



Vienna's Masterpieces

The art collections of an imperial capital

14–19 September 2026 (MM 173)

Lecturer: Tom Abbott

6 days

Focuses on the best of the art in the city – painting, sculpture and decorative arts.

Also the key architectural monuments and characteristic streetscape.

Perfectly located heritage hotel.

Includes tickets to one performance at the Staatsoper.

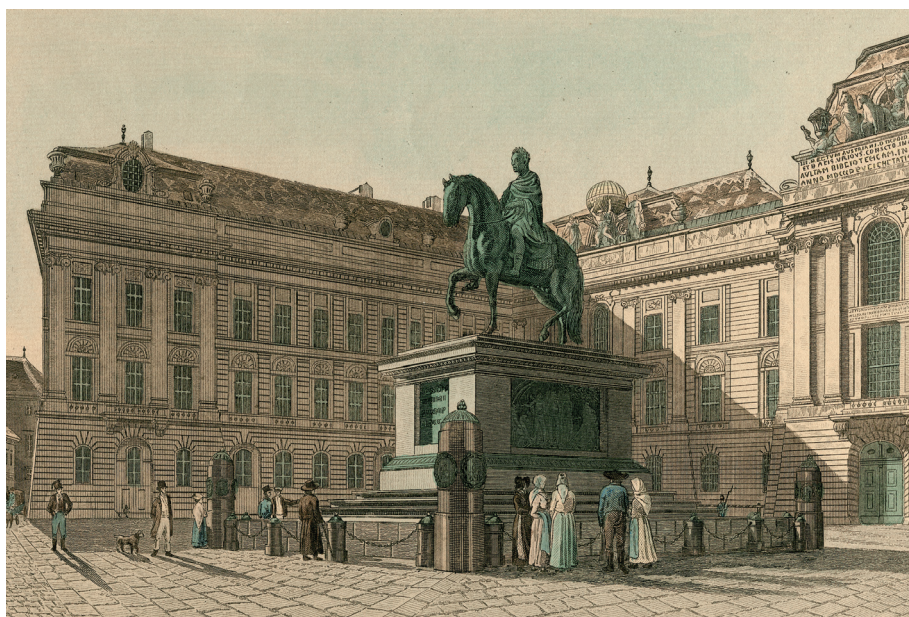
Vienna possesses one of the most significant concentrations of great art to be found anywhere in the world. There are Old Master paintings of the highest quality, indigenous early-modern art and design of the highest importance, furnishings and decorative arts from many civilisations, precious regalia and goldwork without peer – and much else besides. This tour includes all of the main art museums and many of the smaller or less-visited ones. There is also more than a passing glance at the most important works of architecture, and the lecturer's input touches on the fascinating and turbulent history of Austria and her empire.

The seat of the Habsburgs, pre-eminent city of the Holy Roman Empire and capital of a vast multinational agglomeration of territories, Vienna is appropriately equipped with magnificent buildings and broad boulevards. But cheek by jowl with grandiloquent palaces and trumpeting churches are narrow alleys and ancient courtyards which survive from the mediaeval city. In Vienna the magnificent mixes with the unpretentiously charming, imperial display with the *Gemütlichkeit* of the coffee houses. Diversity and delight.

And then there is the music. As home for Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Mahler and countless other composers, Vienna is pre-eminent in the history of music. We will confirm the musical performance in the Spring.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 9.00am from London Heathrow to Vienna (Austrian Airlines). After lunch, an afternoon walk in and around the Hofburg, the Habsburg winter palace, a vast agglomeration from six centuries of building activity. See the incomparable collection of precious regalia and *objets d'art* in the Treasury, and the magnificent Great Hall of the Court Library.



Josephsplatz, engraving c. 1810.

Day 2. The palace and garden of Schloss Belvedere, built on sloping ground overlooking Vienna for Prince Eugene of Savoy, constitutes one of the finest residential complexes of the 18th century. It now houses the Museum of Austrian Art with paintings by Klimt and Schiele. In the afternoon visit the Secession Building which contains Klimt's Beethoven Frieze, and the great Baroque Church of St Charles.

Day 3. Drive to the outskirts to see buildings by Otto Wagner; the richly decorated apartment blocks in the Linke Wienzeile, the emperor's personal railway station at Schönbrunn and the hospital church 'Am Steinhof', the finest manifestation of Viennese Secessionism. The Liechtenstein collection in the family's great Baroque palace (*Gartenpalais*) is perhaps the finest in private hands in Europe.

Day 4. Walk through the Roman and mediaeval core to see a cross-section of architecture including Gothic and Baroque churches and some of Vienna's most enchanting streetscapes. The Jesuit church was spectacularly refurbished c. 1700 by the master of illusionist painting, Andrea Pozzo. Visit the Museum of Applied Arts, an outstanding collection from all eras and places, well displayed. Free time before an evening visit (including dinner) to the Kunsthistorisches Museum, one of the world's

greatest art collections, particularly rich in Italian, Flemish and Dutch pictures.

Day 5. Another walk through picturesque streets and squares passes private palaces and public buildings such as the Gothic Revival city hall and the Neo-Classical Parliament. The magnificent Liechtenstein Palace (*Stadtpalais*) was built at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries by the richest family in the Habsburg Empire and has magnificent Rococo interiors and original furnishings. Afternoon at the Museumsquartier, an art centre in the former imperial stables. The Leopold Collection comprises excellent examples of the arts from the turn of the nineteenth century.

Day 6. Return to Heathrow c. 2.15pm.

Lecturer

Tom Abbott. Specialist in architectural history from the Baroque to the 20th century with a wide knowledge of the performing arts. He graduated in Psychology and Art History from Carleton College, Minnesota and studied at the Louvre School of Art History in Paris. Since 1987 he has lived in Berlin and has organised and led many academic tours in Germany. Tom has a particular interest in the German and American architectural and artistic modern including the Bauhaus and Expressionism.

Vienna's Masterpieces
continued

Practicalities

Included: private coach travel throughout; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 2 lunches and 3 dinners with wine; all admissions; tips for waiters, drivers and guides; all airport and state taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Music: first category ticket to 1 performance is included. As programmes are yet to be published details will be confirmed in Spring 2026.

Accommodation. Grand Hotel Wien (grandhotelwien.com): Luxury hotel in a superb location on the Ringstrasse just a few steps to the opera house, traditionally furnished and decorated. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? This tour involves a lot of walking in the town centre, and should not be attempted by anyone who has difficulty with everyday walking and stair-climbing. Standing around in galleries is also a feature. Average distance by coach per day: 6 miles.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.