

AUSTRIA

— Vienna · Salzburg · Werfen · Hallstatt —

“Austria isn't showing off. Vienna has the architecture, Salzburg has the hills, and then there's an ice cave and a bone house for the days you need something strange.”

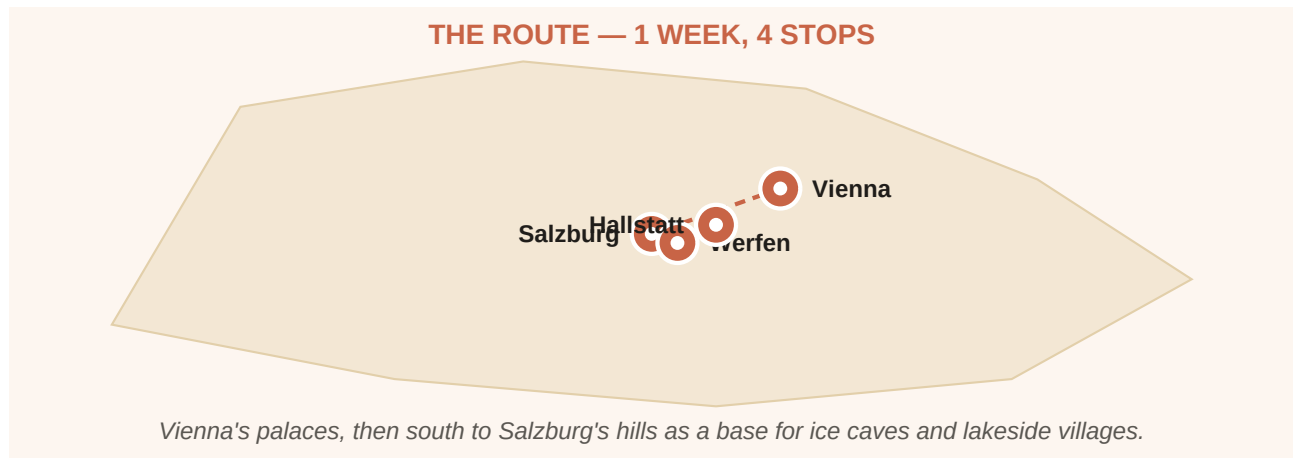


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By Ayushi & Harshit Jain

Austria at a glance

Five nights using Salzburg as a base — the city for two nights, then day trips to Werfen and Hallstatt. Vienna first, a capsule hotel blunder, four bus lines, and a tower where the view stopped time.



Best time	September (early autumn)
Visa (IN)	Schengen (Indian passport)
Currency	EUR
Getting around	Trains connect everything. Regional trains are cheap and cheerful. One day: Salzburg to Werfen to Hallstatt and back is possible, tight, and worth it.
If we did it again	In Vienna, the Astronomical Clock disappointed us. We also skipped some baroque details that we wish we'd slowed for.

The top 10 — our personal highlights

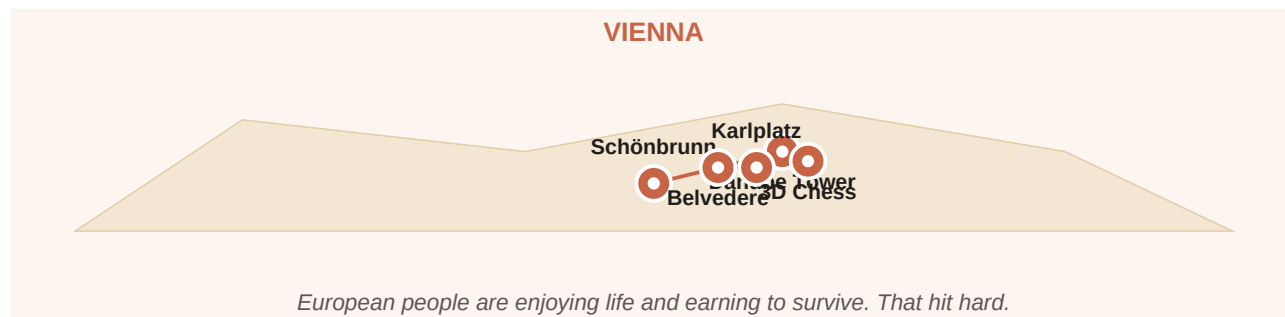
Ten moments worth flying back for. Ranked roughly in the order they made us go “oh.”

- 1 Danube Tower Sunset · Vienna**
150 metres above Vienna at night
- 2 Schönbrunn Palace · Vienna**
The Habsburg summer palace gardens
- 3 Hohensalzburg Fortress · Salzburg**
Walk up, take the funicular down
- 4 Mirabell Gardens · Salzburg**
Sound of Music steps and baroque beauty
- 5 Eisriesenwelt Ice Cave · Werfen**
42km of ice, carbide lamps, year-round 0°C
- 6 Hohenwerfen Castle · Werfen**
Where Eagles Dare, with falconry displays
- 7 Hallstatt Salt Mine · Hallstatt**
Oldest in the world, miners' slides included
- 8 Hallstatt Skywalk · Hallstatt**
The postcard view from above the village
- 9 Beinhaus Bone House · Hallstatt**
1200 painted skulls in a small chapel
- 10 Salzburg Cathedral · Salzburg**
Mozart's baptism font is still there

Vienna

Two days: a capsule hotel mishap, four bus lines, and a tower that made everything worth it

Our first city of the Europe trip. We booked a capsule thinking it was big. We rode all four Hop on Hop off lines. By the second day, we were 150 metres up watching the city turn to lights.



Top 5 here

- **Danube Tower** — 150m up, 360 degrees, apple strudel at the top
- **Schönbrunn Palace** — History-heavy gardens, ride the Green line HoHo out
- **Belvedere Palace** — Skip if you hate art, do it for the hedge-framed photos
- **3D Chess in the Park** — People stand as pieces, play at human scale
- **Karlplatz Station** — The hub — every tour started or ended here

Days	2
Where we stayed	Capsule hotel (not big at all)
Getting around	One-way tickets from Paris, onwards to Prague
Where we ate	Rice, poha and dal makhni cooked in the room, apple strudel and Viennese coffee
Reality check	Nobody checked our tickets. Language is German but people were helpful. Food-wise, Austria isn't vegetarian-friendly — we mostly cooked.

→ Read the full Vienna guide on the site: desk2destinations.com/austria-vienna.html

Salzburg

A baroque stage set with a fortress for a backdrop and Mozart's ghost on every corner

Small enough to walk in a day, dense enough for three. Used as a base for five nights — two for the city, one for Werfen, one for Hallstatt, one buffer day.



Top 5 here

- **Hohensalzburg Fortress** — Walk up the switchbacks or take the funicular
- **Mirabell Gardens** — Baroque hedges, fountains, Sound of Music steps
- **Mozart Geburtshaus** — His yellow house at Getreidegasse 9
- **Salzburg Cathedral** — Enormous white dome, Mozart baptised here
- **Café Tomaselli** — 1700 coffeehouse, cake trolleys, imperious waitresses

Days	5
Where we stayed	Hotel near Mirabellplatz for 5 nights
Getting around	Train from Vienna, onwards to Hallstatt and Werfen as day trips
Where we ate	Veg Svickova at Maitree restaurant, Czech beer we couldn't finish
Reality check	Salzburg is the perfect base for surrounding day trips. Stay here, not in Hallstatt or Werfen.

→ Read the full Salzburg guide on the site: desk2destinations.com/austria-salzburg.html

Werfen

An ice cave where it's always zero degrees, and a castle where eagles dare

Forty minutes south of Salzburg by train. A full day: morning climbing 600 steps of ice in a cave 1641m up a mountain, afternoon watching vultures and eagles dive in a fortress courtyard.



Top 5 here

- **Eisriesenwelt Ice Cave** — 600 wooden steps, carbide lamps, 42km of ice total
- **Cable Car Ascent** — Short, dramatic, much easier than the footpath
- **Hohenwerfen Castle** — 1077 fortress, Where Eagles Dare location
- **Falconry Display** — Twice daily, eagles flying over Alps
- **The Cold** — Year-round 0°C inside — bring layers even in summer

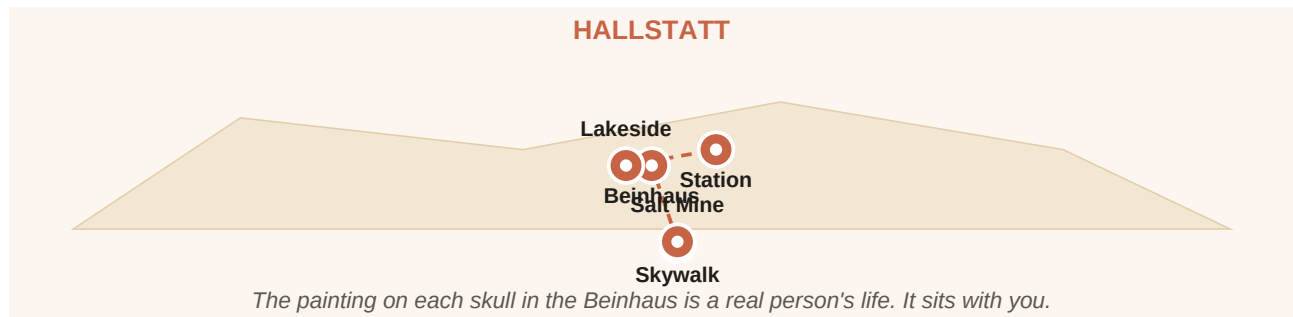
Days	1
Where we stayed	Day trip from Salzburg
Getting around	Train from Salzburg 40 minutes, return same day
Where we ate	Lunch in Werfen village between cave and castle
Reality check	The cave is cold. Wear proper layers. The climb is sustained but not technical. Six hours round trip is accurate.

→ Read the full Werfen guide on the site: desk2destinations.com/austria-werfen.html

Hallstatt

The most photographed village in Austria, best seen before 11am or after 6pm

Tiny, perfect, overwhelmed by day-trippers. Arrive early from Salzburg, beat the wave, spend the morning in near-empty perfection. By midday, 10000 visitors in a 750-person village.



Top 5 here

- **The Skywalk** — Platform jutting over the cliff, best view in Hallstatt
- **Hallstatt Salt Mine** — World's oldest, miners' slides, 7000 years of history
- **The Beinhaus** — 1200 painted skulls behind the church — austere and moving
- **Lakeside Viewpoint** — North end of the village, the postcard shot
- **The Boat from the Station** — Five-minute crossing, the right way to arrive

Days	1
Where we stayed	Stay overnight if possible — village empties by 6pm
Getting around	Train from Salzburg 2 hours with one change
Where we ate	Cheap in the village early, expensive by lunch
Reality check	Arrive on the 7am train. You'll have the place nearly to yourself until 11am. Day-trippers ruin the afternoon.

→ Read the full Hallstatt guide on the site: desk2destinations.com/austria-hallstatt.html

Costs — where the rupees went

Mid-range, vegetarian-friendly, two travellers splitting stays. Numbers are per-person, rounded honestly. Flights vary the most.

Accommodation	Hotels in Salzburg	■3000/night
Trains	Regional and day passes	■4000 for week
Food	Mixed dining	■1200/day
Activities	Museums, caves, castles	■4000/person
Cable cars/Funiculars	Mountain access	■2000/person
Café Tomaselli	Historic coffee	■500/person
Souvenirs	Austrian gifts	■3000
Miscellaneous	Contingency	■4000

Total: ■120000

One last thing

Buy the combined ticket for Werfen (Eisriesenwelt + Hohenwerfen). Regional trains from Salzburg are your best friend.

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