the slightly newer buildings and structures were erected in a romantic style.

Austria is a country with a revolutionary history. From the time when Charlemagne founded his territory and christened lost Vandals, Huns and Romans, to the huge kingdom and power of the Habsburgers that lasted until the First World War. Today's modern republic has matured slowly to become one of the favourite countries for the tourists of the world.

In addition to wonderful cities, the nearness to lakes, forests and mountains enables Austria to offer a great variety of activities. Depending on what you feel like doing, you can easily and quite simply set about whatever it is that you are in the mood to do.

Austria is the cradle of the classic alpine ski style, and if you would like to practise a stylish and safe ski technique you have come to the right place. The whole alpine skiing circuit started with local competitions in the Austrian Arlberg area, where many well-known ski resorts are situated. Most families go on short ski trips, or go

skiing during the weekends in the mountains. Snowboarding is very common among young people. Surfing or sailing in one of the lakes is also a popular activity. Horseback riding, football, tennis and volleyball can be practised nearly everywhere. Activities are not included in the program fee.

For those students, who play an instrument, it is very common to join the village orchestra, where students have the chance to practise and play with more than 40 musicians. When you live in a town, or make a trip to a city, there are museums, theatres, musicals and much more to enjoy.

SCHOOL LIFE

In Austria there are no school uniforms. There are mostly public schools, but some schools are private schools with a school fee. Austrian youths study eight years at high school (Gymnasium). There are different kinds of schools e.g. sports orientated gymnasiums, music orientated schools, science orientated schools, economics orientated gymnasiums, tourism orientated gymnasiums, handicraft orientated schools, pedagogic and kindergarten orientated schools, and agricultural high schools. First grade of high school starts when the students are ten years old, and then goes on until the final examination ("Matura") in the 8th grade. The students are then ready to go on to university.

Most exchange students are placed in 5th, 6th or 7th grade, depending on their previous knowledge of German. You can come to Austria and go to a Gymnasium if you have taken a intensive course in your home country. You can also take extra lessons in Austria during the first few weeks. Of course, without an acceptable German it is not possible to get grades in the subjects that you will be taking. So this means that you need a German course!

The most common subjects (basic subjects) are English, German, mathematics, history, biology, sports, music, physics, geographics, French and Latin. You can substitute one or two of them. This means, that instead of Latin or French, you can take part in a lower grade in German, where they teach much more grammar then in your grade.



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In most cases you will go to school five days a week, except in some schools, where they have classes on Saturdays too. On the other hand, the school days are fairly short. Lessons start just before 8 o'clock in the morning and finish around an hour after lunch during weekdays and around 12 on Saturdays. The school year starts in mid-September. There are possibilities to choose special schools like Tourism schools, Technical schools, and of course Musical Gymnasiums.

In schools you can join many sport activities, and for students with an interest in music, different activities are also offered. Every school arranges trips, either for sport or cultural activities. The trips are a lot of fun to take part in, but not included in the program fee. There is also a fare to pay if you go to school by bus or train. Some students can walk or ride a bike to school.

HOST FAMILY LIFE

Host families in Austria do not get paid for hosting a student. Most host families live in small communities near a bigger city or town. Austrian towns are very picturesque and often feel somewhat small compared to other European cities.

Many host parents work, therefore the students should be mature enough to prepare their own lunch or warm up some food. Normally the family eats together in the evening.

You will most definitely have the chance to go sightseeing with your family. Many places are rather closeby in Austria, and weekend trips to adjoining countries are not unusual. Austrians are known for their "Gemütlichkeit", i.e. their warm and friendly ways. Therefore, you can be sure to feel welcome in your new family.

PROGRAM EXTRAS

Welcome party in St. Gilgen at the Wolfgangsee

This event occurs in the end of September/beginning of October to welcome all new students. We stay overnight at the lake Wolfgang together with the host families, all area reps and the STS staff. The stay at the hostel has to be paid by the student. The cost of the stay is approximately 15 EUR.

German Course

In the end of October we arrange a five-day intensive German course. Every day includes four lessons in a small group and activities in the afternoons. The price includes: accommodation, sightseeing tours, Sound of Music tour, mountain hiking with a guide, visit to a salt water thermal, dinner etc. The cost is approximately 500 EUR.

Venice Trip

This trip is also in November. We take the train to Venice. Included in the price is a sightseeing tour, train to Venice and return with two escorts. The cost is approximately 140 EUR.

Snowboard weekend

In the beginning of March, we arrange a three-day ski event. Ski-

or snowboard course, accommodation, ice skating, possibility to rent skis or snowboards, helmets, thermal spring baths is included in the price. At least four area representatives take part in the trip and the cost is approximately 120 EUR.

Venice Trip

Another Venice trip is arranged in the spring. We take the train to Venice. Included in the price is a sightseeing tour, train to Venice and return with two escorts. The cost is approximately 140 EUR.

German Course

In the beginning of April, we arrange a 5 days intensive German course again. Every day includes 4 lessons, in a small group, and activities in the afternoons. The price includes: accommodation, sightseeing tours, Sound of Music tour, mountain hiking with a guide, visit at a salt water thermal, dinner etc). The cost is approximately 500 EUR.

Vienna weekend

You get to spend three days in Vienna in the end of April. Sightseeing tour, musical, castle Schönbrunn, museums, youth hostel downtown is all included. At least three area representatives join this event. The cost is approximately 100 EUR.

Jodeling course – May, 1 day

One day learning how to jodel and get the idea of what Austrian culture is like. The cost is approximately 40,00 Euro.

Farewell party

In the end of June it is time to say goodbye to some of the students. This event is an overnight event at the lake Wolfgang, together with the host families, area reps, STS staff and friends, at a cost of approximately 25 EUR.

European tour

In the end of June, STS Head Office offers a three-week bustour around Europe. You get to visit 10 countries together with students from all over the world. The price includes accommodation, half board, sightseeing, most entrances and activities, Disneyland in Paris etc. Please see separate sheet for more detailed information regarding this tour.



All information is subject to change.

