Vienna: a city worth living in

Vienna is a great place to live. What the Viennese have known all along is regularly confirmed by official rankings. Vienna has been leading the rankings in reputable city comparisons conducted by Mercer and the Economist Intelligence Unit for many years now.

This outstanding quality of life is based on the fact that about half of Vienna's urban area consists of green space[1] – even the historic city center boasts numerous parks and green spaces.

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 km² and stretch across 51 municipalities in Lower Austria, as well as seven of Vienna's westerly districts[2] (19, 18, 17, 16, 14, 13 and 23).[3] 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. Or one of 22 different species of bat that inhabit the city[4]. Around 500 species of wild bees[5] 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. In August 2025, the Elephant House welcomed a new addition: a young bull elephant. It is the first animal to be conceived naturally at Schönbrunn Zoo in more than 20 years. The world's oldest surviving zoo has been voted the best zoo in Europe on six[6] occasions. The treetop trail offers stunning views. A forest adventure trail also makes learning about forests in all their many facets an exciting and varied experience. Speaking of trees, over 400 natural monuments in Vienna are under special protection, including individual trees, groups of trees, bodies of water, rock formations, and even the tree-lined avenues in the Schönbrunn Palace Gardens.[7]

There are many vantage points in Vienna: the Danube Tower, the Kahlenberg, the Cobenzl Estate – all easily accessible by public transport. The city has excellent urban infrastructure that is constantly being expanded. Special attention is also paid to accessibility,[8] with tactile guidance systems, low-floor vehicles, and multisensory emergency systems. Accessible swimming pools and sensor-controlled traffic lights that detect when a pedestrian wants to cross the street have improved the lives of people with disabilities. These and other initiatives convinced the jury to name Vienna the winner of the[9] Access City Award 2025.

Mountain bikers, cyclists and hikers can take advantage of signposted routes all year round. 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). Alternatively,

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[1] www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/umweltgut-oeffentlich

[2] www.bpww.at/de/artikel/biosphaerenpark-wienerwald-unesco-modellregion-fuer-nachhaltigkeit

[3] www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Wienerwald

[4] www.wien.gv.at/pdf/ma23/wien-in-zahlen-2026.pdf

[5] www.wien.gv.at/umweltschutz/naturschutz/biotop/wildbienen.html

[6] www.zoovienna.at/besuch-und-tickets/best-european-zoo-award/

[7] www.viennaoffices.at/de/Media-Corner/Top-Themen/Wiener-Naturdenkmaeler

[8] www.wienerlinien.at/barrierefreiheit

[9] www.wien.gv.at/politik/access-city-award-2025

enjoy a unique mix of city break and local recreation on one of the 14 city hiking trails[10]. Vienna's waterbodies also enrich the urban landscape. The Danube, Europe's second-longest river, shapes Vienna more than any other body of water. It also inspired Johann Strauss's Danube Waltz, which is regarded as Vienna's unofficial anthem. In addition to the river itself, there is the Danube Canal, the Old Danube, and the New Danube. Viennese residents particularly appreciate the city's waterways during the swimming season from May to September, and new projects such as expanded and renovated beach areas with access to the water ensure that the quality of life in the city on the Danube remains high. Pier 22, Copa Beach, Arena Beach and Pirate Bay are interesting for more than just families. The New Danube with its large recreation area and leisure paradise on Danube Island as well as the Old Danube draw people outdoors. The bathing beaches along the Old Danube have a long history in Vienna. In summer, these are popular for swimming and sailing, as well as cycling, jogging and skating, while in winter, ice bathing is becoming increasingly popular. 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. One of Vienna's most striking landmarks, the Giant Ferris Wheel, is impossible to miss. Farther east is the Lobau, a wetland wilderness in the Donau-Auen National Park.

Vienna's green cityscape is shaped by around 450 agricultural businesses[11] with an area under agricultural use of approx. 6,275 hectares, of which 39 percent are organically managed,[12] 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. Vienna's high-quality spring water is also delicious and refreshing, combining well-being and health awareness and ensuring that Vienna is at the forefront when it comes to quality of life.

[10] www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/wald/freizeit/wandern/wege/

[11] Statistics Austria Agricultural Structure Survey 2023: www.statistik.at/fileadmin/announcement/2025/06/20250626AS2023.pdf

[12] Statistics Austria Agricultural Structure Survey 2023: www.statistik.at/fileadmin/announcement/2025/06/20250626AS2023.pdf

Facts and figures “Green Vienna”

- More than 2,000,000 people were living in Vienna in 2026 (Source: www.wien.gv.at/pdf/ma23/wien-in-zahlen-2026.pdf)
- Vienna is home to around 500 species of wild bees (Source: 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/pdf/ma23/wien-in-zahlen-2026.pdf)
- Half of the city’s surface is covered by green spaces (Source: www.wien.gv.at/pdf/ma23/wien-in-zahlen-2026.pdf)
- There are 1,000 parks and green areas (Source: www.wien.gv.at/pdf/ma23/wien-in-zahlen-2026.pdf)
- 1,800 drinking fountains in the city (Source: EU Leaderboard: Vienna Has 1,800 Drinking Fountains - wien.ORF.at)
- Green Prater: covers more than 3 million m² (Source: www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/parks/anlagen/prater.html)
- Prater Main Avenue: 4.5 km long and lined by around 2,600 trees (Source: www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/parks/anlagen/prater.html)
- Alpine Garden: 4,000 alpine species of plant; oldest alpine garden in the world (Source: www.bundesgaerten.at/belvederegarten/alpengarten.html)
- Vienna Woods Biosphere Park: 1,050 km² of habitat for 2,000 plant species, 150 species of breeding birds and many endangered animals (Source: www.bpww.at/de/themenseiten/region)
- Donau-Auen National Park: more than 9,600 hectares, of which approximately 65% is floodplain forest, 15% is meadow, and approximately 20% is water; 39 mammal species and about 100 breeding bird species, 8 reptile species and 13 amphibian species, 67 fish species (Source: 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/)
- Around 850 bridges (almost twice as many as in Venice) (Source: www.wien.gv.at/verkehr/brueckenbau/fakten.html)
- Agricultural land: 15% of the total area, or about 6,275 hectares (Source: www.statistik.at/fileadmin/announcement/2025/06/20250626AS2023.pdf)
- 455 farms in Vienna

  (Source www.statistik.at/fileadmin/announcement/2025/06/20250626AS2023.pdf

- 39% of Vienna's agricultural land is farmed organically, making Vienna (relatively speaking) one of the leading federal states (Source www.statistik.at/fileadmin/announcement/2025/06/20250626AS2023.pdf)
- More grain for bread is produced in Vienna than in Salzburg, the Tyrol and Vorarlberg combined (Source: wien.lko.at/wiener-landwirtschaftsbericht-2022+2400+3737004)
- Cucumber capital: 58% of all cucumbers grown in Austria come from Vienna (Source: www.wien.gv.at/pdf/ma23/wien-in-zahlen-2026.pdf)
- Vienna is home to 22 species of bat (Source: www.wien.gv.at/pdf/ma23/wieninzahlen-2025-de.pdf)