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BEYOND WORDS

A lifestyle magazine inspired by Sylvia Day

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NEW MEETS OLD IN VIENNA

by Bridget Shirvell



Vienna seduces you. Meandering cobblestone streets give way to imperial palaces, while coffee houses welcome you in, and music, literature and art surrounds you. The

Austrian city is often overlooked by tourists for Europe's other great capitals but venture off the beaten path and you'll discover a city full of historic charm that simultaneously embraces modern life.

At a more than 8-hour flight from New York City, Vienna is best for trips lasting a week or more. Whether you prefer a jammed packed detailed-itinerary or lots of time for wandering you'll find plenty to do and can make Vienna a base from which to explore some of Eastern Europe's other oft-forgotten cities. Both Budapest and Prague are less than a 4-hour drive. Vienna is magical anytime of year but especially during the spring and fall. But no matter when you visit or how long your trip these are the five not to be missed activities.

Kaffeehäusers



Cafe Sperl | Photo: [La Citta Vita on Flickr](#) (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Coffee houses, called kaffeehäusers are Vienna institutions. Some of them date back more than

300 years. They're speculator inside. Often full of artwork and antiques they're places designed to sit and linger over a cup of coffee while reading the paper or catching up on the latest news and gossip from the other patrons. At one time the city was home to as many as 600 coffeehouses and while many have closed you'll still find several hundred throughout the city. Travel film lovers should visit Café Sperl, featured in *Before Sunrise* the kaffeehäuser dates back to 1880.

Prater



Riesanrad, the famous Giant Wheel in Vienna, Austria.

Locals and visitors alike flock to Prater during the milder months. Walk the main path, called the Hauptallee and marvel at the beauty of the trees. You'll find a number of kaffeehäuser and also cafes inside the park if you're seeking a spot for lunch or to indulge in the sacher-torte. The must visit inside Prater, however, is the amusement park by the same name which is home to the Riesenrad. A ride on Vienna's famous ferris wheel, built in the 1800s, takes about 20

minutes and offers the chance to catch amazing shots of the city.

Ringstrasse



Vienna, Austria – April 14, 2012: Old tram number 1 on tram stop in front of the Opera house in Vienna. Vienna Opera House is situated in the center of Vienna on Opernring. Opernring is part of Ringstrasse which is circular road surrounding central part of Vienna.

While Vienna is one of Europe's most walkable cities it also have amazing public transportation. Plan to take at least one ride around the Ringstrasse during your stay. The circular road surrounds the city and allows visitors to take in much of Vienna's architecture and glimpse the famous sights while helping to orient themselves with the city. There is a dedicated Vienna Ring Tram that goes completely around the Ringstrasse or you can save money by taking streetcar No. 1 or No 2.

Palaces



Vienna, Austria – September 04, 2013: A Baroque palace Belvedere is a historic building complex in Vienna, consisting of two Baroque palaces with a beautiful garden between them.

Step back in time to Vienna's imperial days by visiting the city's palaces. From the Schönbrunn to the Hofburg to the Belvedere Palace, Vienna's palaces are magical. Once the summer home of the Habsburgs, the Schönbrunn is now a Unesco World Heritage site and while only 40 of the palace's 1441 rooms are open to the public the gardens are not to be missed. The Hofburg was home to the Habsburgs from the late 1200s to the early 1900s and today is home to the Austrian president's offices. The Schloss is a baroque style palace full of artworks. Visit in the fall and you'll be treated to a breathtaking view of the Vienna skyline.

Arts



Kunsthistorisches Museum Cafe – Vienna / Photo: [Ryan Healy on Flickr](#) (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

You could spend all your days in Vienna at the city's storied art institutions. Enjoy an evening at the [State Opera](#) the [Hofburg Concert Halls](#) or spend a Sunday morning at the [Burgkapelle](#) listening to the Vienna Boy's Choir. If music isn't your thing the [Kunsthistorisches Museum](#) is full of art world treasures including paintings by Rembrandt, Raphael and Titian.

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73



About me

Bridget is a digital journalist, world traveler and farmers market forager. Her writing on food, travel and the environment for national publications has taken her from Argentina to Cambodia. Now based in New York, when she isn't

writing or editing you'll often find her searching out new coffee spots and attempting to wear her golden retriever out with long walks.



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