

Quest Program AUSTRIA



Austria is famous for its natural splendor. Towering peaks overlook crystal lakes and thick green forests. Did you know

that the world's toughest downhill skiing race, Hahnenkamrennen, is organized in Kitzbühel, Austria, every year? Don't forget your skis and boots!



Austria is probably best known as a residence of classical music. In the 18th century, Salzburg became the center of baroque music. It was in Salzburg where Mozart worked, even though he also spent time in Vienna. Vienna was another musical magnet, where everything was done to the accompaniment of waltzes. Classical music thrived and composers from all over Europe went on pilgrimages to this country. Vienna is also famous for its antique charm.

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, spanning from the time when Charlemagne founded his territory, to the legendary kingdom and power of the Habsburgers. Today's modern republic has matured slowly to become one of the favorite countries for tourists of the world.

In addition to wonderful cities and a rich history, Austria offers a great variety of pastimes due to its proximity to lakes, forests and mountains. People can easily access the great outdoors for hiking, boating, mountain biking and skiing. Austria is the home of the classic alpine ski style, and is the best place to learn stylish and safe ski techniques. 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 on the many lakes is also a popular activity. Horseback riding, football, tennis and volleyball are practiced nearly everywhere.

For the more musically inclined, it is very common to join the village orchestra, where students have the chance to practice and play with more than 40

Austria Statistics

Area: 32,376 square miles
Population: approximately 9 million
Capital: Vienna
Language: German
National holiday: October 26

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A nonprofit corporation committed to advancing intercultural educational student exchange.



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musicians. In Austrian town and cities, there are museums, theatres, musicals and much more to enjoy.

School Life

Most schools in Austria are public and do not require school uniforms. Austrian youths study at high school (Gymnasium) for eight years. The first grade of high school starts when the students are ten years old, and continues until the final examination (“Matura”) in 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. Of course, without a minimum level of German, exchange students can not receive grades in their subjects. For these students, there are extra German lessons available. The most common subjects in school (basic subjects) are English, German, mathematics, history, biology, sports, music, physics, geography, French and Latin. Exchange students can substitute one or two of them, which means that instead of Latin or French, one can take part in a lower grade in German.

In most cases students go to school five days a week starting in mid-September. There are some schools that have classes on Saturdays as well. These schools have weekend classes because school days in Austria are fairly short. Lessons in school start just before 8 o'clock in the morning and finish around an hour after lunch during weekdays, and around noon on Saturdays. There are also specialty schools available in Austria, such as Tourism schools, Technical schools, and of course Musical Gymnasiums.

Students can join many sports and music activities in school. Each school arranges trips, either for sporting or cultural activities. The trips are a lot of fun to take part in; however they are an external cost from the program. There is also a fare to pay if you go to school

by bus or train. Some students opt to walk or ride a bike to school, so they can experience the city.

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. In most cases, the family eats together in the evening. You will probably have the chance to go sightseeing with your family. Many places are close by in Austria, so weekend trips to adjoining countries are not unusual. Austrians are known for their “Gemütlichkeit,” meaning 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 and beginning of October to welcome all new students. We stay overnight at the lake Wolfgang together with the host families, area representatives and staff. The stay at the hostel is an additional cost paid by the student (approx. 15 EUR).

German Course

In the end of October and beginning of April we arrange a five-day intensive German course. Every day includes four lessons in a small group and afternoon activities. The price of this trip includes: accommodations, sightseeing tours, a Sound of Music tour, guided mountain hiking, a visit to a salt water thermal, dinner, and more. The cost is approximately 400 EUR.

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Venice Trip

In the spring and fall, we organize a trip to visit Venice. Included in the trip is a roundtrip train ticket to Venice with two escorts and a sightseeing tour. The cost is approximately 120 EUR.

Snowboarding Weekend

In the beginning of March, we arrange a three-day ski and snowboard event. The price of the trip includes a ski or snowboard course, accommodations, ice skating, thermal spring baths, and the possibility to rent skis, snowboards and helmets. At least four area representatives take part in the trip and the cost is approximately 120 EUR.

Vienna Weekend

At the end of April, we offer a three-day tour of downtown Vienna. The trip includes a sightseeing tour, musical, castle Schönbrunn, museums, and youth hostel downtown. At least three area representatives join this event and the cost is approximately 100 EUR.

Adventure Days

In the end of May we do a four-day adventure trip with activities such as rafting, rock climbing, canoeing and swinging on a giant swing. All activities are supervised by a trainer. Included in the price are accommodation and activities at a cost of approximately 250 EUR.

Farewell Party

In the end of June it is time to say goodbye to some of our exchange students. We organize an overnight event at the lake Wolfgang, so that host families, area representatives, staff and friends can all get together to say goodbye. The trip costs approximately 25 EUR.

European Tour

In the end of June, our office offers a three-week bus tour around Europe. You get to visit 10 countries together with students from all over the world. The price includes accommodations (half board), sightseeing, most entrances and activities, Disneyland in Paris, and more. The cost is approximately 2200 EUR. Please ask for more detailed information regarding the tour.

About Quest

Quest International was founded in 1999. We are a nonprofit organization committed to international, educational student exchange. Our goal is to promote cultural awareness and international understanding by offering quality, educational and cultural programs for students, host families and schools. Our staff is dedicated to creating a positive exchange experience for all program participants.