

Getting to Austrian destinations by train and bus

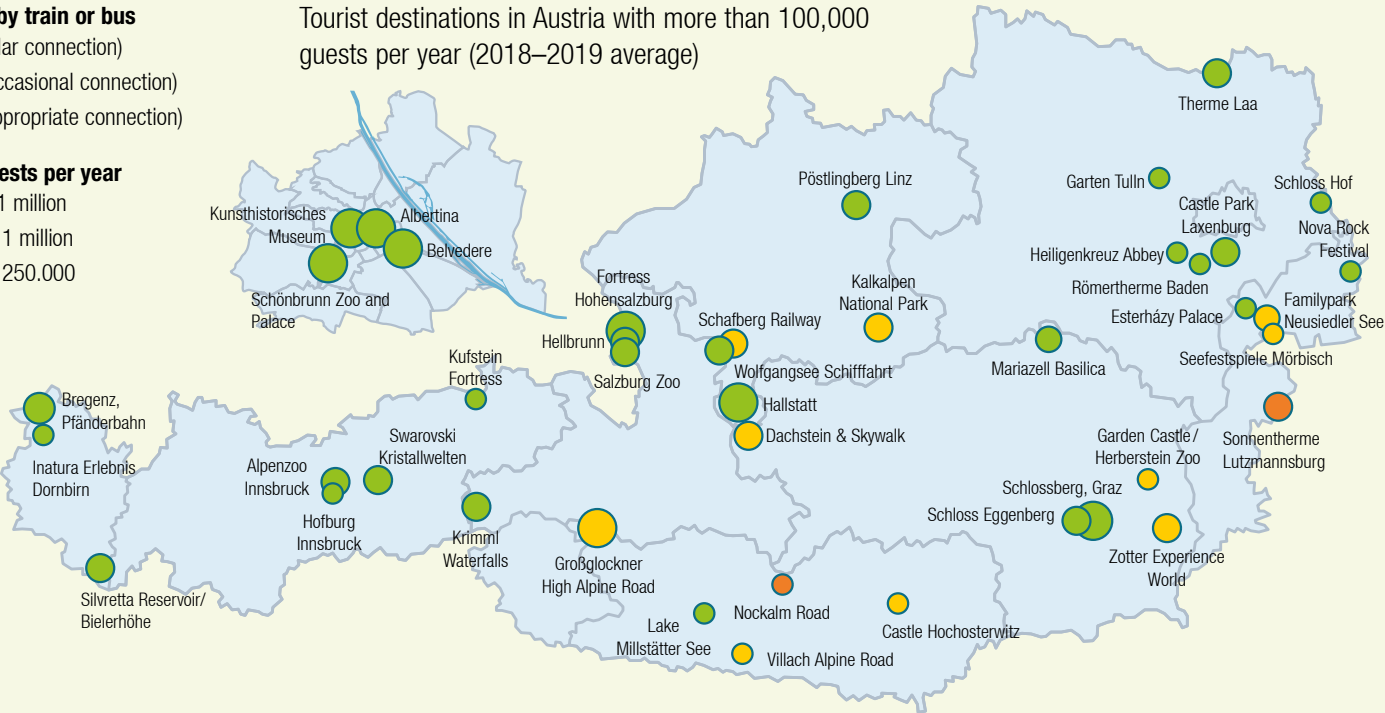
Accessibility by train or bus

- good (regular connection)
- average (occasional connection)
- poor (no appropriate connection)

Number of guests per year

- more than 1 million
- 250.000 – 1 million
- 100.000 – 250.000

Tourist destinations in Austria with more than 100,000 guests per year (2018–2019 average)



Source: Juhasz A. 2022 Chart: VCO 2022

How to make trips climate-friendly

Getting to tourist attractions without a car should be easy. Many destinations are easily accessible by public transport and offer flexible local transport services. Mobility management helps tourist regions actively shape mobility.

32 percent of the trips taken by Austrian households are trips made for leisure purposes and visits. While the share of leisure trips is 23 percent on working days, it accounts for 44 percent on Saturdays and rises to 73 percent on Sundays and public holidays, thus making up the majority of all journeys made in Austria. In leisure traffic, 750 million kilometres, or 47 million trips, are made per week, 57 percent of which by car, as a driver or passenger. The leisure trips by car alone generate about 2.5 million tonnes of direct greenhouse gas emissions per year.¹

Making leisure traffic climate-friendly

More than half of the leisure trips in Austria are made by car, about eleven percent by public transport and 35 percent on foot or by bike.² In an effort to make leisure trips more climate-friendly, the national Mobility Master Plan 2030 of the Federal Ministry for Climate Action stipulates that destinations should be easily accessible by public transport, on-demand transport and on foot or by bike. Many regions in Austria already offer such services that enable a shift to sustainable mobility.

Trips as part of our mobility

Day trips are part of leisure traffic. Overall, about 18 percent of the population take a day trip at least once a month.³ Day trips are all trips in the leisure time that include leaving the familiar surroundings but not staying overnight. Apart from days out in the countryside or sightseeing, these also include trips to visit family and friends, engage in sports activities, participate in events or eat out. Everyday journeys are not defined as trips.

Longer journeys on weekends

In Austria, 32 percent of the trips made are leisure trips and visits. The length of trips increases by almost 50 percent on Sundays and public holidays compared to working days and the duration increases by more than 20 percent. In this context, leisure trips on Sundays play a major role. A survey in Upper Austria found that about 40 percent of trips are made on weekends.⁴ At 1.7 persons per car, the car occupancy rate is higher than on working days. On Saturdays, this difference is smaller.⁵

Better offers for climate-friendly travelling

The reasons for choosing a tourist destination are manifold. For example, 43 percent of re-

spondents in Upper Austria said that “enjoying nature” was their main reason for their day trips. More than one third wanted to go to restaurants and inns and 30 percent exercise. However, 89 percent of the journeys to and from the destinations in Upper Austria are made by car.⁶ The share of public transport for day trips is below average; it generally drops from 17 percent on working days to nine percent on Sundays in Austria.⁷ The accessibility of important tourist destinations by public transport, flexible services, such as on-call buses and services in the afternoon and on weekends are key prerequisites for a climate-friendly journey. When selecting a destination, the length of the journey also plays a role.⁸ Public transport offers flexibility to travellers. Ease of travelling and direct connections that are as seamless as possible are important features. Most of the top tourist attractions in Austria are situated in urban areas. St. Stephen’s Cathedral, the Belvedere, Schönbrunn Zoo and Palace and the Fortress Hohensalzburg each recorded between one and five million visitors per year before the Covid-19 pandemic.⁹ However, there are also many popular sights outside the cities. Of the 42 Austrian tourist destinations with more than 100,000 visitors per year, more than two thirds are easily accessible with regular services.

Public transport offers flexibility

A main advantage of public transport is that hiking or bike tours, for example, can start and end at different places. You can take bikes on regional trains and many local lines. In Carinthia, for example, the “Tauernsprinter” train allows you to take your bike from Villach to Mallnitz in the Hohe Tauern National Park. The train runs once a day from Villach to Mallnitz and back again and is equipped with a special carriage with over 200 spaces for bikes.¹⁰ In Lower Austria, many excursion railways like the Mariazell Railway as well as the Radtramper bus along the Traisental cycle path offer spaces for bikes.¹¹ There are buses with bike trailers in the Ötztal in Tyrol or in the Bregenzerwald region in Vorarlberg, for example.¹² In the summertime, the Ybbstal bike taxi operates between Waidhofen an der Ybbs and Lunz am See.¹³ Bike rental systems in many places in Austria round off the offer.



Starting hikes and mountain hikes by public transport

The search engine “Zuugle” finds hikes and mountain hikes that are easily accessible by public transport. The tour starts at home, from the nearest public transport stop in the hometown. Zuugle is the first search engine for activities such as mountain hikes, ski tours, climbing, mountain biking and hiking in the alpine region using public transport for travelling to and from the destination. The search portal includes a total of more than 8,000 tours. Other services such as NaturTrip, a Web app for day trips without a car, and “bahn-zum-berg.at”, a search portal for outdoor activities accessible by public transport, also help find climate-friendly ways to physical activities.

Free parking attracts more cars

The availability of car parking spaces influences the choice of transport mode. Working persons who do not have a car parking space at their place of work make an average of 30 percent of their commute trips by car; the figure for those having a parking space is 77 percent.¹⁴ Where the number of car parking spaces is reduced and instead a high-quality public transport service, a connection to the cycle route network and enough bike parking spaces are offered, the mobility behaviour changes.

In Vorarlberg, for instance, day trips to Nenzinger Himmel can only be taken by shuttle bus to avoid car traffic to the narrow high valley. In alpine regions such as Werfenweng, Hinterstoder, Mallnitz or Weißensee, many local transport options like valley buses (“Tälerbusse”), hiking taxis and other services are available.¹⁵ Zermatt in Switzerland is completely car-free; it can only be reached by public transport. The main forms of mobility in the village are walking and cycling, complemented by electric buses and electric taxis. Valley buses in East Tyrol run every hour, public transport is free for guests.¹⁶

Klimaticket and leisure tickets as incentives

Tickets for all scheduled services in a specific area provide easy and flexible access to public transport. An increasing number of tourism regions offer their guests regional tickets that are usually combined with offers for local attractions. With their guest cards, holiday makers in Vorarlberg can use public transport free of charge.¹⁷ The leisure time ticket offered by the transport association for Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland can be used in Lower Austria and the Burgenland on weekends and public holidays. With the day ticket of the transport association in Upper Austria, two adults with up to four children can use the regional public transport services. The ÖBB Einfach-Raus-Ticket (“Simply Away”) allows groups to travel with the ÖBB’s local and regional trains including the Raaberbahn. This ticket can also be upgraded to take your bike along.¹⁸

The KlimaTicket (climate ticket) introduced in the autumn of 2021 allows you to use all public transport services in one federal province or all over Austria. By the end of June 2022, about

170,000 KlimaTickets valid across Austria had already been sold.¹⁹ Most regional climate tickets were sold in Vorarlberg with over 70,000 tickets, followed by Salzburg with over 40,000 tickets.²⁰ The KlimaTicket has yet to be expanded into a mobility card that also includes local micro public transport services such as on-call buses, collective taxis and sharing solutions.

Flexible last mile connections

The last leg of a journey from the bus/train station to the final destination often poses a challenge to travellers. As a solution, flexible mobility services such as bike and car sharing, collective taxis and on-call buses are a useful addition to regular transport services. The Carinthia Train Station Shuttle connects public transport with ten tourism regions. The Nockmobil is an example of a shuttle service to public transport facilities, operating in eight communities in the Nockberge region.²¹ In Tyrol, the train station shuttle is available for the last mile to destinations.²² In Carinthia, a dedicated tourism mobility centre focuses on offers for tourists.²³

Mobility centres and synergy effects

Mobility centres are one-stop-shops for obtaining all necessary information on sustainable mobility in a region. Central coordination makes it possible to plan leisure traffic and offers for the local population in an integrated manner and exploit potential such as different usage hours. Apart from information on timetables and rates, the centres also answer general questions on public transport and climate-friendly mobility. In Bischofshofen, the „Mobilto” mobility centre has been offering information on environmentally-friendly mobility services in the Pongau region (Salzburg) since 2001. In the municipality of Gosau (Upper Austria) in the Dachstein/Salzkammergut region, a 24/7 taxi service is available that can also be ordered via an app. The local population can use the service at a reduced rate.²⁴

Making trips to attractions climate-friendly

In Austria, leisure trips and visits account for almost a quarter of all private trips on working days, and for as much as 73 percent on Sundays and public holidays.²⁵ Leisure mobility includes day trips, more than half of which are made by travellers by car (as drivers or passengers). Transport services which do not rely on private car are on the rise and offer potential for a shift to sustainable modes of transport. A high-quality public transport system provides flexibility for day trips, for example, as you can set your starting and end points at different places. Transport services such as on-call and hiking buses or collective taxis facilitate climate-friendly journeys to and from tourist regions.

Introducing mobility management in tourism

Mobility management in tourist regions makes it possible to align publicly accessible transport services with regional demand. This includes an integrated regular-interval timetable and guaranteed transfer points for guests and the local population. On-demand transport services such as on-call buses and collective taxis, combined with sharing offers, serve the last mile to the destination and pave the way for demand-oriented local mobility. Easily accessible information on local mobility as well as regional tickets and guest cards ensure simple access.

Sources online under:

www.vcoe.at/publikationen/vcoe-factsheets



VCÖ recommendations

- Introduce mobility concepts to ensure accessibility of tourist destinations by public transport
- Improve offers in tourist regions by expanding public transport and introduce flexible transport services such as shuttle buses and bike or car sharing
- Provide integrated regular-interval timetables with guaranteed transfer points to improve the accessibility of destinations
- Create safe footpaths and cycling paths, in particular to connect destinations with public transport
- Improve the availability of regional public transport tickets for day-trippers
- Establish mobility centres for leisure traffic, integrating ongoing mobility management
- Share comprehensive and easily accessible information on local public transport services, for instance through regional mobility centres



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VCÖ - Mobility with a future:

„Mobility management in tourist regions tailored to destinations for day trips in particular enables comprehensive planning of sustainable local mobility according to demand and coordinated planning with further transport services in the region.“

In 2022, funding for active mobility and sustainable mobility management in the amount of up to 60 million euros is available within the framework of klimaaktiv mobil. The klimaaktiv mobil programme for the tourism and leisure sector provides funding for climate-friendly tourism and sustainable leisure facilities. Link: klimaaktivmobil.at/tourismus

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