



Habsburg Austria

Castles & churches, houses & palaces, town & country

6–13 October 2025 (ML 811)

8 days • £4,080

Lecturer: Dr Jarl Kremerier

Outstanding range of castles, abbeys, churches, houses, palaces and excellent art collections.

Picturesque towns and villages, and consistently beautiful scenery.

Led by an art historian who specialises in Mitteleuropa and the Habsburgs.

Habsburgs first came to Austria in 1273; their departure in 1919 terminated the longest innings of any dynasty in European history. The territory over which they ruled had meanwhile expanded into a vast multi-national empire which encompassed much of central

and eastern Europe which is now split between ten different countries. There was, of course, a concomitant accumulation of titles including several kingships and, for much of their time in power, the most august title of them all: Holy Roman Emperor.

This tour concentrates on the lands which are now more or less coterminous with modern Austria, a clutch of dukedoms and counties in largely mountainous terrain which were not particularly prosperous. However, proximity to the principal Habsburg seat, Vienna, meant that a high proportion of the artistic and architectural splendours of the Empire were concentrated in the Austrian lands. Only two days are devoted to Vienna itself on this tour, which concentrates on the smaller towns and the architecture of the countryside.

Prominent in this category are the abbeys, some of which can boast a continuity of

spiritual life since the early Middle Ages, many of them rebuilt on a most lavish scale during the Baroque age. The ruling dynasty and the aristocracy of their empire spawned a profusion of castles, country houses, town palaces and hunting lodges, and created art collections which today form the kernel of some of the best of their kind in the world.

Itinerary

Day 1: fly at c. 11.00am from London Heathrow to Munich (Lufthansa). Drive into Austria, stopping at the fortress town of Kufstein. First of two nights in Innsbruck.

Day 2: Innsbruck. Surrounded by mountains, Innsbruck has a spectacular natural setting with a joyously picturesque historic centre.

Innsbruck, aquatint c. 1830.



Habsburg Austria
continued

Schloss Ambras just outside Innsbruck is a Habsburg palace of the 16th century; surviving here is a collection of curiosities which ranks as one of the first museums in the world. An afternoon walk around Innsbruck includes the astonishing tomb of Emperor Maximilian (d. 1519) with 28 larger-than-life bronze statues, the 18th-century Habsburg state apartments in the Hofburg and the Baroque cathedral.

Day 3: Salzburg. The episcopal city-state of Salzburg once played a major role in European culture and politics, and the old town centre has scarcely changed since the days of its greatness two centuries ago. Among the places visited are the mighty cathedral, the first major Baroque building north of the Alps, and the Residence, which was for centuries the official residence of the prince-archbishops. Overnight in Linz.

Day 4: Linz, Wilhering, Artstetten. The Danube city of Linz, capital of Upper Austria, has a very attractive historic centre with a town hall and several churches of architectural importance. The monastery church at Wilhering beside the Danube has the finest Rococo interior in Austria. Schloss Artstetten was rebuilt in the 16th century and again for Archduke Franz Ferdinand, whose descendants still live here. First of two nights in Dürnstein.

Day 5: Dürnstein, Melk, Altenburg. Dürnstein is an enchanting little town on the Danube, backed by a hill with a ruined castle and fronted by a monastery church at the water's edge. Perched on a rock outcrop beside the Danube, the vast Benedictine Monastery at Melk is one of the greatest creations of the Baroque era. A sequence of state apartments includes a terrace with a magnificent view of the Danube valley and culminates in a church of dazzling splendour. Drive through idyllic hilly scenery north of the Danube. The Benedictine abbey at Altenburg, distinguished by the library hall, monumental stairway and oval church, ranks with the finest of Baroque abbeys.

Day 6: Grafenegg, Vienna. Schloss Grafenegg is a medieval country residence, which was augmented with one of Austria's most flamboyant and successful essays in Gothic Revival. Vienna, the Roman frontier settlement close to the Danube became the principal seat of the Habsburgs and therefore centre of the

Holy Roman Empire and capital of a vast multinational empire. Visit the Habsburg tombs in the Capucin crypt and the National Library. First of two nights in Vienna.

Day 7: Vienna. The Hofburg, the Habsburg Palace, is an agglomeration of buildings spanning six centuries with an incomparable collection of precious regalia in the treasury and magnificent Baroque library. Visit the Kunsthistorisches Museum, one of the world's greatest collections of paintings, before some free time for independent exploration.

Day 8: Vienna. Built around 1700 for Emperor Joseph and modified 50 years later for Maria Theresa, Schloss Schönbrunn became the summer palace of the Habsburgs until the end of their rule. One of the largest of royal residences, it contains some of the finest Rococo interiors in Europe and has extensive parkland and gardens. Fly from Vienna (Austrian Airlines), arriving Heathrow c. 6.45pm.

Lecturer

Dr Jarl Kremer. Art historian specialising in 17th- to 19th-century architecture and decorative arts; teaches Art History at the Berlin College of Acting and the Senior Student's Department of Berlin's Freie Universität. He studied at the Universities of Würzburg, Berlin and the Courtauld, is a contributor to the *Macmillan Dictionary of Art*, author of a book on the Würzburg Residenz, and of articles on Continental Baroque architecture and architectural theory.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £4,080 or £3,780 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £4,620 or £4,320 without flights.

Included: flights (economy class) with Lufthansa and Austrian Airlines (Airbus 321); travel by private coach; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts; 2 lunches and 5 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Accommodation. Schwarzer Adler, Innsbruck (schwarzeradler-innsbruck.com) a family-run 4-star boutique hotel in the historic centre.

Hotel am Domplatz, Linz (hotelamdomplatz.at) a comfortable boutique hotel near the cathedral. **Richard Löwenherz, Dürnstein** (richardloewenherz.at) a lovely old-fashioned hotel occupying a historic building next to the Danube. **Hotel Bristol, Vienna** (marriott.com): a 5-star hotel in a superb location on the Ringstrasse, traditionally furnished and decorated.

Please note that the bathroom is separated from the bedroom by a glass wall at the Hotel am Domplatz in Linz. If you intend to share a room on this tour, please contact us for a supplement to book two separate rooms at this hotel if you wish.

How strenuous? Quite a lot of walking is involved, some of it uphill and over roughly paved paths. It should not be undertaken by anyone who has difficulties with everyday walking and stairclimbing. There are also some long coach journeys. Average distance by coach per day: 65 miles.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.