
AUSTRIA

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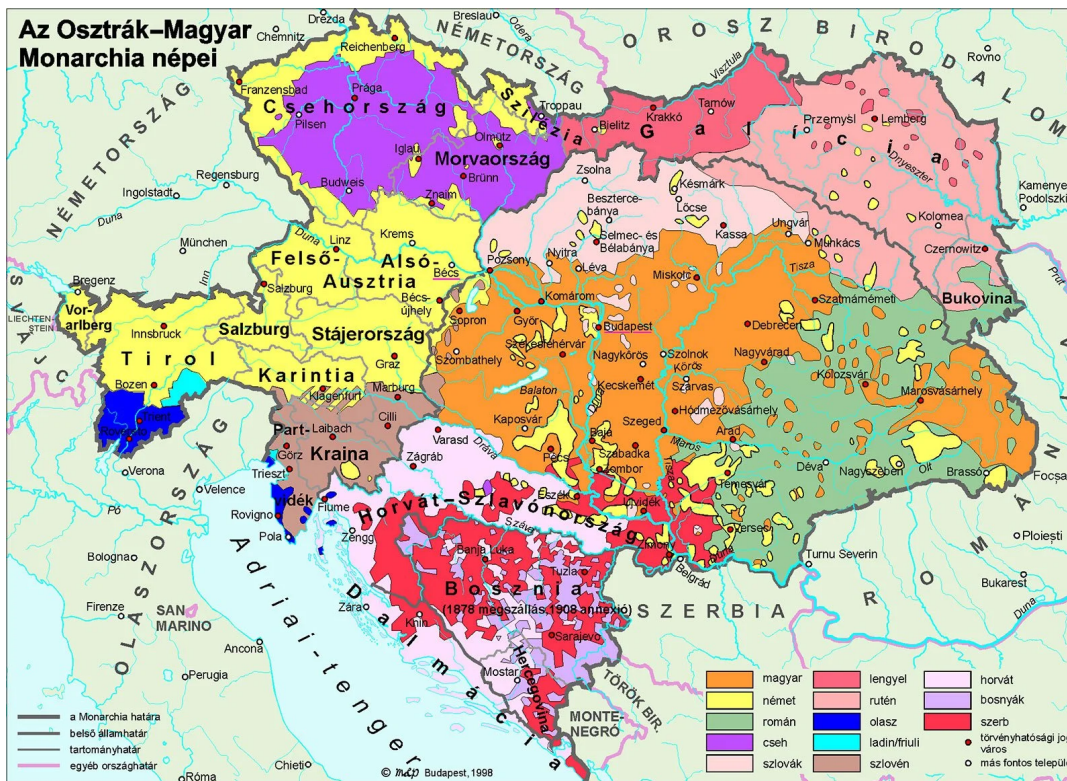


REGIONS



FACTS AND STATISTICS

- **Location:** Landlocked country in Central Europe with nine federated states. Austria is north of **Italy** and **Slovenia** bordering **Czech Republic** 362 km, **Germany** 784 km, **Hungary** 366 km, Italy 430 km, Liechtenstein 35 km, **Slovakia** 91 km, Slovenia 330 km, **Switzerland** 164 km
- **Capital:** Vienna
- **Climate:** temperate; continental, cloudy; cold winters with frequent rain and some snow in lowlands and snow in mountains; moderate summers with occasional showers
- **Population:** 9.01 million (2020)
- **Ethnic Make-up:** German 88.5%, indigenous minorities 1.5% (includes Croatians, Slovenes, Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, Roma), recent immigrant groups 10% (includes Turks, Bosnians, Serbians, Croatians) (2018)
- **Religions:** Roman Catholic 74%, Protestant 5%, Muslim 4%, other 17%
- **Government:** Federal Parliamentary Republic
- **Business Culture:** Ranked 9th in **The Business Culture Complexity Index™**



LANGUAGE IN AUSTRIA

German is the official language spoken by 98% of the population as their mother tongue.

- There are distinct differences between the many regional dialects, and also a wide variation in the 'standard' Hochdeutsch spoken from region to region.
- Slovene is an official language in the southern province of Carinthia.
- Other minority languages include Croatian (0.5%) and Hungarian (0.1%). All three languages are taught alongside German in some bilingual schools.

AUSTRIAN SOCIETY & CULTURE

As with other landlocked countries, the culture of Austria has been influenced greatly by the cultures of surrounding countries. The culture of Austria has also been significantly shaped by its leading position within the historic Austro-Hungarian Empire which, at one time, included Bosnia, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Herzegovina, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

The empire held considerable power in Europe between 1867 until the time of its dissolution in WWI. A common error is to assume that Austrian culture mirrors that of Germany. However, Austrian specific historical episodes (such as its annexation by the Third Reich during WWII) have contributed to a very Austrian-centric culture.

When looking at the culture of Austrian society, it's important to recognize that Austria is also divided into nine 'Bundeslander'. The geographical, political and other regional differences between these areas have nurtured a degree of cultural diversity within the country. This cultural diversity is evident in differences in dialect, food, customs, and architecture.

Austrian Family Values

- The family forms the basis of the Austrian social structure.
- The family is generally small and, due to lack of migration, generally closely knit within a certain town or village.
- Weekends are generally devoted to family activities such as outdoor activities.
- Eating dinner together in the evening is very much the norm.
- Sundays are usually bookmarked for visiting grandparents for dinner, and/or, enjoying a hike in the country together.

The Austrian Home

- Austrians take much pride in their homes, keeping them neat and tidy.
- In a formal culture such as theirs, the home is the place where people relax and let their hair down.
- Only close friends and relatives are invited into the house, so it is a place where more informal communication may occur.
- Neighborly etiquette also has its rules that must be observed. It is imperative that common areas such as sidewalks, pavements, corridors (in flats), and steps be kept clean at all times by all associated with them.

Conservatism

- Austrians are generally conservative people.
- They are prudent and moderate in their behavior.
- 'Regimentation' and 'compartmentalization' are a useful ways of describing how they organize their lives.
- They extend social invitations in advance of the event, and the more formal the occasion the greater the time between the invitation and the event itself, so that they can be certain that their guests do not have a prior engagement.

Appearances Matter

- Presentation and dressing well are important to Austrians.
- Even when dressed informally, they are neat and conservative; their clothes are never ostentatious.
- There is sometimes a strict protocol for dressing appropriately in different situations: formal wear for the theatre or a concert and semi-formal wear for better restaurants.
- Some high-level events may have a dress code and will turn away patrons who are not dressed properly.
- Most Austrian women dress up to go shopping, since they dress elegantly, if conservatively, at all times, especially when they will be in public.

AUSTRIAN ETIQUETTE & MANNERS

Etiquette in Austria

- Greetings are formal.

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- A quick, firm handshake is the traditional greeting.
 - Maintain eye contact during the greeting.
 - Some Austrian men, particularly those who are older, may kiss the hand of a female.
 - A male from another country should not kiss an Austrian woman's hand.
 - Women may also kiss men, but men never kiss other men.
 - Titles are very important and denote respect. Use a person's title and their surname until invited to use their first name.
 - When entering a room, shake hands with everyone individually, including children.

Gift Giving Etiquette

- In general, Austrians exchange gifts with family and close friends at Christmas (generally Christmas Eve) and birthdays.
- Children receive gifts on December 6th, the feast of St. Nicholas
- If invited to dinner at an Austrian's house, bring a small gift of consumables such as chocolates.
- If giving flowers, always give an odd number as except for 12, even numbers mean bad luck.
- Do not give red carnations, lilies, or chrysanthemums.
- Gifts should be nicely wrapped.
- Gifts are usually opened when received.

Dining Etiquette

- If you are invited to an Austrian's house:
- Arrive on time. Punctuality is a sign of respect.
- Dress conservatively and elegantly.
- In some houses, you may be asked to remove your shoes, although the custom is not as prevalent as it once was.

Watch your table manners!

- Remain standing until invited to sit down. You may be shown to a particular seat.
- Table manners are Continental -- the fork is held in the left hand and the knife in the right while eating.
- Put your napkin on your lap as soon as you sit down.
- Do not begin eating until the hostess says 'mahlzeit' or 'Guten Appetit'.
- Cut as much of your food with your fork as possible, since this compliments the cook by saying the food is very tender.
- Finish everything on your plate.

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- Indicate you have finished eating by laying your knife and fork parallel on your plate with the handles facing to the right.
 - The host gives the first toast. Everyone lifts and clinks glasses, looks the person making the toast in the eye, and says, 'Prost!'.
 - An honored guest offers a toast of thanks to the host at the end of the meal.