

# Austria - OVERVIEW

Updated: February, 11, 2014



**Country Name Long Form:** Republic of Austria

**Government Type:** Federal Republic

**Languages Spoken:** German, Turkish

**National Flag**



**Austria is a Tier III Country. Significant security measures are necessary.**

|  | Overall Assessment  | Political Violence  | Crime   | Terrorism   | Travel Safety   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Austria  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Key: (L) Low – (M) Medium – (H) High – (C)Critical |   |   |   |   |   |

## POLITICAL CONDITIONS

**Political Violence is rated at LOW in Austria**

Austria is a stable democracy with a potential for war or civil unrest being low. Political demonstrations on a variety of issues occur with some frequency, especially in Vienna. Civil disorder in Austria is rare, but does occur occasionally. Demonstrations in 2013 were peaceful. Peaceful protests concerning a variety of political causes are common in Vienna.

## TERRORISM

**Terrorism is assessed as LOW**

There have been no recent terrorist actions in Austria; however, the potential for such activity to occur unexpectedly must be taken seriously. Religiously-motivated extremism presents a potential threat to international and European security.

## Austria - OVERVIEW

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Austria is a transport and finance hub, and various international terrorist groups and individuals associated with them are believed to operate within the country as part of their support base. As the violence in Syria continues, Austria has seen a number of residents go to Syria to fight and then return. The threat of extremism violence from these individuals is of growing concern to authorities.

Austria has no known regional terrorist groups. There are extremist right-wing groups and left-wing groups present.

### RULE OF LAW / CORRUPTION

The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2013 gave Austria a score of 69, indicating that the country has moderate levels of corruption. The CPI rates countries by the perceived levels of corruption in their public sector, with the least corrupt country receiving a maximum score of 100.

### CRIME

**Crime is assessed as MEDIUM**

Austria has one of the lowest crime rates in Europe, and violent crime is rare. However, crimes involving theft of personal property do occur. As such, most crimes involving U.S. citizens are crimes of opportunity, involving theft of personal belongings. Travelers are also targets of pick-pockets who operate where tourists tend to gather. Some of the spots where such crimes are most frequently reported include Vienna's two largest train stations, the plaza around St. Stephen's Cathedral and the nearby pedestrian shopping areas.

The most common crime experienced by Americans have been purse/wallet snatching in crowded areas or other crimes of opportunity such as theft of purses and electronics in which the victim was distracted and not in physical control of the items on trains or shopping areas. Such crimes are generally non-violent, and weapons are seldom used in their commission.

Residual burglaries continue to be a significant concern, especially in the more affluent neighborhoods.

Organized crime is very low, and none have taken any actions directed against Americans.

### KIDNAPPING

Kidnapping is a rarely an issue in Austria, and few cases of Western travelers being abducted are known to exist.

### SEXUAL ASSAULT

Although uncommon, multiple instances of assault involving Westerners have been reported. These crimes are typically committed by intoxicated individuals near establishments that serve alcohol and

## Austria - OVERVIEW

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public transportation hubs. A few cases of Western female travelers being sexual assault after their drinks were unknowingly contaminated with incapacitating drugs have been reported.

### NATURAL DISASTERS

Due to Austria's mountainous terrain, snowfalls, avalanches, landslides and flash floods often occur in the country and can result in fatalities. Accidents involving mountaineers and winter sports' enthusiasts also occur regularly. Travelers are strongly urged to stay on clearly marked routes and to seek local advice about dangers if intending to spend time in mountainous areas and / or engage in outdoor activities.

### STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Shaking of hands is customary upon entering and leaving, meeting and greeting.
- Knowledge of basic German phrases is advantageous.
- When holding a conversation it is polite to keep eye contact with whoever is speaking.
- Stay in groups, travel in a caravan consisting of two or more vehicles, and stay on the main roads.
- Ensure that someone not traveling with you is aware of your itinerary.
- Avoid hotels that do not have adequate security.
- Intercity travel after dark anywhere in should be avoided.
- It is preferable to stay in the main tourist destinations.
- Pay close attention to your surroundings, especially when walking or driving in Austria
- Official taxis are a suitable means of travel in daylight hours in urban areas. It is highly recommended that taxis be arranged through your hotel, or program office. Negotiate the price in advance.
- Women should be especially careful when traveling alone and avoid staying out late without a trusted male escort.
- Make sensible security precautions to mitigate the risk of petty crime, particularly pick pocketing and bag snatching.
- Carry a photocopy of your passport when traveling to avoid losing it in a robbery.
- Do not resist if you are being robbed and avoid eye contact and to not make any sudden movements. Victims have been killed when they resisted attack or refused to give up their money or other valuables.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times and keep a low profile.
- Never leave your food, drinks or belongings unattended.
- Carry bags close to your body and make sure the fasteners are secure.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash or wearing expensive jewelry or valuables.
- Leave all important documents in a safe or safe deposit box at your hotel and only carry certified copies.
- Trust your instincts. If someone or something makes you uneasy, avoid the situation.

# Austria - OVERVIEW

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## **Important Contact Details:**

**International Dialing Code:** +43

**International Dialing Prefix:** 00

## **Victims of crime in should contact the following phone numbers for assistance:**

**POLICE:** The local equivalent to the “911” emergency line in is 133

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:** 122

**AMBULANCE:** 144

**Note:** Police, ambulance or fire department response may be unreliable in some parts of the country.

## **TRAVEL & ROAD SAFETY**

- **Refrain** from driving in the country during winter season.

## **RECOMMENDED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS**

- No buying of counterfeit and pirated goods, even if they are widely available.
- No road travel after dark.
- No use of ATMs after dark.
- No traveling alone after dark.

## **HEALTH**

The medical facilities are excellent countrywide. Most medical personnel have a good knowledge of the English language, but some knowledge of German may help, especially in rural areas. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for medical services. Pharmacies are available in all cities and towns, and basic medical supplies are readily available. .

- Unpasteurized milk should be avoided. Powdered or tinned milk should be used as an alternative if pasteurized milk is not available.
- Undercooked meat and fish should not be consumed.

The following vaccinations are recommended or required if travelling to Austria:

- Hepatitis B (recommended)
- Rabies (recommended)
- Tick-borne encephalitis (recommended for travelers visiting forested parts of the country)

## Austria - OVERVIEW

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It is also important to ensure that routine vaccinations are up to date for diseases including influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus.

### **Significant Diseases –**

- **Tick-borne encephalitis** – A viral infection of the central nervous system that is spread by ticks. It is a risk for travelers visiting forested areas of Austria between March and November; the highest risk areas lie in the states of Steiermark and Karnten in southern Austria, the state of Upper Austria, areas to the south of Vienna, and parts of the state of Burgenland in the east of the country.

### **HOSPITALS –**

Allgemeines Krankenhaus  
Währinger Gürtel 18-20  
1090 Wien, Austria  
Tel: +43 (1) 404000

Anstaltsapotheke des Wilhelminenspitals  
Montleartstraße 37  
1160 Wien-Ottakring, Austria  
Tel: (+43-1) 49150  
<http://www.wienkav.at/kav/wil/>

Sozialmedizinisches Zentrum Ost Krankenhaus Donauspital  
Langobardenstraße 122  
1220 Wien, Austria  
Tel: (+43-1) 288020  
<http://www.wienkav.at/kav/dsp/>

### **US EMBASSY – CONSULATE LOCATIONS**

#### **United States Embassy Vienna**

Boltzmanngasse 16  
1090 Vienna, Austria  
Tel: (+43-1) 31339-0  
Emergency Tel: (0043-1) 313 390  
Fax: (+43-1) 310 06 82  
Email: [embassy@usembassy.at](mailto:embassy@usembassy.at)

### **USF INTERNATIONAL HOTLINE**

USF 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 813-317-5815

## Austria - OVERVIEW

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AXA Assistance 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 1-877-577-9504 / +1-203-399-5130 (Call collect from abroad)

ASSIST ID #: GLMN 04983932. <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/resources/>

\* Information derived from CIA World Fact Book, US Department of State, OSAC, and Travel Guard. This travel overview summarizes some of the most important concerns; however, it does not negate the need for detailed trip planning.