



# The Wayfarer

*By Dawn M. Wayand*

## White Winter Wonderland



Last year, I had the pleasure of visiting the city of Vienna, Austria, but unfortunately, it was only for two days. It was winter and snow fell from the sky covering the ground like a white cotton blanket during my entire visit. The Danube River was beautifully frozen over and served as a scenic and

exhilarating venue for local ice skaters to show off their fancy footwork.

Vienna is a city that can be easily explored by foot, however, the U-Bahn (metros) and S-Bahn (buses) provide choices of convenient transportation to view the city for a minimum fare.

Austria is renowned for not only their hearty soups and chocolate, but also for the birth of the music of Mozart. Although not taken seriously until after his death, his popularity now heavily influences the city and serves as a household brand name for products such as liquor, chocolate and even store and café names.

Vienna houses monuments that compete in awe with other major European monuments, the first and largest being: Hofburg. Being that it is in the center of the city, curiosity is bound to draw your attention to it.



Hofburg's size makes it its own little city, complete with chapel, state apartments, horse stables, art museums and gardens. Formerly inhabited by powerful Austrian leaders, this gothic, neo-Renaissance-styled attraction is worth visiting.

The next largest and most breathtaking sight is located at the U-Bahn metro stop: Stephansplatz. Stephansdom takes the trophy, by far, in intricate gothic-style cathedrals. Not only does it look very old and magical with winter's snow sprinkled upon its spires, but it can be difficult to get inside to explore without actually attending services.

If you're on a quick trip, I highly recommend touring the Vienna State Opera House, Vienna University and the Upper and Lower Belvederes. I was super impressed by Vienna University's architecture in that it followed a Renaissance influence, had Internet cues in its hallways for student use and embraced the luxury of a marble-paved courtyard housing literary sculptures of

famous historians. Although I did not have the chance to see the interior of the State Opera House in person, its exterior extravagance was what was to be expected of an old Opera House. Keep in mind, whether it's at this Opera House, the Konzerthaus Wien in Stadtpark or any of the cathedrals, music is probably the most prized and spirited activity in Vienna. It is a treat to attend at least one opera during your visit. Ticket vendors are hard to miss as they lurk everywhere in the city, dressed in concert attire, with folders of information and ticket purchase availability on the spot.



Belvedere consists of two palaces joined by a uniquely designed garden. It was originally built to reflect Prince Eugene's power and glory in his victories over the Turkish. The Lower Belvedere was built and used for his everyday living quarters. A good two to three hour tour of the Belvedere palaces would not be a waste of time.

Regardless of what you choose to see on your tour while in Vienna, the notable buildings are found in the city center, all accessible by the U-Bahn titled "Ring Road". I stayed over the winter holidays overlooking the Stadtpark, so if you are interested in a real "white winter wonderland", the Stadtpark is a good place to start your snow-filled journey in Vienna!

**Travel Planning Tips:  
Europe Vacation Tips Series  
Part V - Tips for Packing**

Most people find my luggage load for a three week trip to Europe "surprising" for a woman. I take one 23"

carryon suitcase on wheels and a large purse (a small backpack could be substituted for guys).

The first time I went to Europe, I took the same suitcase but I also took a duffle bag and had to check my luggage. I arrived in Paris without any of my belongings and didn't see them for almost two days due to airline error. Compound the stress of no belongings for two days with minimal French language skills on my first trip to Europe: I learned from that experience and I have NEVER checked luggage since.

Each year my departure load gets smaller because I find more convenient ways of packing. First of all, some cities in Europe have great deals on clothes. I now pack a few basics here and buy additional clothes when I am there. However, for those of you less fortunate to take advantage of those great deals on clothes once there, all of the cities in Europe have affordable laundromat services. A couple of pairs of pants and a few shirts to alternate between works fine when you are traveling to several destinations. Who knows in one city what you wore in the city you visited prior?

Leave behind any appliances to be plugged in otherwise you will also need to bring conversion plugs and in some cases power converters for things that require extra voltage like hair dryers. The power outlets are different in most European countries. Bringing anything of the sort is a waste of packing space, especially when some hostels/hotels have hairdryers supplied in the room. Check ahead. Unless you're there on business, leave your laptop behind. Cheap Internet cafes are available almost everywhere in the major cities.

Remember to bring only the things you NEED with you when traveling. Anything you buy while traveling - mail it back to yourself. It will save you a backache and provide you with the convenience of traveling lightly. Pack an empty bag. It can come in handy for bringing things back.

Next month, we'll continue with Part VI of this series: **Getting Around Town.**

## Lodging Pick



I had the most wonderful hostel experience in Vienna this last winter. For less than \$50 USD a night, I had my own private room overlooking the Stadtpark with an

amazing view of the city. While the toilette & shower facilities were located down the hall, the room did have it's own sink, closet, table and chair. The rooms were very clean, simple and equipped with telephone and radio not to mention, the beds are very comfortable. A full breakfast in the morning was included in the price.

### Hotel Goldene Spinne

Linke Bahngasse 1  
Vienna, Austria

## Eats Pick

It's a little out of the way, but the location, service and food are completely worth the metro ride and walk. The StrandCafe is a restaurant geared towards locals on the Danube River. Bring your appetite because the portions are unbelievable for the price.

The restaurant serves huge mugs of the original Budweiser called Budweis (pronounced Bud-vice). If you've never had the European version, hold your breath. While the smell is a bit much to bear, it will definitely give you more of a buzz than its American counterpart. The veal Weinerschnitzel fills the entire plate and is served with lemon wedges as its flavor is enhanced with lemon juice. French fries and coleslaw style salad are served on the side.

The StrandCafe can be found by taking the U1 Alte Danou metro stop. Once you exit the metro station, go left to the first stoplight. Cross the street and go left and over the bridge of the Danube River. If you're lucky,

during the winter, you'll see locals ice skating on the frozen river. Just over the bridge and just before "Foxy's" nightclub, turn right onto the alleyway and stroll along the river about a quarter mile. The StrandCafe can be easily found by its "strand" of colorful lights on its dock behind the restaurant.

### Strandcafe

Florian-Berndl-Gasse 20, 22nd District/Donaustadt  
Vienna, Austria

<https://www.strandcafe-wien.at/>