

History of Austria

Today's Republic of Austria is a small state, whose origins can be traced back into history. Populated since the prehistoric times, Austria's location in the heart of Europe means that it has had its share of the continent's historical developments. It evolved from a border region into a powerful empire and multiracial state, which collapsed at the end of the First World War. In 1918, the small, newly proclaimed Republic of Austria had at first to come to terms with the European environment. Austria emerged from the Second World War and the sufferings associated with it as a state that feels secure in its existence and which plays a decisive role in Europe.

Geography

Location: Central Europe, north of Italy and Slovenia

Area: Total= 83,858 sq km, Water= 1,120 sq km, Land= 82,738 sq km

Climate: Temperate; continental; cloudy; cold winters with frequent rain in lowlands & snow in the mountains; cool summers with occasional showers

Terrain: In the west & south mostly mountains (Alps); along the eastern & northern margins mostly flat or gently sloping.

Elevation Extremes: Lowest Point: Neusiedler See 115 meters

Highest Point: Grossglockner 3,798 meters

Natural Hazards: landslides, avalanches, & earthquakes

Geographic Note: Landlocked, strategic location at the crossroads of central Europe with many easily traversable Alpine passes and valleys; major river is Danube; population is concentrated on the eastern lowlands because of steep slopes, poor soil, & low temperatures elsewhere.

People

Population: 8,188,207 (July 2003 est)

Life Expectancy: Total Pop: 78. 17 years, males 75. 02 years, females 81. 48 years

Religions: Roman Catholic 78%, Protestant 5%, Muslim and other 17%

Languages: German, English (little)

Literacy: 98% of the population

Population Growth Rate: 0.22%

Age Structure: 0-14 yrs, 16.2%; 15-64 yrs, 68.3%; over 65 yrs, 15.5%

Birth Rate: 9.43 births / 1000

Death Rate: 9.69 deaths / 1000

Government

Country Name: conventional long form: Republic of Austria, conventional short form: Austria, local short form: Oesterreich, local long form: Republik Oesterreich

Government Type: Federal Republic

Capital: Vienna

Administrative Divisions: 9 states, (Bundesland, Burgenland, Kaernten, Nidderoesterreich, Oberoesterreich, Salzburg, Steiermark, Tirol, Vorarlberg, Wien)

Independence: 1156 (from Bavaria)

Legal System: Civil law system with Roman law origin; judicial review of legislative acts by the Constitutional Court; separate administrative and civil/penal supreme courts; accepts compulsory neutrality

Economy

GDP: purchasing power parity - \$227.7 billion

GDP per Capita: purchasing power parity - \$27,900

GDP by sector: Agriculture 2%, Industry 33%, and Services 65%

Inflation Rate: 1.8%

Labor Force: 4.3 Million

Unemployment Rate: 4.8%

Exports: \$70 billion

Imports: \$74 billion

Currency: euro (EUR) – note: on January 1999, the European Monetary Union introduced the euro as a common currency to be used by the financial institutions of member countries; on January 1, 2002, the euro became the sole currency for everyday transactions within the member countries.

Exchange Rate: 1 EUR = 1.45 USD (Nov 2007)

Austrian Cuisine

The Tyrol, the western mountain region, is known for its hearty soups, and meat dishes. Large Platters of roast pork, smoked pork, sausage and dumplings served on a mound of sauerkraut, cold cut platters of bacon and cheese, and venison dishes using chamois meat can be found in this region. Top drinks are beer, light red wine, and schnapps. (Austrian Nat'l Tourist Board – <http://austria-tourism.at>)

Miscellaneous

Mobile Phones: 6 million

Internet Country code: .at

Internet Service Providers: 37 (2002)

Internet Users: 3.7 million (2002)

Railways: total: 6,024 km

Highways: total: 200,000 km

Waterways: 358 km

Airports: 55

Airports with paved runways: 24

Military Branches: Land Forces (KdoLdSK), Air Force (KdoLuSK)

Military Age: 19

Military Expenditures: \$1.497 billion

International Disputes: Minor disputes with Czech Republic & Slovenia continue over nuclear power plants and post World War II treatment of German Speaking minorities (CIA World Factbook)

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/au.html>



Innsbruck

The Inn valley has always been very important for its geographical and trafficable favorable position. First settlements date back to the Bronze Age. When the Roman Empire expanded to the North, the valley became an important military transportation route. They built a fortified road stop, Veldidena, which is now Innsbruck's district of Wilten. With the settlements of the Bajuwaren, the area turned Bavarian and was later given to the Bishops of Brixen, who lost more and more control of the area to the native Tyrolean counts. In the year 1187 the name "Innsbrucke", which means Bridge over the River Inn, is first mentioned. Soon they built out Innsbruck as the center of their domain.

In the 15th century the emperor Maximilian I made the city the center of his new administration-, culture- and finance politics. He erected the "Goldene Dachl" in the core of Innsbruck's now historic center, a renaissance oriole, decorated with gold painted copper shingles. In 1665 Empress Maria Theresia built the Triumph Gate and expanded the "Hofburg", the residence of the Habsburg in Innsbruck.

Nowadays the architecture of this period still characterizes the cityscape.

In 1805 Napoleon's armies defeated Austria and Tyrol was given to the Bavarians. The Tyrolean resistance fighter Andreas Hofer managed to free Tyrol from the German and French troops for a while and in 1814 it was returned to the Austrians. Andreas Hofer is a Tyrolean National hero and a large painted round panorama picture, the "Rundgemalde", was dedicated to his fight on the Mount Isle.

Now Innsbruck, with its 150,000 inhabitants, is because of its favorable position in the Alps, an international center for winter sports and was the host of the Olympic Winter Games twice, in 1964 and in 1976. It is also kind of an unofficial capital for snowboarding in Europe. (About Austria.org) <http://aboutaustria.org/capitals/innsbruck.htm#1>