

# Vienna: a city worth living in

Vienna is a great place to live. What the residents of Vienna have known for a long time now has been certified officially more than once: In 2023, the consulting firm Mercer<sup>1</sup> and the Economist Intelligence Unit<sup>2</sup> voted Vienna as the world's most liveable city. The international news and lifestyle magazine Monocle<sup>3</sup> also named Vienna the city with the highest quality of life worldwide in its Monocle's Quality of Life Survey 2023.

The reason for this outstanding quality of life? Vienna has more green space than virtually any other city. It is a place where you can relax – there are even parks in the heart of the city – or enjoy sport. The Austrian capital also has excellent infrastructure and is one of the safest major cities on earth.

Whether it's artistic flowerbeds or unspoilt nature, there are many aspects to green Vienna. The Wienerwald, or Vienna Woods, was awarded the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve designation in 2005. The woods cover an area of 1,050 km<sup>2</sup> and stretch across 51 municipalities in Lower Austria, as well as seven of Vienna's westerly districts<sup>4</sup> (19, 18, 17, 16, 14, 13 and 23).<sup>5</sup> They provide a habitat for numerous species of plants and animals. When taking a stroll in the Lainz Game Reserve you shouldn't be surprised if a wild boar crosses your path. The Lainz Game Reserve is also home to the largest number of different bat species in Europe.<sup>6</sup> Around 500 species of wild bees<sup>7</sup> make Vienna Europe's bee capital. An additional 200 million honey bees buzz through the city each summer. Schönbrunn Zoo offers up-close encounters with exotic animals: the ongoing baby boom and modern, naturalistic enclosures attract more than two million visitors to Schönbrunn Zoo every year. The world's oldest surviving zoo has been voted the best zoo in Europe on six<sup>8</sup> occasions. The treetop trail offers stunning views. A forest adventure trail here also make the many facets of the forest an exciting and varied experience. There are countless vantage points elsewhere in the city including the Danube Tower, Kahlenberg and Cobenzl, all of which can be easily reached using public transport.

The Danube Tower has been enhanced by a new all-action attraction in 2023: a 165 meter high and spectacular slide designed by object artist Carsten Höller awaits. Visitors can slide down the northern outer side of the Danube Tower to the viewing level 15 meters below. The gradient is 29 degrees and the slide takes just under 10 seconds, but offers a very unique way to view Vienna from above.

Mountain bikers, cyclists, ramblers and cross country skiers love the range of signposted routes. The trails take in all kinds of terrain including steep hills and flat stretches along the Danube. Visitors with enough time and fitness can do a circuit of the city on the Rundumadum Trail (120 km), or enjoy the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mercer.com/insights/total-rewards/talent-mobility-insights/quality-of-living-city-ranking/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/global-liveability-index-2023/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://monocle.com/minute/2023/06/22/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bpww.at/de/artikel/biosphaerenpark-wienerwald-unesco-modellregion-fuer-nachhaltigkeit>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Wienerwald>

<sup>6</sup> [www.derstandard.at/story/2000127568453/warum-es-im-lainzer-tiergarten-bald-keine-hirsche-mehr-gibt](http://www.derstandard.at/story/2000127568453/warum-es-im-lainzer-tiergarten-bald-keine-hirsche-mehr-gibt)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.wien.gv.at/umweltschutz/naturschutz/biotop/wildbienen.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.zoovienna.at/besuch-und-tickets/best-european-zoo-award/>

unique mix of city break<sup>9</sup> and local recreation on one of the 12 hiking trails. Vienna's waterbodies also enrich the urban landscape. The New Danube with its large recreation area and leisure paradise on Danube Island as well as the Old Danube draw people outdoors. The tradition of visiting the public lidos on the Old Danube goes back decades. People swim and sail, and also cycle, jog, and skate here in summer. The Danube Canal cuts through the center of the city and is transformed into a stretch of bars and restaurants each summer. The area is home to the Badeschiff (Pool Boat). You can swim in the Danube here in summer and chase the curling sticks over the ice in winter. A little further along the Danube Canal is the Green Prater, a recreation area covering more than three million square meters that was originally gifted to the people of Vienna by Emperor Joseph II and is now one of the most beautiful urban parks in the world. Highlights include the 4.5 km long Hauptallee and the famous Wurstelprater amusement park. Vienna's trademark Giant Ferris Wheel is also impossible to miss and is celebrating its 125th anniversary in 2022. Farther east is the Lobau, a wetland wilderness in the Donau-Auen National Park.

Vienna's green cityscape is shaped by around 453 agricultural businesses<sup>10</sup> with an area under agricultural use of approx. 6,336 hectares, of which 31 percent are organically managed,<sup>11</sup> as well as numerous vineyards. These can best be discovered on the hiking trails. Vienna's vineyards are prized for their internationally acclaimed wine. No trip to the capital would be complete without a trip to a wine tavern where you can sit and leave your cares behind you while enjoying a drop of fine wine. Viennese drinking water has a particularly crisp and refreshing taste. This healthy spring water is yet another reason why Vienna is the world's true number one when it comes to quality of life. The water playgrounds at the Wasserturm (water tower) and on Danube Island offer fun as well as interesting facts about Viennese water. The water playground on Danube Island even happens to be the largest in Europe<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/wald/freizeit/wandern/wege/>

<sup>10</sup> Statistik Austria Agrarstrukturerhebung 2020, published 2022

<sup>11</sup> Statistik Austria Agrarstrukturerhebung 2020, published 2022

<sup>12</sup> Source: [www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS\\_20040705\\_OTS0052/europas-groesster-wasserspielplatz-auf-der-donauinsel](http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20040705_OTS0052/europas-groesster-wasserspielplatz-auf-der-donauinsel)

# Facts and figures “Green Vienna”

- Vienna is home to around 500 species of wild bees (Source: [www.wien.gv.at/umweltschutz/naturschutz/biotop/wildbienen.html](http://www.wien.gv.at/umweltschutz/naturschutz/biotop/wildbienen.html))
- Vienna is home to 17 species of amphibian and 9 species of reptile (Source: [www.wien.gv.at/statistik/pdf/wieninzahlen-2022.pdf](http://www.wien.gv.at/statistik/pdf/wieninzahlen-2022.pdf))
- Half of the city's surface is covered by green spaces (Source: [www.wien.gv.at/umweltschutz/umweltgut/oeffentlich.html](http://www.wien.gv.at/umweltschutz/umweltgut/oeffentlich.html))
- There are 1,006 parks and green areas (Source: [www.wien.gv.at/statistik/pdf/wieninzahlen-2022.pdf](http://www.wien.gv.at/statistik/pdf/wieninzahlen-2022.pdf))
- The city has 1,300 drinking fountains (Source: [www.wien.gv.at/statistik/pdf/wieninzahlen-2022.pdf/](http://www.wien.gv.at/statistik/pdf/wieninzahlen-2022.pdf/))
- Green Prater: covers more than 3 million m<sup>2</sup> (Source: [www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/parks/anlagen/prater.html](http://www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/parks/anlagen/prater.html))
- Prater Main Avenue: 4.5 km long and lined by 2,500 trees (Source: [www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/parks/anlagen/prater.html](http://www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/parks/anlagen/prater.html))
- Alpine Garden: 4,000 alpine species of plant; oldest alpine garden in the world ([www.bundesgaerten.at/belvederegarten/alpengarten.html](http://www.bundesgaerten.at/belvederegarten/alpengarten.html))
- Vienna Woods Biosphere Park: 1,050 km<sup>2</sup> of habitat for 2,000 plant species, 150 species of breeding birds and many endangered animals (Source: [www.bpww.at/de/themenseiten/region](http://www.bpww.at/de/themenseiten/region) )
- Donau-Auen National Park: more than 9,600 hectares, of which approx. 65% riparian forest, 15% meadows and approx. 20% water bodies; more than 30 species of mammals and 100 species of birds of prey, 8 species of reptiles and 13 species of amphibians, around 60 species of fish (Source: <https://www.donauauen.at/wissen/zahlen-daten-fakten>)
- Danube Island: 42 kilometers of shore area in total (i.e. both shores together) (Source: [www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/gewaesser/donauinsel/](http://www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/gewaesser/donauinsel/))
- 841 bridges (twice as many as Venice) (Source: [www.wien.gv.at/verkehr/brueckenbau/fakten.html](http://www.wien.gv.at/verkehr/brueckenbau/fakten.html))
- Land area used for agriculture: 15% of the city's total surface area, equating to around 6,336 hectares (Source: Statistics Austria Agricultural Structure Survey 2020, published 2022)
- 453 farms within Vienna's boundaries (Source: Statistics Austria Agricultural Structure Survey 2020, published 2022)

- 31% of the agricultural land in Vienna is organically managed, ranking Vienna among the country's leading provinces (Source: Wiener Landwirtschaftsbericht 2022)
- More grain for bread is produced in Vienna than in Salzburg, the Tyrol and Vorarlberg combined (Source: Wiener Landwirtschaftsbericht 2022)
- Cucumber capital: 62% of all cucumbers in Austria come from Vienna (Source: [www.wien.gv.at/statistik/pdf/wieninzahlen-2022.pdf](http://www.wien.gv.at/statistik/pdf/wieninzahlen-2022.pdf))
- Lainz Game Reserve: the most different species of bat in Europe live here in one place (Source: [www.derstandard.at/story/2000127568453/warum-es-im-lainzer-tiergarten-bald-keine-hirsche-mehr-gibt](http://www.derstandard.at/story/2000127568453/warum-es-im-lainzer-tiergarten-bald-keine-hirsche-mehr-gibt))
- 13 museums have been awarded the Austrian Ecolabel:
  - Albertina
  - Architekturzentrum Wien
  - Jewish Museum of the City of Vienna
  - Kunst Haus Wien
  - Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien
  - MAK - Vienna Museum of Applied Arts
  - Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien
  - Museum of Natural History Vienna
  - Austrian Gallery Belvedere
  - Austrian National Library
  - Austrian Film Museum
  - Vienna Museum of Science and Technology
  - Zoom Children's Museum