

Styria



Styria (Steiermark) is Austria's best-kept secret. When you ask someone in Austria for advice on the best places to visit in their country, and they answer with the mountains of Tyrol, the lakes of Salzkammergut and the cultural joys of Vienna, they're just trying to keep you out of Styria.

Austria's second-largest province is a perfect combination of culture, architecture, rolling hills, vine-covered slopes and, of course, mountains. Its capital Graz, Austria's second-largest city and among its most attractive, has one of the highest standards of living in Europe. Head south from Graz and you're in wine country, dubbed the 'Styrian Tuscany' for its uncanny resemblance to that region of glorious wine and golden sun. This is also *Kürbiskernöl* (strong, dark pumpkin-seed oil ubiquitous in Styrian cooking) country.

The eastern stretch of Styria is dotted with rejuvenating thermal spas and centuries-old castles. If you're a fan of the former, Bad Blumau is a mandatory stop, not only to take the waters but also to appreciate its unusual architecture, created from the rich imagination of Friedensreich Hundertwasser. If you prefer the latter, Schloss Riegersburg stands head and shoulders above most castles, not only in Styria, but the entire country.

The landscape of Styria's northern and western reaches is an untamed region of cold, fast-flowing alpine rivers, towering mountains and carved valleys. Complementing the area's natural wonders is a handful of man-made gems, including Admont Abbey and the Erzberg open-cast mine.

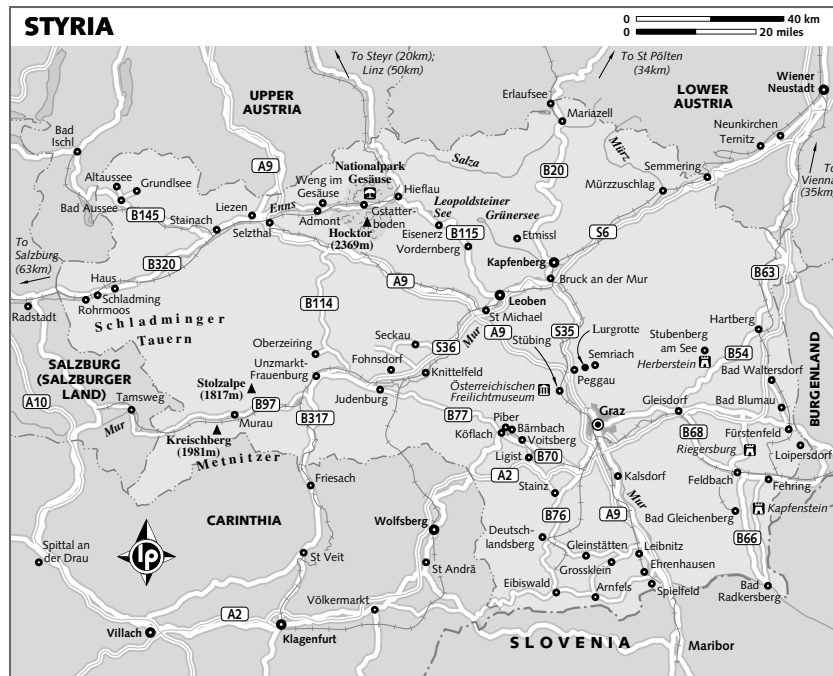
Note that the northwestern reaches of Styria stretch into Salzkammergut.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Exploring Styria's capital **Graz** (p232) and its bars and clubs
- Catching one of the fascinating changing exhibitions at **MuseumsCenter Leoben** (p241)
- Visiting Admont's spectacular **abbey** (p243) and exploring its fascinating museums
- Tripping underground, or overground, at Eisenerz's **open-cast mine** (p242)
- Cruising the mountain bike trails around **Mariazell** (p238)



■ POPULATION: 1.2 MILLION ■ AREA: 16,392 SQ KM ■ HIGHEST ELEVATION: HOCHGOLLING 2862M



History

Habitation of Styria dates back to the Stone Age, and findings from the Bronze and Iron Ages are on display in Grossklein (p236). The Celts, then the Romans, followed by the Avars and Slavs, settled in the area, but it wasn't until the 11th century that Styria as a region gained its current name. At the time, Ottakar I, whose base was in the Upper Austrian town of Steyr, acquired the area through succession and stamped his seal *Marchia Styriae* (Styrian Mark) on the province. The name stuck.

When Duke Ottakar IV died without an heir in 1192, Styria passed to the Babenberg duke Leopold V. Control fell to King Ottakar II of Bohemia (see p30) and then finally, in 1276, into the hands of the Habsburgs. In the next century the population grew, but there followed two centuries of local conflicts and invasions by the Turks and Hungarians. The year 1480 was particularly dire; it was known as the year of the 'Plagues of God' – the Turks, the Black Death and locusts. Exactly 200 years later one-quarter of Graz's population was obliterated in another plague epidemic.

In the 16th and 17th centuries Reformation and Counter-Reformation wracked the province, with the Habsburg army running riot and burning anything Protestant it could find. Once religious peace returned, and the Turkish threat was removed after 1683, the region prospered. Then, in 1779, and again in 1805 and 1809, it was the turn of the French to invade. After the Nazi occupation of WWII, the first Allied troops to liberate the area were from the Soviet Union, followed by the British, who occupied Graz until 1955.

Climate

Styria is a tale of two climes; southern Styria enjoys a relatively kind climate, influenced by the Pannonian (west Hungarian) plain to the east, while much of northern Styria is subject to alpine climatic conditions.

Getting There & Away

The A2, from Vienna to Villach in Klagenfurt, runs through southern Styria, passing just below Graz, while the A9 runs an almost north-south course through the middle of Styria, making it straightforward to travel

from Linz and Salzburg to Graz. The A9 also connects Graz with Slovenia, 40km to the south.

Styria's train lines are relatively sparse; the main line between Carinthia and Vienna passes well north of Graz through the region's main railhead, Bruck an der Mur. For Linz and Salzburg, a change is usually required at St Michael, 25km southwest of Bruck.

Getting Around

Regional and city transport (☎ 0316-82 06 06; www.verbundlinie.at) is based on a system of zones and time tickets. Tickets can be bought from machines for one to 22 zones, and the price rises from a single trip in one zone (€1.70, valid for one hour), to 24-hour passes for one (€3.70) or multiple zones (€55.80 for 22 zones and all of Styria). Weekly and monthly passes are also available.

In Graz, **Mobilzentral** (Map p224; ☎ 0316-82 06 06; www.mobilzentral.at, in German; Jakoministrasse 1; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) is a useful store of information on Styrian regional buses. It also sells international train tickets. The website www.busbahnim.at has timetable and price information.

GRAZ

☎ 0316 / pop 287,700

Austria's second-largest city is possibly Austria's most relaxed, and after Vienna it is also Austria's liveliest for after-hours pursuits. It's an attractive place with bristling green parkland, red rooftops and a small, fast-flowing river gushing through its centre. Architecturally, it complements Renaissance courtyards and provincial baroque palaces with cutting-edge modern designs that fascinate, provoke or arouse curiosity.

The surrounding countryside, a mixture of vineyards, mountains, forested hills and thermal springs, is within easy striking distance, and Graz has a very beautiful bluff connected to the centre by steps, a funicular and a glass lift. Last but not least, a large student population (some 50,000 in four universities) helps propel the nightlife and vibrant arts scene, creating a pleasant, lively and liveable city.

History

Graz is a derivation of the Slav word *gradec*, meaning small fortress, and developed from a Bavarian settlement that was first documented in 1128. By 1189 Graz was a city, and in 1379

it became the seat of the Leopold line of the Habsburgs. Friedrich III, emperor of Austria and the Holy Roman Empire, resided here and left his famous motto, AEIOU (*Austria Est Imperare Orbi Universo*; Austria rules the world) inscribed all over town. In 1564, Graz became the administrative capital of Inner Austria, an area covering present-day Styria and Carinthia, plus the former possessions of Carniola, Gorizia and Istria. In 1784, with the Turks no longer a threat, Graz tore down its city walls.

Early in the 19th century Archduke Johann, benign brother of Franz I, founded the first museum in Austria, the Joanneum, in Graz. In the late 1990s the historic centre of Graz achieved the status of a Unesco World Heritage site.

Orientation

Schlossberg rises over the medieval town centre, the river Mur cuts a north-south path west of this bluff and the *Hauptbahnhof* (main train station) is 1km further west of here.

Trams 3 and 6 run from the *Hauptbahnhof* to Hauptplatz. Radiating from Hauptplatz is Sporgasse, an important shopping street, and Herrengasse, the main pedestrian thoroughfare. At the southern end of Herrengasse is Jakominiplatz, a major transport hub for local buses and trams.

MAPS

Graztourismus has an excellent free map of the central city, and also a great *city & environs* map; Freytag & Berndt's *Graz* (€3.95; scale 1:15,000) city map is also useful.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

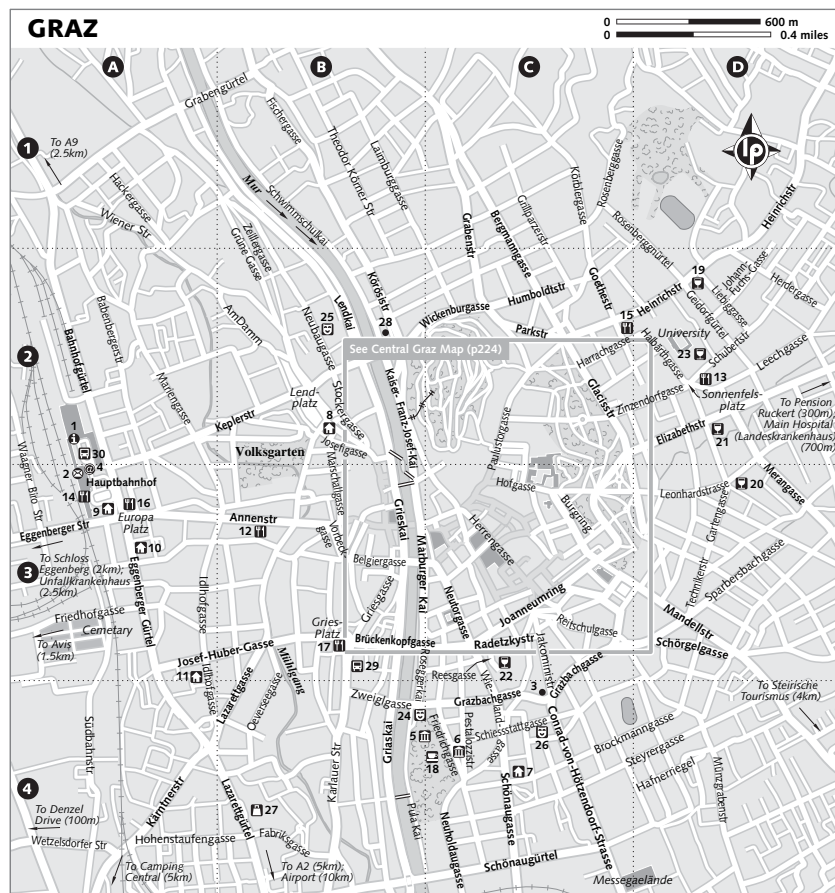
English Bookshop (Map p224; ☎ 82 62 66; Tummelplatz 7; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) Lots of English books, but at a price.

Freytag & Berndt (Map p224; ☎ 81 82 30; Sporgasse 29; ☎ 10am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) The best source of maps and guidebooks.

INTERNET ACCESS

High Speed Internet-Selfstore (Map p224; ☎ 0650-89 16 900; Herrengasse 3; per hr €3; ☎ 7am-10pm) A coin-operated internet space inside the passage.

Speednet Cafe (Map p222; ☎ 228 412; www.speednet-cafe.com, in German; Europaplatz 4; per hr €5.80; ☎ 7am-10.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-10.30pm Sat & Sun) Located in the train station.



INTERNET RESOURCES

www.graz.at Provides a snapshot of most aspects of the city.

www.graztourismus.at The city's excellent tourist information portal.

www.info-graz.at Practical information on life in Graz; in German.

LAUNDRY

Putzerei-Rupp (Map p222; ☎ 82 11 83; Jakoministrasse 34; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri) One useful self-service laundry.

LEFT LUGGAGE

Lockers (small/large €2/3.50 for 24 hours) are inside the train station.

LIBRARIES

Steiermärkische Landesbibliothek (Map p224; ☎ 877 4600; Kalchberggasse 2; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri early Sep-early Jul, to 1pm early Jul-early Sep) The main library of Graz.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Landeskrankenhaus (off Map p222; ☎ 385-0; Auenbruggerplatz 1) The city's largest hospital; provides emergency treatment. It's about 3km from the town centre.
Unfallkrankenhaus (off Map p222; ☎ 505-0; Göstingerstrasse 24) Emergency hospital at tram 1 terminus.

MONEY

The **Hauptbahnhof** has two ATMs.
Bankhaus Krentschker (Map p224; ☎ 80 30-0; Am Eisernen Tor 3; ☎ 8.30am-4.15pm Mon-Wed,

INFORMATION		Jugendgästehaus.....11 A3		Orange.....21 D2	
Hauptbahnhof Information	Stand.....1 A2	EATING	Billa.....12 B3	Magnolia.....(see 7)	Augartenkino.....24 B4
Post Office.....2 A3	Putzerei-Rupp Laundry.....3 C4	Mensa.....13 D2	Spar.....14 A3	Zu den 3 Goldenen Kugeln.....(see 27)	p.p.c.....25 B2
Speednet Cafe.....4 A3	SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES	FriDa & FreD.....5 B4	Museum der Wahrnehmung.....6 C4	Zu den 3 Goldenen Kugeln.....15 C2	Royal English Cinema.....26 C4
		Zu den 3 Goldenen Kugeln.....16 A3	Zu den 3 Goldenen Kugeln.....17 B3	SHOPPING	Citypark.....27 B4
		SLEEPING	Augarten Hotel.....7 C4	DRINKING	TRANSPORT
		Gasthof-Pension zur Steirer-Stub'n.....8 B2	Hotel Daniel.....9 A3	Auschlössl.....18 C4	Airport Bus.....(see 30)
		Hotel Strasser.....10 A3		Bierbaron.....19 D2	Bicycle.....28 B2
				Goldene Kugel.....20 D3	GKB Bus Stop.....29 B3
				Kulturhauskeller.....(see 21)	Postbus.....30 A2

to 5.30pm Thu, to 3pm Fri) American Express representative in Graz.

Steiermärkische Sparkasse (Map p224; ☎ 050100 36 018; Schmiedegasse; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-4pm Mon-Thu, 8.30am-3pm Fri) Full banking services.

POST

Hauptbahnhof post office (Map p222; Bahnhof; ☎ 7am-10pm Mon-Fri, 8am-8pm Sat, 1-8pm Sun) This post office is located inside the station.

Main post office (Map p224; Neutorgasse 46; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat)

TOURIST INFORMATION

Graztourismus (Map p224; ☎ 80 75-0; www.graztourismus.at; Herrengasse 16; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat, Jan-Mar & Nov, to 6pm Mon-Sat, to 4pm Sun Apr-Jun,

Sep, Oct & Dec, to 7pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat & Sun Jul & Aug) Graz's main tourist office, with loads of free information on the city, and helpful and knowledgeable staff. Inside the train station (Map p222) is an information stand and terminal, and a free hotline to the tourist office.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

STA (Map p224; ☎ 82 62 62-0; graz@statravel.at; Raubergasse 20; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri) Nationwide travel agency specialising in student travel.

Sights

Most of Graz's museums are under the tutelage of the Landesmuseum Joanneum. Entry to the Kunsthaus Graz, Neue Galerie, Schloss Eggenberg or the Landeszeughaus, including their special exhibitions, entitles you to a day

GRAZ IN...

One Day

Begin the morning with a coffee and cake at **Edegger-Tax** (p231) before hitting the slug-like **Kunsthaus** (p226). Grab a quick midday refreshment on the **Murinsel** (p227) and, if the kids are around, they can run riot in the small playground. Climb **Schlossberg** (p225) and take in the views from the terrace of the **Garisson Museum** (p225) before lunching at **Aiola Upstairs** (p230). Dedicate a leisurely afternoon to **Schloss Eggenberg** (p226), not missing the **Alte Galerie**, and in the early evening have a snack and quaff a wine at the bar of **Iohan** (p231) before drifting over to a table or moving to **Landhauskeller** (p231) for a full meal. After dinner, chill out in a **Bermuda Triangle** bar (p231).

Two Days

After day one, drop by the market at **Lendplatz** (p231) and later catch up on the Habsburgs by visiting the **Mausoleum of Ferdinand II** (p225). Afterwards nip into the **Domkirche** (p225) before retiring to **Promenade** (p231) in the **Stadtspark** (p225) for a light meal. Write some postcards here or stroll through the shady park, and later get a feel for medieval armoury in the **Landeszeughaus** (p224) before depriving your senses in the samadhi bath in the **Museum der Wahrnehmung** (p226). In the evening, catch a performance at the **Opernhaus** (p233) or **Schauspielhaus** (p233).



ticket for any of these. The two-day Joanneum pass (€12) covers most city museums.

HAUPTPLATZ & AROUND

The **Landesmuseum Joanneum** (Map p224; ☎ 8017 9740; www.museum-joanneum.at; Raubergasse 10; adult/child & student/family €5.50/2/11; ☞ 3-6pm Tue-Sat), founded in 1811, is Austria's oldest museum and, with 19 locations, is pretty much the gardener of Graz's rich cultural landscape. Its Raubergasse building is home to collections on geology and palaeontology, minerals and zoology, as well as one on botany (only open to groups). (Note that these restricted hours apply while it's being renovated – until about 2011).

The **Landeszeughaus** (provincial armoury; Map p224; ☎ 80 17 98 10; Herrengasse 16; adult/child & student €7/3,

tour €2.50 extra; ☞ 10am-6pm Apr-Oct, to 3pm Mon-Sat, to 4pm Sun Nov-Mar) will quite possibly rate as your favourite Austrian museum if you have a passion for armour and weapons. It houses an astounding array of gleaming pieces (more than 30,000 in fact). Most of these date from the 17th century, when the original armoury was built, and some of it is exquisitely engraved; other exhibits are rough and ready and have seen battle. This is heavy metal territory – you'll find equipment here (such as the two-handed swords) that would need a Schwarzenegger to wield it.

The stained glass window of the **Stadtpfarrkirche** (town parish church; Map p224; Herrengasse 23; admission free; ☞ dawn-dusk), southeast of the

INFORMATION		SLEEPING		Cafe Centraal.....53 A3	
Bankhaus Krentschker.....1 C4	Grand Hotel Wiesler.....29 A3	Café Harrach.....54 D1	Edegger-Tax.....55 B2	Exil.....56 A2	M1.....57 B3
English Bookshop.....2 C3	Grazerhof.....30 B4	Hotel Erzherzog Johann.....31 B3	Hotel Feichtinger Graz.....32 A2	Hotel Mariahilf.....33 A3	Operncafé.....58 C4
Freitag & Berndt.....3 B2	Hotel Erzherzog Johann.....31 B3	Hotel Weitzer.....34 A4	Hotel zum Dom.....35 C3	Schlossberg Hotel.....36 A2	Parkhouse.....59 D2
High Speed Internet-Selfstore.....4 B3	Main Post Office.....5 B4	Hotel zum Dom.....35 C3	Steiermärkische Landesbibliothek.....8 B4	Schlossberg Hotel.....36 A2	Pierre's Café-Bar.....60 A2
Main Tourist Office.....6 B3	STA.....7 B4	Steiermärkische Sparkasse.....9 B3			Promenade.....61 D2
					Stern.....62 C2
					Stockwerk Jazz.....63 C4
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES		EATING		ENTERTAINMENT	
Burg.....10 C2	Aiola City.....37 C3	Alteirische Schmankelestubn.....38 B2	Arcadium.....64 A4	Dom in Berg.....(see 23)	Open-Air Theatre.....65 B1
Domkirche.....11 C3	Eurospar.....(see 43)	Farmers Market.....39 D4	Openhaus.....66 D4	Schauspielhaus.....67 C2	Theaterservice.....68 D4
Double Staircase.....12 C2	Garrison Museum.....13 B1	Fast-Food Stands.....41 B3	Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	
Garrison Museum.....13 B1	Farmers Market.....39 D4	Fast-Food Stands.....41 B3	Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	
Glockenspiel.....14 C3	Farmers Market.....40 A2	Fast-Food Stands.....41 B3	Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	
Kulturhistorische Sammlung.....15 B4	Fast-Food Stands.....41 B3	Fast-Food Stands.....42 C4	Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	
Kunsthau.....16 A3	Feinspitz.....43 B3	Feinspitz.....43 B3	Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	
Landesmuseum Joanneum.....17 B4	Gamlitzer Weinstube.....44 C3	Gamlitzer Weinstube.....44 C3	Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	
Landeszeughaus.....18 C3	iku.....45 A3	iku.....45 A3	Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	
Landhaushof.....19 B3	Iohan.....46 B3	Iohan.....46 B3	Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	
Mausoleum of Ferdinand II.....20 C3	Krebsenkeller.....47 B3	Krebsenkeller.....47 B3	Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	
Murinsel.....21 A2	Landhauskeller.....48 B3	Landhauskeller.....48 B3	Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	
Neue Galerie.....22 B2	Mangolds.....49 A3	Mangolds.....49 A3	Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	
Schlossberg Cave Railway.....23 B2	Stainerbauer.....50 C3	Stainerbauer.....50 C3	Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	
Stadtmuseum.....24 B2	Tramina.....51 C4	Tramina.....51 C4	Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	
Stadtpfarrkirche.....25 C3	Yamamoto.....52 B3	Yamamoto.....52 B3	Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	
Styriarte & Steirischer Herbst	Offices.....26 B2	Offices.....26 B2	Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	
Uhrturn.....27 B2	Volkskundemuseum.....28 B2	Volkskundemuseum.....28 B2	Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	
			Staircase.....(see 43)	Staircase.....(see 43)	

Landeszeughaus, is an interesting anomaly: the fourth panel from the bottom on the right (left of the high altar) clearly shows Hitler and Mussolini looking on as Christ is scourged.

SCHLOSSBERG

Rising to 473m, Schlossberg is the site of the original fortress that gave Graz its name. Its wooded slopes can be reached by a number of paths, with the funicular **Schlossbergbahn** (Castle Hill Railway; Map p224; free with public transport ticket) from Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Kai, or by **Glass Lift** (Map p224; free with public transport ticket) from Schlossbergplatz. Even Napoleon was hard-pressed to raze this fortress, but raze it he did. The whole area was later landscaped and today an **open-air theatre** (Map p224), a great restaurant-bar and a small **Garrison Museum** (Map p224; ☎ 82 73 48; Schlossberg 5a; adult/child €1/free; ☞ 10am-4.30pm Tue-Sun) are the legacy. Perched on the southern edge of Schlossberg is the city's emblem, the **Uhrturn** (Clock Tower; Map p224). In what must have been a good deal for Europe's modernising midget, the townsfolk paid Napoleon a ransom of 2987 florins and 11 farthings to spare the clock tower during the 1809 invasion.

THE BURG & AROUND

Southeast of Schlossberg is the city's 15th-century **Burg** (Map p224; Hofgasse), now housing government offices. At the far end of the courtyard, on the left under the arch, is an ingenious **double staircase** (1499; Map p224) – the steps diverge and converge as they spiral. Farther east is the **Stadtpark** (Map p224), the city's largest green space.

Opposite the Burg is the **Domkirche** (Map p224; ☎ 82 16 83-0; Burggasse 3; admission free; ☞ dawn-dusk), a late-Gothic church dating from the 15th century that became a cathedral in 1786. The interior combines Gothic and baroque elements, with reticulated vaulting on the ceiling, but its highlight is the faded **Gottesplagenbild** fresco on the cathedral's exterior, which dates from 1485. It depicts life in the early 1480s, when Graz was besieged by its triple tragedy of Turks, the plague and locusts.

Next door is the mannerist-baroque **Mausoleum of Ferdinand II** (Map p224; ☎ 82 16 83; Burggasse 2; adult/child €4.50/2; ☞ 10.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-4pm). Construction by Italian architect Pietro de Pomis began in 1614, but the mausoleum was completed after Pomis' death by Pietro Valnegro, while Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach chipped in with the exuberant

stuccowork and frescoes inside. Ferdinand (1578–1637), his wife and his son are interred in the crypt, although the lead roles are played by the red marble sarcophagus of Ferdinand's parents, Karl II (1540–90) and Maria of Bavaria (1551–1608). Only Maria occupies the sarcophagus – Karl II lies in the Benedictine Abbey (p244) in Seckau.

SCHLOSS EGGENBERG

Situated on the western fringes of the city (tram 1), **Schloss Eggenberg** (off Map p222; ☎ 58 32 64-0; Eggenberger Allee 90; adult/child & student €7/3; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Palm Sunday-Oct) was created for the Eggenberg dynasty in 1625. This splendid baroque palace was constructed by de Pomis at the request of Johann Ulrich (1568–1634), who required a suitable home after becoming governor of Inner Austria in 1625.

The dominating theme of the 24 **Prunkräume** (staterooms) is astronomy and mythology. The Planet Hall, which is a riot of white stuccowork and baroque frescoes, is one highlight; the frescoes portray the seven planets (all that were then discovered), the four elements and the 12 signs of the zodiac. Most rooms are devoted to one theme, including a Chinese room and a games room. Guided tours are conducted in German every hour on the hour, though an English translation is possible (enquire in advance).

The **Alte Galerie** (☎ 58 32 64-9770; adult/child & student €7/3; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) is the best among the museums housed within the Schloss, with exquisite paintings and sculpture dating from the Romanesque period through to the late baroque. The palace houses three other collections, which can be visited with admission to the Alte Galerie or Schloss itself. In the **Pre- and Early-History Collection** the prize exhibition is the exceptional **Strettweg Chariot** and a bronze mask, both dating from the Hallstatt period (7th century BC). The other collections are the **Coin Collection** from Styria, and a **Collection of Roman Provincial Antiquities** covering Roman finds in the province.

The palace is set in **parkland** (adult/child €1/free; ☎ 8am-7pm Apr-Oct, to 5pm Nov-Mar) where peacock and deer roam among Roman stone reliefs, and has a **Planetengarten** (Planet Garden; ☎ 10am-6pm May-Oct, to 4pm Nov & Apr) on the same Renaissance theme of planets.

For Graz's Kunsthaus, see the Walking Tour (right).

OTHER SIGHTS

Some other intriguing museums are:

Kulturhistorische Sammlung (Map p224; ☎ 80 17 97 80; Neutorgasse 45; in planning) A museum with crafted applied arts from the Middle Ages to present.

Museum der Wahrnehmung (Museum of Perception; Map p222; ☎ 81 15 99; www.muwa.at; in German; Friedrichgasse 41; adult/child/family €3.50/1.80/8, samadhi bath €45; ☎ 2-6.30pm Wed-Mon) Small but unusual collection that explores sensory illusions; the samadhi (meditative) bath is a therapeutic bath that relieves the body of all sensory input.

Volkskundemuseum (Map p224; ☎ 80 17 98 99; Paulustorgasse 11-13a; adult/child/student €3.50/2/2.50, tours extra €1.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) Museum devoted to folk art and lifestyle; highlights include 2000 years of traditional clothing.

Walking Tour

This walk covers about 2.5km of the old town and can be done in 1½ hours without stops.

Start your walk from the tourist office on Herrengasse and enormous **Landhaus (1)**, the home of the provincial parliament. The building is a design of the 16th-century Swiss architect Domenico dell'Allio, based on the style of a Lombard palace. West of this is **Landhaushof (2)**, a stunning Italian Renaissance courtyard, a three-tiered gallery connected by walkways and one of the most celebrated examples of Renaissance architecture in Austria. Back on Herrengasse, continue northwest past the **Bemaltes Haus (3)**; Painted House), a splendidly decorated Renaissance ducal residence, and cross over to **Hauptplatz (4)**, the main square from 1160, which is dominated by another Renaissance gem, the **Rathaus (5)**; Town Hall) from 1550. The fountain in the centre is a monument to Johann, with four women at his feet representing Styria's main rivers – the Mur, Enns, Drau and Sann. From here, follow Franziskanergasse to Franziskanerplatz, dominated by the **Franziskanerkirche (6)**; Franciscan Church). The building dates from 1240 and is based on an earlier Minorite church reworked by the Franciscans, who took it over in the 16th century. Cross the bridge. Sitting splendidly on the bank of the Mur River is the **Kunsthaus (7)**; Map p224; ☎ 8017 9200; www.kunsthausgraz.at; Lendekai 1; adult/child & student/family €7/3/14, tours €2.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, tours 11am & 4pm). Designed by British architects Peter Cook and Colin Fournier, this world-class contemporary art space is a bold creation

which looks something like a space-age sea slug. Exhibitions change every three to four months, and tours cover not only the exhibitions but also the building. Mariahilferstrasse, immediately behind the Kunsthaus, is a lively street with some good bars set among a raft of dubious nightclubs.

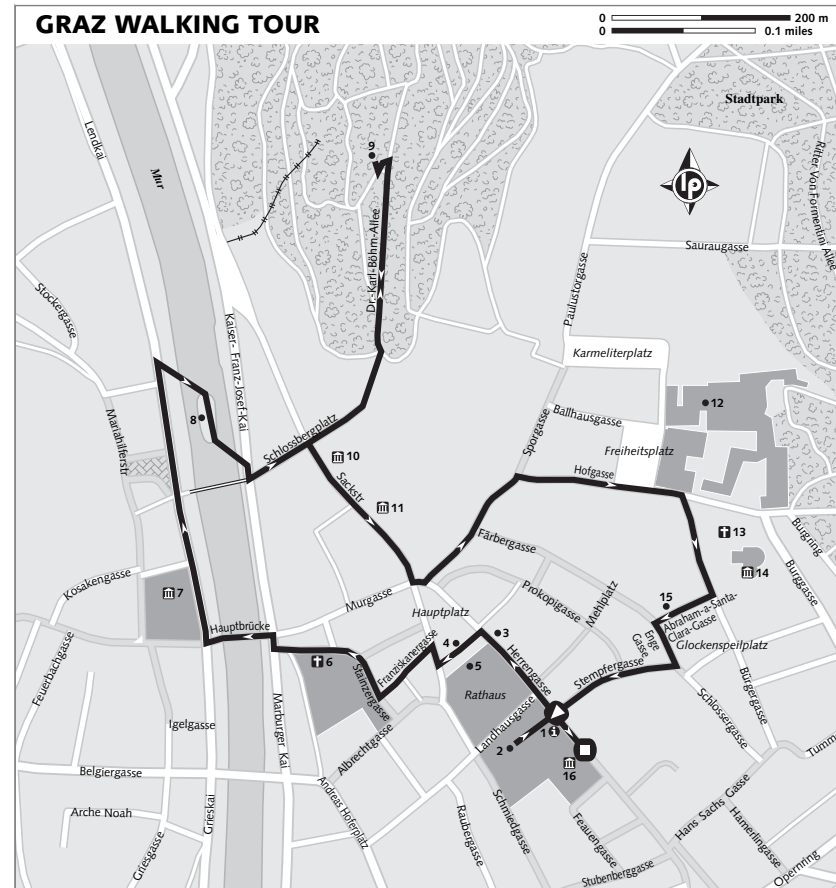
Continue north along the river to Mariahilferplatz, where the two towers of the Mariahilferkirche dominate a large square. A short walk ahead is the **Murinsel (8)**, an artificial island-cum-bridge of metal and plastic in the middle of the Mur. This modern floating landmark contains a café (p232), a kids' playground and a small stage. After crossing the island you reach Schlossbergplatz, where stairs and a lift take you to **Schlossberg (9)**; p225).

From the top, follow Dr-Karl-Böhm-Allee north for the wonderful views from Schlossberg and then backtrack, taking either the lift or stairs again and go left (south) along Sackstrasse, with its art and antique shops. This takes you past the **Stadtmuseum (10)**; Map p224; ☎ 82 73 48; Sackstrasse 18; adult/child €4/2; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun), portraying the history of Graz and housing temporary exhibitions, and

WALK FACTS

Start Tourist Office
Finish Landeszeughaus
Distance 2.5km
Duration 1½ hours

GRAZ WALKING TOUR



THE TERMINATOR – A ROCKY RELATIONSHIP WITH GRAZ

If you ask an ordinary Graz citizen on the street who they think is Graz's most famous citizen, the chances are they'll say 'Arnold Schwarzenegger'. Maybe it's not surprising. Arni's star-spangled biography is legendary. The son of a Graz cop. The modest childhood growing up just outside the city limits. A talented young bodybuilder who swept up multiple titles of Mr Universe and Mr Olympia. And not forgetting, of course, the fabled *Terminator* films and his meteoric rise to become Governor of California. Topping off the legend, he has recently morphed into California's 'green' crusader.

But his relationship with Graz has been turbulent. When he didn't use his gubernatorial power in 2005 to stop the execution of a condemned man, local political figures felt compelled to change the name of Graz's stadium, at that time known as the Arnold Schwarzenegger Stadion in honour of the town's most famous export.

Many local Graz citizens are quick to jump to Schwarzenegger's defence. When we asked Robert, aged 42, and born in Graz to Croatian parents, he said he admired Schwarzenegger for the way he's done his own thing. 'Schmidtbauer', aged 39, who sells produce at the Lendplatz market, echoed this view (and the sentiments of his colleague selling vegetables a few stalls further on), saying that 'He's a lot smarter than everyone thinks'.

As for the Terminator himself, he wrote a letter pre-empting the stadium name change, and demanded that his name be removed. He also returned his ring of honour to the city. 'In conclusion,' he wrote in 2005 to the city mayor, 'I want to once again expressly stress that I'll stay with all my heart a Grazer, Styrian and Austrian.'

Eva, a 25-year-old woman who grew up in Graz, said she'd seen his films and liked them. She didn't like the episode with the stadium, though. 'Renaming the stadium was idiotic', she said. 'It just wasn't right to do that.'

after that the **Neue Galerie (11)**; Map p224; ☎ 82 91 55; Sackstrasse 16; adult/child & student/family €7/5.50/14; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun), with changing modern art exhibitions. At Sporgasse, turn left, take a right into Hofgasse and walk east along here past Freiheitsplatz and the city's 15th-century **Burg (12)**; Castle). Just east of this is the **Dom (13)** and **Mausoleum (14)**. Turn right into Bürgergasse and take the first right into Abraham-a-Santa-Clara-Gasse, which opens up to Glockenspielplatz and the **Glockenspiel (15)**, where at 11am, 3pm and 6pm daily figures emerge from the clock's upper window and twirl to music. The area here and around Mehlplatz is called the Bermuda Triangle (see p232) and is one of the most popular eating and entertainment districts. Turn left into Enge Gasse and go right along Stempfergasse and you arrive back on Herrengasse. Finally, just south is the **Landeszeughaus (16)** armoury museum.

Graz for Children

With its green spaces, playgrounds and relaxed atmosphere, Graz is made for children. The creation of **FriDa & FreD** (Map p222; ☎ 87 27 700; www.fridaundfred.at; Friedrichgasse 34; adult & child over 6/child under 6/family €4/1.50/11; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon,

Wed & Thu, 9am-7pm Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun), Graz's first museum devoted to children, makes it even better. This small but fun-packed museum is aimed at kids up to the age of 12, and hosts workshops, exhibitions and theatre. Like any good children's museum, it has loads of hands-on tasks and interactive displays.

The **Schlossberg Cave Railway** (Map p224; Schlossbergplatz; admission €3; ☎ 10am-5pm), the longest grotto railway in Europe, is another highlight for the little 'uns. The trip, taking about 20 minutes, winds its way around fairy-tale scenes through tunnels once used as a safe haven from the allied bombings during WWII.

Tours

The tourist office (Graztourismus; see p223) offers a guided walking tour (adult/child €9.50/3.50) in German and English at 2.30pm daily from April to October and at 2.30pm Saturday from November to March. Also ask about its regular theme tours in town and weekend day trips outside Graz, or pick up its nifty multimedia (and multi-lingual) guide to sights, using a handheld computer (€7.50/8.50 two/four hours).

Festivals & Events

Graz's biggest bash is **Styriarte**, a festival featuring almost continuous classical concerts in June and July. Pick up information from **Styriarte Kartenbüro** (Map p224; ☎ 82 50 00; www.styriarte.com; Sackstrasse 17; €16-110).

Steirischer Herbst, an avant-garde festival of new art held during October, includes performances in music, theatre, film, plus exhibitions and art installations. Contact **Steirischer Herbst Informationsbüro** (Map p224; ☎ 81 60 70; www.steirischerbst.at, in German; Sackstrasse 17; €6-35) for more. **Jazz Sommer Graz** (www.jazzsommergraz.at, in German), a collection of free jazz concerts (often with an impressive international line-up), takes place in Dom im Berg from early July to late August.

Sleeping BUDGET

The tourist office has an excellent accommodation guide and books hotels without charge.

Camping Central (off Map p222; ☎ 0676-378 51 02; freizeit@netway.at; Martinhofstrasse 3; campsites per adult/child/tent €8/5/17; ☎ Apr-Oct; ☎ ☎ ☎) The large swimming pool and children's playground are useful features of this camping ground 6km southwest of the city centre (bus 32 from Jakominiplatz).

Jugendgästehaus (Map p222; ☎ 70 83 50; graz@jfg.at, Idlhofgasse 74; dm/s/d €22/33/52; ☎ ☎) This big, colourful and friendly HI hostel is the cheapest deal in Graz. There's a small playground for kids too.

Hotel Strasser (Map p222; ☎ 71 39 77; office@hotel-strasser.at; Eggenberger Gürtel 11; s/d €35/60; ☎) Beyond the uninteresting exterior of the Strasser are some fascinating pseudo-neoclassical and Mediterranean touches, with Tuscan gold and ochre blending with mirrors, along with artwork and cast iron balustrades. Rooms are comfortable but ask for one away from the busy street.

Gasthof-Pension zur Steirer-Stub'n (Map p222; ☎ 71 68 55; www.pension-graz.at; Lendplatz 8; s/d €41/74, apt €100-150) This inn combines the best of a traditional atmosphere with a bright and breezy feel, complemented by features like tiled floors in the corridors, a potted plant in each room and patios outside many of the good-sized rooms overlooking Lendplatz.

Pension Rückert (off Map p222; ☎ 32 30 31; Rückertgasse 4; s/d €52/74; ☎) A big plus with this pension is that it's smack-bang in the student

district. In summer the 1st floor is the best – the 2nd floor is unrenovated and the top floor gets the heat and is better for winter sojourns. Take tram 1 to Tegetthoffplatz, walk 100m in the direction of the tram route then turn right.

MIDRANGE

Hotel Mariahilf (Map p224; ☎ 71 31 63; www.hotel-mariahilf.at; Mariahilferstrasse 9; s/d €51/88) Large rooms, including some with small ante-rooms, and interesting Art Deco touches give the Mariahilf a relaxed atmosphere. The interior wood creates a light ambience, and the location is excellent if you want to be near the Kunsthalle and bars on Mariahilferstrasse.

Hotel Feichtinger Graz (Map p224; ☎ 724 100; www.hotel-feichtinger.at; Lendplatz 1a; s/d/tr €50/94/129; ☎) This modern seminar and business hotel offers some of the best-value beds in town. Rooms are spacious, and the furnishings are modern and have a light touch, which extends to the very large breakfast room.

our pick Hotel Daniel (Map p224; ☎ 711 080; www.hoteldaniel.com; Europaplatz 1; r €59-79, breakfast €9 per person; ☎ ☎) Perched at the top of Annenstrasse and looking for all the world like a block of 1950s beachside holiday apartments that's lost its beach, the Daniel is an exclusive design hotel with two categories of rooms: 'Smart' and 'Loggia'. The former are smaller, though decent sized, and have queen-sized beds; they're a great deal because the price is per room, not person. The Loggia category is larger and has balconies. All rooms are tastefully furnished in minimalist designs, you can rent a Vespa (€25 per day) and there's a 24-hour espresso bar. The bathroom – but, thankfully, not toilet – wall is transparent.

Grazerhof (Map p224; ☎ 82 43 58; www.grazerhof.at; Stubenberggasse 10; s/d/tr €54/90/120) This hotel offers a central location, but few other real advantages, in a plain building; unfortunately the rooms to the yard have a wall outside the window.

Hotel zum Dom (Map p224; ☎ 82 48 00; www.dom-hotel.at, in German; Bürgergasse 14; s €80-90, d €165, ste €200-322; ☎ ☎) Hotel Zum Dom is a charming, graceful hotel with tasteful and individually furnished rooms. These come either with steam/power showers or whirlpools, and one suite even has a terrace whirlpool. Ceramic art throughout the hotel is crafted by a local artist.

Hotel Weitzer (Map p224; ☎ 7030; www.weitzer.com; Grieskai 12; s €85-140, d €125-180, ste €300; (P) (Q)) This four-star hotel in two buildings is just the trick if you like your pillows well fluffed each evening while you're off enjoying a sauna or romp in the fitness room. The rooftop terrace is disappointing, but everything else is up to standard here.

TOP END

Augarten Hotel (Map p222; ☎ 20 800; www.augartenhotel.at; Schönaugasse 53; s/d €115/140; (P) (Q)) Though not an 'art hotel', art plays an important role in the Augarten. It's decorated with the owner's private collection, which includes a great oil of the German crooning superstar Heino. All rooms are bright and modern, the end rooms have windows on two walls, and corridors run along the exterior of the building.

our pick **Hotel Erzherzog Johann** (Map p224; ☎ 81 16 16; www.erzherzog-johann.com; Sackstrasse 3-5; s €119-172, d €145-235, ste €350; mains €12-18; (P) (X)) Weekend deals are the thing to watch out for here, but also throw caution to the wind and splurge in one of the ostentatious theme rooms. The Wanda-Sacher-Masoch-Suite is in white and with projections of classical statues in the bathroom, whereas Orientalists will get a kick out of the sensational Moroccan room.

Schlossberg Hotel (Map p224; ☎ 80 70-0; www.schlossberg-hotel.at; Kaiser-Franz-Josef-Kai 30; s €141-181, d €187-230, ste €311-375; (P) (Q) (X)) Central but away from the city tumult, four-star Schlossberg is blessed with a prime location at the foot of Schlossberg. Rooms are well sized and decorated in the style of a country inn, but the fitness room is a tacky number, with exposed air-conditioning pipes. The rooftop terrace with views is perfect for an evening glass of wine.

Grand Hotel Wiesler (Map p224; ☎ 70 66-0; www.weitzer.com; Grieskai 4; s €185-205, d €245-265, ste €300-695; (P) (Q)) This Art Nouveau gem is the only five-star hotel in town. All but two of the elegant rooms have bathtubs, and the Art Nouveau mosaic by Leopold Forstner (1878-1936) in the breakfast room - depicting Venus stepping out of an oyster - evokes admiration even if it's while glancing up from your egg.

Eating

Whether you're after a bite on the run, coffee and cake, a cheap, filling meal, hearty Styrian fare or gourmet cuisine in splendid surroundings, Graz can give it to you.

RESTAURANTS

Stern (Map p224; ☎ 81 84 00; www.sternenclub.at; Sporgasse 3; mains €5-14; ☎ 9am-3am) During the day and early evening Stern is a fine restaurant with a focus on salads, wok and pasta dishes served at outdoor tables on Kameliterplatz; when the sun sets, its cellar-like interior morphs into a bar, featuring DJs every Friday and Saturday, and live acts on Sunday.

Krebsenkeller (Map p224; ☎ 82 93 77; Sackstrasse 12; mains €6-12; ☎ 10am-midnight) Krebsenkeller does inexpensive regional cuisine - which means lots of pumpkin oil - and appeals to locals and tourists alike, not only for its home-style cooking, but also for a lovely inner courtyard and traditional atmosphere.

Tramina (Map p224; ☎ 83 01 67; Klosterwiesgasse 2; mains €6.50-11; ☎ 6pm-2am) In the family for three generations, this is one of two restaurants in Graz - Mangolds is the other - awarded the Styrian 'Green Chef's Hat' for good ecological practice. Everything is organic in this unusual *Beisl*-gone-feral run by two sisters. It specialises in lamb, but you'll also find thin slices of beef served in vinegar and oil and half a dozen vegetarian dishes.

iku (Map p224; ☎ 8017 9292; Lendkai 1; lunch menu €5.50, mains €8-12; ☎ 9am-1am) Inside the surrealistic Kunsthau, this sleek bar and restaurant does one vegetarian and one meat dish for lunch, and has a small evening menu offering the likes of beef medallions in red wine and basil sauce. A DJ takes the floor from 10pm Saturday.

Gamlitzer Weinstube (Map p224; ☎ 82 87 60; Mehlplatz 4; €6-17; ☎ 9am-11pm Mon-Fri) With a menu in 18 different languages, the Gamlitzer aims squarely at the tourist trade. Ingredients for its home-style classic Styrian dishes come from the local farmers; there's outside seating.

Aiola Upstairs (Map p224; ☎ 81 87 97; Schlossberg 2; mains €8-18; ☎ 9am-midnight) Ask any local where to find the best outdoor dining experience in Graz, and they'll probably say Aiola. Whether it's king prawns with pasta or corn-fed chicken, this wonderful restaurant on Schlossberg has great views, delicious international flavours, a superb wine list, spot-on cocktails and very chilled music.

Yamamoto (Map p224; ☎ 852 852; Prokopigasse 4; small/large sushi €11/19; udon €7-8.50; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat) Yamamoto is refreshingly authentic in an age when Chinese restaurants are re-inventing themselves as lucrative sushi bars; it's Japanese owned and run, and gets its sushi

delivered throughout the week, so it's always fresh and, like the noodle dishes, delicious.

Iohan (Map p224; ☎ 82 13 12; www.iohan.at; Landhausgasse 1; mains €10.50-22.50, bar menu €7.50-9.50; ☎ 6pm-1am Tue-Sat) This very stylish restaurant and bar with a Gothic vaulted ceiling is one place where you can find a seasonal salad incorporating tongue of veal and asparagus. But it's also perfect for chilling out at the bar and taking entree-like snacks.

Aiola City (Map p224; ☎ 890 335; Mehlplatz 1; mains €12-20; ☎ 7.30am-late Mon-Sat, 9am-late Sun) In the centre, this Aiola has low vaulting, a cool lounge feel and outdoor seating on Mehlplatz.

Landhauskeller (Map p224; ☎ 83 02 76; Schmiedgasse 9; mains €12.50-21.50; ☎ 11.30am-midnight Mon-Sat) What started as a spit-and-sawdust pub in the 16th century evolved into an atmospheric, high-quality restaurant serving specialities like its four different sorts of *Tafelspitz* (prime broiled beef). Flowers, coats of arms and medieval-style murals pack a historical punch, and in the summer outside tables look onto the stunning Landhaus courtyard.

Other recommended restaurants include: **Altsteirische Schmankerlstubn** (Map p224; ☎ 83 32 11; Sackstrasse 10; mains €8-16; ☎ 10am-midnight) Rustic restaurant serving traditional Styrian cuisine at the foot of the Schlossberg.

Stainzerbauer (Map p224; ☎ 82 11 06; Bürgergasse 4; mains €10-19; ☎ 11am-midnight) Styrian and Austrian specialities in a lovely courtyard garden.

Magnolia (Map p222; ☎ 82 38 35; Schöngauggasse 53; 3-5 course menu €39.50-59.50, mains €15-20; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri) Alongside Augarten Hotel, with outdoor seating, this stylish restaurant with a seasonal menu and Austro-international cuisine is highly rated.

QUICK EATS

Aside from the following listings, there are plenty of cheap eateries near **Universität Graz** (Map p222), particularly on Halbarthgasse, Zinzendorfgasse and Harrachgasse.

Mangolds (Map p224; ☎ 71 80 02; Griesgasse 11; meals €5-10; ☎ 11am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat) Tasty vegetarian patties, rice dishes and over 40 different salads are served at this pay-by-weight vegetarian cafeteria.

Other good quick-eats include:

Feinspitz (Map p224; ☎ 870-0; 2nd fl Kastner & Öhler department store, Sackstrasse 7-11; meals €5-9; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat) Buffet-style restaurant with healthy salads and ready meals; also offers a kids' menu for €4 (which includes a drink and a surprise).

Mensa (Map p222; ☎ 32 33 62; Sonnenfelsplatz 1;

menu €5; ☎ 11am-2.30pm Mon-Fri) One of the university cafeterias.

Zu den 3 Goldenen Kugeln (most mains under €5; ☎ lunch & dinner) Heinrichstrasse/University (Map p222; ☎ 36 16 36; Heinrichstrasse 18); Griesplatz (Map p222; Griesplatz 34); Bahnhofgürtel (Map p222; Bahnhofgürtel 89); Citypark (Map p222; Lazarettgürtel 55) An institution in Graz, the Goldenen Kugeln serves up possibly the cheapest schnitzel around, but still manages to make it tasty. The Heinrichstrasse branch, with its rustic air, is the nicest.

SELF-CATERING

The freshest fruit and vegetables are at the **farmers markets** (☎ 4.30am-1pm Mon-Sat) on Kaiser-Josef-Platz (Map p224) and Lendplatz (Map p222). For **fast-food stands**, head for Hauptplatz (Map p224) and Jakominiplatz (Map p224). Supermarkets are plentiful throughout the city; there's a **Billa** (Map p222; Annenstrasse 23), a **Eurospar** (Map p224; Sackstrasse 7-11) and a **Spar** (Map p222; ☎ daily) is located in the *Hauptbahnhof*.

Drinking

The café and bar scene in Graz is propelled by a healthy student crowd. Some of the cafés we've listed here change into bars as the night wears on, but tend not to stay open as late.

CAFÉS

Edegger-Tax (Map p224; ☎ 83 02 30; Hofgasse 8; coffee & cakes €2-5; ☎ 6.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 6.30am-3pm Sat, also 7am-3pm Apr-Sep) This modern café is perfectly complemented by its 1569 bakery (open 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday, to noon Saturday) next door. Apart from the yummy goodies baked on the premises, its stunning wood-carved façade is reason enough to drop by; note the small doors in the frontage, concealing ingenious hiding places.

Operncafé (Map p224; ☎ 82 04 36; Opernring 22; coffee & cake €2-5; ☎ 7.30am-9pm Mon-Sat, 9am-9pm Sun) Operncafé is a traditional café with good coffee, homemade pastries and pleasant, suited waiters who have found a calling in life.

Auschlössl (Map p222; ☎ 81 33 68; Friedrichgasse 36; coffee about €3; ☎ 10am-midnight Mon-Sat) Auschlössl is another small café on the edge of a park, but this time on the other side of town. It's perfect for an evening drink or a coffee break after an exhausting visit to FriDa & FreD. It often hosts art exhibitions.

Promenade (Map p224; ☎ 81 38 40; Erzherzog Johann Allee 1; snack €7.40; ☎ 8am-midnight) Popular with all walks of life, the delightful Promenade is a Graz institution - styled on a Vienna

coffee house on a tree-lined avenue in the Stadtpark.

Aiola Island (Map p224; ☎ 81 86 69; Murinsel; ☎ noon-8pm Tue-Fri, 10-midnight Sat, 10am-8pm Sun) This café on the Murinsel offers a unique experience – here you can sip a drink as the Mur River splashes below your feet.

BARS

Most bars are concentrated in three areas; around the university, on Mehlplatz and Prokopigasse (dubbed the 'Bermuda Triangle'), and near the Kunsthaus. Lines are often blurred, so don't dismiss a place for a good night out just because it serves food. Classic examples include the two Aiola restaurants, iku and Stern.

Orange (Map p222; ☎ 32 74 29; www.café-bar-orange.at; Elisabethstrasse 30; ☎ 8pm-3am) A young, fashionable student crowd gets down in this modern lounge, which has a patio perfect for warm summer evenings. DJs spin sounds regularly here.

Kulturhauskeller (Map p222; Elisabethstrasse 30; ☎ 9pm-5am Tue-Sat) Next door to Orange, the Kulturhauskeller is a relaxed cellar bar that heaves with raunchy young students on weekends.

Café Harrach (Map p224; ☎ 32 26 71; Harrachgasse 26; ☎ 9am-midnight Mon-Fri, 7pm-midnight Sat & Sun) Harrach is a long-time favourite among the art-scene students and has retained its relaxed feel.

Bierbaron (Map p222; ☎ 32 15 10; Heinrichstrasse 56; ☎ 10am-1am Mon-Sat, 6-11pm Sun) This large, busy bar just north of the university is another well-known student haunt. It has rows of gleaming silver beer pumps, and a relaxing garden.

Goldene Kugel (Map p222; ☎ 32 31 08; Leonhardstrasse 32; ☎ 10am-midnight) The Kugel has been through some tumult of late, but now its doors are wide open again to a student crowd that gathers here to nosh inexpensively and enjoy one or two of the 20 different beers.

Three Monkeys (Map p222; ☎ 31 98 10; www.three-monkeys.at; Elisabethstrasse 31; ☎ 9pm-5am Mon-Sun) Three Monkeys is possibly the most popular student bar near the university; it's loud, lots of fun, and generally known as a pick-up joint.

Parkhouse (Map p224; ☎ 80 80 80; www.parkhouse.at; Stadtpark 2; ☎ 11am-4am) On warm summer days and evenings half of Graz seems to make a beeline to this place. Parkhouse gets a very mixed crowd, but as the day fades to night

it morphs into a buzzing spot for DJs and occasional live music (usually a Tuesday).

M1 (Map p224; ☎ 81 12 330; 3rd fl, Färberplatz; ☎ 9am-2am Mon-Sat) In the heart of the Bermuda Triangle, M1 is a modern three-storey café-bar replete with rooftop terrace attracting a mixed – but often quite young – crowd. Its spiral staircase can cause a few problems after sampling a couple of the bar's 200 or so cocktails.

Stargayte (Map p222; 0664 92 47 29; www.stargayte.at, in German; Keesegasse 3; ☎ 8pm Mon-Thu & Sun, 8pm-open end Fri & Sat) This gay and lesbian cocktail bar and lounge near Jakominiplatz is popular. Thursday nights the dance floor is given over to women, and it has a permanent male-only room with a sling, plus labyrinth with glory holes.

Café Centraal (Map p224; ☎ 0699-172 13 415; Mariahilferstrasse 10; breakfast €3-6, snack €5-7; ☎ 8am-2am) This traditional bar and *Beisl* (small tavern or restaurant) with a dark-wood interior and outside seating has an alternative feel.

Pierre's Café-Bar (Map p224; ☎ 0699-20 21 86 82; Lendplatz 45; ☎ 5pm-2am Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm & 5pm-2am Sat) Pierre's charms appeal mostly to rolling stones who have gathered a coat of moss. Minimalism meets 40-somethings with greying pony tails who watch Led Zeppelin or Shania Twain clips on the large screen; it's perfect if you like classic rock.

Exil (Map p224; ☎ 0676-72 92 190; Josefigasse 1; ☎ 7pm-late Tue-Sat) If you like the Centraal, you'll probably like Exil even more – it's a laid-back alternative bar with outdoor seating and a couple of turntables for Friday and Saturday nights when sounds are spun; it's against the grain – empty when everywhere else is full, and buzzing when quiet elsewhere.

Stockwerk Jazz (Map p224; ☎ 81 76 74; http://stockwerkjazz.mur.at, in German; Jakominiplatz 18; concerts €10-15; ☎ 4pm-1am Mon-Sat, 4pm-midnight Sun) Stockwerk is Graz's premier jazz bar for homegrown artists or international acts on tour. Relax over a beer among creaking wooden fixtures or on the summer rooftop terrace.

Entertainment

To find out what's on and where in the city, pick up a copy of the free monthly *das eventmagazin* (in German), available from tourist offices, or buy *Megaphon* (€2, in German), a monthly magazine that combines entertainment listings with political and social commentary. It's sold on most street corners.

CINEMAS

Augartenkino (Map p222; ☎ 82 11 86; Friedrichgasse 24; ticket €8) Regularly shows films (mostly art-house) in their original language.

Royal English Cinema (Map p222; ☎ 82 61 33; Conrad-von-Hötzendorf-Strasse 10; ticket €8.50) This cinema screens English-language films.

NIGHTCLUBS

Dom im Berg (Map p224; ☎ 8008 333; www.domimberg.at, in German; Schlossbergplatz; admission €5-10; ☎ see website) The tunnels under Schlossberg were once used as air-raid shelters. Today, some of them have been refashioned into a large art-clubbing venue. The sound system and light show are the best in Graz, so it's no surprise the place is often full when it hosts clubbing events.

p.p.c (Map p224; ☎ 81 41 41 11; www.popculture.at, in German; Neubaugasse 6; admission €5-10; ☎ 10pm-4am Wed-Sat) Electronic club nights with top-name DJs from Austria and abroad, as well as regular live music, are popular here.

Arcadium (Map p224; ☎ 0664-59 80 231; www.arcadium-graz.at, in German; Griesgasse 25; admission €4-7; ☎ 10pm-late) Arcadium has Latino nights Wednesdays but its real strengths are club nights and live music – everything from punk to electronic gets a showing here, mainly for a mid-20s crowd.

THEATRE & OPERA

Graz is an important cultural centre, hosting musical events throughout the year. The main venues in town are the **Schauspielhaus** (theatre; Map p224; ☎ 80 00; Hofgasse 11; tickets €3.50-46) and the **Opernhaus** (opera; Map p224; ☎ 80 08-0; Kaiser-Josef-Platz 10; tickets €1-64). Performance details and tickets (no commission) for both venues are available at **Theaterservice Graz** (Map p224; ☎ 8008 1102; www.theater-graz.com, in German; Kaiser-Josef-Platz 10; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat). Both venues close in August and there are discounts for students.

Shopping

Aside from its divine pumpkin-seed oil, Styria is known for painted pottery and printed linen. A good place to pick up quality handicrafts is **Steirisches Heimatwerk** (Map p224; ☎ 82 90 45; Herrergasse 10) or **Kastner & Öhler** (Map p224; ☎ 870-0; Sackstrasse 7-11), a department store north of Hauptplatz. If you're just looking for high-street names, head for **Citypark** (Map p222; ☎ 71 15 80-0; Lazarettgürtel 55), a large shopping centre to the south of the centre.

Getting There & Away

AIR

The **airport** (off Map p222; ☎ 29 02-0; www.flughafen-graz.at) is 10km south of the town centre, just beyond the A2 and connected by train from the *Hauptbahnhof*; see p395. **Austrian Airlines** (☎ 05 17 89) has frequent flights to/from Düsseldorf (Germany), Vienna and Linz, and weekly flights to/from Salzburg, while **Welcome Air** (☎ 0800 210 211) has regular flights to/from Innsbruck, and Göteborg via Stavanger and Hanover. **InterSky** (☎ 0557 448800) connects Graz with Berlin-Tempelhof and Friedrichshafen several times a week. **TUIfly** (☎ 0820 820033) has weekly connections with Hanover and Cologne-Bonn in Germany. **Lufthansa** (☎ 0810 1025 8080) has frequent flights to Frankfurt am Main, Munich and Stuttgart in Germany, and **Ryanair** (☎ 0900 210240) has frequent flights to/from London Stansted. Facilities at the airport include an **information desk** (☎ 29 02-172; departure hall; ☎ 5am-10.30pm), free internet terminals, and a bank with an ATM in arrivals, ground floor.

An infrequent airport bus also runs to the airport from the *Hauptbahnhof* but is less convenient than the train.

BUS

Postbus (Map p222; ☎ 82 06 06; www.verbundlinie.at) services depart from outside the *Hauptbahnhof* (Map p222) and from Andreas Hofer Platz (Map p224) to all parts of Styria. Indirect **GKB buses** (Map p222; ☎ 59 87-0; www.gkb.at) run to Bärnbach (€6.50, 1¼ hours) and Piber (€6.50, one hour) several times each day from Monday to Friday; more frequent services go to Deutschlandsberg (€8, two hours) Monday to Saturday. All leave from Griesplatz (Map p222), though a few begin at the *Hauptbahnhof*.

TRAIN

Trains to Vienna's Südbahnhof depart every two hours (€30, 2½ hours), and to Salzburg every two to three hours (€43, four hours). All trains running north or west go via Bruck an der Mur (€10.90, 45 minutes, every 20 minutes), a main railway junction with more frequent services. Almost all trains to Klagenfurt (€32, 2¾ hours) require a change in Bruck.

International direct trains from Graz include Zagreb (€31, 3½ hours), Ljubljana (€31, 3½ hours), Szentgotthárd (€16, 1½ hours) and Budapest (€43, 5½ hours).

CAR RENTAL

Car rental companies include **Avis** (Map p224; ☎ 81 29 20; Reinighausstrasse 66), **Hertz** (Map p224; ☎ 82 50 07; Andreas-Hofer-Platz 1), which is also at the airport, and **DenzelDrive** (Map p222; ☎ 050105 4130; www.denzeldrive.at; Wetzelsdorfer Strasse 35). See p403 for rates.

Note that much of Graz is a *Kurzparkzone* (short-term parking zone); tickets are available from parking machines on streets (€0.60 per 30 minutes).

Getting Around

Trams 1, 3, 6 and 7 connect Jakominiplatz with the *Hauptbahnhof* (Map p222) every five to 20 minutes from 4.40am to 7pm Monday to Saturday. After that trams 1 and 7 do the run alone until services end just before midnight (€1.70).

Graz has one zone (zone 101). Single tickets (€1.70) for buses and trams are valid for one hour, but you're usually better off buying a 24-hour pass (€3.70). Ten one-zone tickets cost €14.80, and weekly/monthly passes cost €9.60/32.50. Hourly and 24-hour tickets can be purchased from the driver; other passes can be purchased from *Tabak* (tobacconist) shops, pavement ticket machines or the tourist office.

Bicycle rental is available from **Bicycle** (Map p222; ☎ 68 86 45; Körösisstrasse 5; per 24hr €9; ☎ 7am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Fri). To call a taxi, dial ☎ 2801, ☎ 878 or ☎ 889. **Mobilzentral** (see p221) has a few city bicycles it rents for €8 per day or €40 per week.

AROUND GRAZ

All the following sights are within easy distance of Graz and make for a pleasant excursion into the countryside.

ÖSTERREICHISCHEN FREILICHTMUSEUM

Located some 15km northeast of Graz and consisting of about 100 Austrian farmstead buildings, the **Österreichischen Freilichtmuseum** (Austrian Open-Air Museum; ☎ 03124-53 700; www.freilichtmuseum.at; adult/student/child/family €7/5/4/21; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct) in Stübing is ideal for a family outing. All buildings are originals that have been painstakingly relocated to the museum site, arranged geographically as if you were walking through Austria

from east to west. Craft demonstrations are held regularly, and on the last Sunday in September the **Erlebnistag**, a special fair with crafts, music and dancing, takes place here. Pick up a copy of the English-language guidebook (€2.20) at the entrance.

The museum is about a 20-minute walk from the Stübing train station; turn left out of the train station and pass over the tracks, then under them before hitting the entrance. Hourly trains make the journey from Graz (€4.40, 15 minutes).

BUNDESGESTÜT PIBER

Piber is home to the world-famous Lipizzaner stallion stud farm **Bundesgestüt Piber** (Piber Stud Farm; ☎ 03144-33 23; www.piber.com, in German; Piber 1; tour adult/senior/student €11/9/6; ☎ 10am-4pm hourly Apr-Oct, 11am & 3pm Nov-Mar).

Originally the farm was based in Lipica (Slovenia) but when Slovenia was annexed after WWI it moved here. About 40 to 50 foals are born at the farm every year, but of these only about five stallions have the right stuff to be sent for training to the Spanische Hofreitschule (Spanish Riding School) in Vienna. Foals are born grey, brown or black and take between five and 12 years to achieve their distinctive white colouring. Visitors are looked after by the same people who tend the horses.

In summer, you are given an information sheet with German and short English descriptions, plus a map of the complex. You make your way to several stops, where a carer waits to give explanations in German, although explanatory signs at the stations are also in English. In winter, tours are fully guided.

For information, head to the **Tourismusverband Lipizzanerheimat** (☎ 03144-72 777-0; www.lipizzanerheimat.com, in German; An der Quelle 3) in Köflach, 3km south of Piber. The perfect place to overnight is **Gasthof Bardel** (☎ 03144-34 22; gh-bardel.tripod.com, in German; Fesselweg 1; s/d €30/50; ☎), right next to the stud farm. Each of the modern rooms comes with a balcony overlooking one of the parade areas. There's also a restaurant on the premises, but if you would prefer a snack and coffee, there's a café on the stud farm's grounds.

The best eating option, however, is **Restaurant Caballero** (☎ 03144-33 23-170; mains €14-20; ☎ lunch & dinner Wed-Sat, lunch Sun), on the ground floor of Schloss Piber on the farm.

Getting There & Away

To get to Piber from Graz, the most convenient option is to catch the **GKB** (www.gkb.at) morning bus at 8am from Graz Griesplatz, arriving in Piber at 9.15am (you have to change to a connecting bus at Voitsberg Hauptplatz). The last bus leaves Piber at 2.45pm. This only works weekdays. Frequent trains also go to Köflach, from where it's a 3.5km walk from Hauptplatz along Piberstrasse (follow the signs).

BÄRNBACH

☎ 03142 / pop 4900

Otherwise unremarkable, Bärnbach is famous for its St Barbara Kirche, a church designed by Friedensreich Hundertwasser. The town is also a centre for exquisite glass-making, and has an interesting factory tour on the theme.

Tourist information is available from the glass-making centre and **Bärnbach Information** (☎ 615 50; tourismus@baernbach.at; ☎ 8am-noon Mon-Fri & 2-4pm Mon, Tue & Thu) inside the town hall. The church and glass centre are an equal distance west and east respectively from the Hauptplatz.

Sights

Although built after WWII, **St Barbara Kirche** (☎ 625 81; Piberstrasse; admission free, tours adult/child €2/1; ☎ dawn-dusk) needed renovating in the late 1980s. About 80% of the town population voted to commission the maverick Viennese artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser (p53) to undertake the redesign; work began in 1987 and was completed in 1988. This was a bold move: Hundertwasser was known for his unusual design concepts, particularly his designs based on a spiritual ecology. The gamble paid off; the church is a visual treat. Leave a donation and pick up the explanation card in English, which reveals the symbolic meaning behind the architectural design features. Tours are run by appointment only.

The church is surrounded by 12 gates, each representing a different faith, and all connected by an uneven pathway. By the west façade is a powerful mosaic war memorial by Franz Weiss. The distinctive church steeple is topped by a gold onion dome. Features you wouldn't see in any other church include the bowed roof with green splodges along its flanks, the irregular windows, and the grass growing on the side porch roofs.

The interior mostly retains its original features, although Hundertwasser's 'spiral

of life' window (which reflects the afternoon sun onto the font), on the left as you enter, is striking. Also note the glass altar and podium filled with 12 layers of different types of earth representing the 12 tribes of Israel, created by Erwin Talker.

Bärnbach, a glass-making centre for three centuries, is home to the **Stöizle Glas Center** (☎ 629 50; www.stoelze.com; Hochregisterstrasse 1; adult/child & concession/family €5.50/3/13; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat Mar-Dec), a working glass-blowing factory and museum. Try to get there in the morning, as the entrance fee includes a guided tour (leaving 9am, 10am, 11am and noon Monday to Thursday, 9am, 10am and 11am Friday) of the glass-making facilities and the small museum filled with delicate pieces. In the afternoon the factory is off-limits.

Sleeping & Eating

Bärnbach is an easy day trip from Graz, and not a particularly exciting place at night, so you're better off returning to Graz. If you do stay, the only central hotel is **Gasthof Decelak** (☎ 622 85; Voitsberger Strasse 38; s/d €25/50; ☎). Three kilometres out of town, **Sporthotel Glockenhof** (☎ 623 34; www.glockenhof.at; s €43-53, d €86-106; ☎) has full fitness/wellness amenities, including massages and its own tennis courts, but you need your own wheels to get there. For a bite to eat, there are a couple of cheap eateries near the church, including **Pizzeria Casa Verona** (☎ 61 5 65; Hauptplatz 1; pizzas €5-10; ☎ 10am-midnight).

Getting There & Away

Regular trains run from Graz (€6.60, 50 minutes) but the train station is 2km south of the town centre; a bike is useful here. Cross the railway line, follow the road around until you reach the main highway and then take this right. The train station has a toilet and a coin phone if you need a **taxi** (☎ 0664-3402247) to the centre of town (€5). Bundesgestüt Piber (Piber Stud Farm) is close to Bärnbach (€4 by taxi); from the church, head west on Piberstrasse for 2km and after about 30 minutes you'll reach it.

SOUTHERN STYRIA

Southern Styria is known as *Steirische Toskana* (Styrian Tuscany), and for good reason. Not only is this wine country, but the landscape is reminiscent of Chianti; gentle rolling hills

cultivated with vineyards or patchwork farmland, and capped by clusters of trees. It's also famous for *Kürbiskernöl*, the rich pumpkin-seed oil generously used in Styrian cooking.

Region Süd und West Steiermark (☎ 03462-43152; www.sws.st, in German; Hauptplatz 34, in Deutschlandsberg) handles telephone, email and postal enquiries for western and southern Styria.

STYRIAN WEINSTRASSEN

Picturesque **Weinstrassen** (wine routes; www.steirischerwein.at) crisscross much of southern Styria, and lead into East Styria. The *Steirische Weinführer* booklet, free from the Graz tourist office (p223), is a comprehensive guide to all eight trails, providing a map and a list of *Buschenschänken* (wine taverns) and vineyards along the way. You'll need your own wheels to explore these properly, though.

The most travelled wine route is the **Schilcher-Wienstrasse**, which runs north-south from Ligist to Eibiswald, passing through the Stainz and Deutschlandsberg. The wine of choice here is Schilcher, a light, dry rosé. Other popular wine roads include the **Klöcher Wienstrasse**, stretching from Fehring to Bad Radkersburg (try the *Gewürztraminer*, a dry white wine typical of the region), the **Südsteirische Wienstrasse**, looping its way from Ehrenhausen to Spielfeld near the Slovenian border, and the **Sausaler Wienstrasse**, which runs west from Leibnitz to Gleinstätten.

DEUTSCHLANDSBERG

☎ 03462 / pop 8000

In the heart of the Schilcher wine region, Deutschlandsberg is a bustling little town dominated by a well-restored castle, some 25 minutes' walk uphill from the town centre. Inside the castle is a **museum** (☎ 56 02; www.burgmuseum.at, in German; Burgplatz 2; adult/student/child €9/8/4; ☎ 10am-7pm Mar-mid-Nov) split into four parts: ancient history, the Celts, historical weapons and antique jewellery. The extensive collection, whose highlights include a delicate gold necklace from the 5th century BC, takes about 1½ hours to see. As with any good castle, there's a torture chamber in the underground vaults.

The **tourist office** (☎ 75 20; www.schilcherheimat.at, in German; Hauptplatz 34; ☎ 9am-noon & 3-6pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat Mar-Oct, to 3pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat Nov-Jan) is a good source of information on the town and environs.

For sleeping arrangements, look no further than the **Burg Hotel** (☎ 56 56-0; www.burghotel-dl.at, in German; Burgplatz 1; s €47-75, d €94-150, ste €180-310; mains €10-20; ☎), which is located in the castle. Its crowning glory is the tower suite, with champagne and a fruit basket; rooms are large, quiet and have views of the woods.

If Burg is too pricey then the **Hi Hostel** (☎ 22000; deutschlandsborg@jfigh.at; Burg 5; s/d €37/30) is a good option. It's set in a vineyard at the foot of the castle.

Frequent trains connect Graz and Deutschlandsberg (€8.30, one hour).

GROSSKLEIN

Southern Styria was once a stamping ground of the Celts, and this legacy has gradually been unearthed by archaeologists. Some of their finds are housed in the four exhibition rooms of the **Hallstattzeitliches Museum** (Hallstatt Period Museum; ☎ 03456-50 38; www.archaeo-grossklein.com; adult/child & student €4/2; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-5pm Wed-Sun May-Oct) in the small town of Grossklein, 26km southeast of Deutschlandsberg. Most of the exhibits are from the nearby grave mounds and include coins, pottery and tools, and a copy of a bronze mask dating from 600 BC (the original is housed in Schloss Eggenberg in Graz; see p226). The museum has a children's playroom where you can leave the kids. If this fails to get the adrenalin pumping, then a 9km archaeology trail heading northwest from the town towards Kleinklein should – it takes in approximately 700 Celtic grave mounds.

Buses (€3.40, 25 minutes) connect Leibnitz and Grossklein every one to two hours weekdays; a few run on Saturday and virtually none on Sunday. Weekdays, a train-bus connection from Graz via Leibnitz works well (€11.10, 1½ hours).

EHRENHAUSEN

☎ 03453 / pop 1200

The picturesque town of Ehrenhausen, near the A9 that connects Graz with the Slovenian border, makes a fine base for exploring the vineyards of southern Styria.

The town is little more than one street of pastel-coloured houses dominated by the baroque **Pfarrkirche** (Hauptplatz; admission free; ☎ dawn-dusk). Before setting off for the wine country, follow the path (three minutes' walk) on the right of the Rathaus up to the **mausoleum** (admission free) of Ruprecht von Eggenberg (1546-1611), hero of the Battle

HUNDERTWASSER SPA

East Styria is well known throughout Austria for its thermal activity, and in particular the spa centres that have sprung up around its thermal springs. Fans of the architectural style of Friedensreich Hundertwasser won't want to miss the unusual spa **Rogner-Bad Blumau** (☎ 03383-51 00-0; www.blumau.com; s €139-149, d €218-298), near the town of Bad Blumau, 50km east of Graz. The spa has all the characteristics of his art, including uneven floors, grass on the roof, colourful ceramics and golden spires. Overnight accommodation includes entry to the spa.

of Sisak against the Turks. Towering above Hauptplatz, this white and yellow building is guarded by two Roman-like bruisers who seem to be suggesting you don't mess with the baroque. And sure enough, the stucco inside is starkly white, with plenty of baroque embellishments clinging to the central dome, and stucco vines swirling around supporting pillars. The mausoleum is normally locked; get the key from the **manse** (Pfarrhof; ☎ 2633) next to the Pfarrkirche. Schloss Ehrenhausen, a little further up the hill from the mausoleum, is closed to the public.

Sleeping & Eating

If you're in town and looking for a private room, the best thing to do is ask around in the shops. **Zur Goldenen Krone** (☎ 26 40; Hauptplatz 24; s/d €45/58; closed Thu; ☎) is one hotel with doubles that's good value, and **Die Burg zum Goldenen Löwen** (☎ 204 15; Hauptplatz 28; s/d €40/80; mains €7-17; ☎) is just a few doors along and slightly more upmarket. It also has a popular restaurant with courtyard seating. **Klapotetz Weinlokal** (☎ 2977; Hauptstrasse 51; 2-person apt €60, 4-person apt €80) has a couple of apartments you can rent for one or more nights.

Hauptplatz has a bank and shops for provisions. For wine, head to **Erzherzog Johann Vinothek** (☎ 0699-100 64 654; Hauptstrasse 34; ☎ 7.30am-noon & 1.30-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-6pm Sat, 11am-3pm Sun Apr-Dec).

Getting There & Away

Trains run from Graz to Ehrenhausen every couple of hours (€9.30, 45 minutes). The train station is about four minutes' walk east of Hauptplatz.

RIEGERSBURG

☎ 03153 / pop 2560

Located 50km southeast of Graz at Riegersburg and perched on a 200m-high rocky outcrop, **Schloss Riegersburg** (☎ 821 31; rieggersburg.com; adult/child & student/family €9.50/7/25; ☎ 10am-5pm Apr & Oct, 9am-5pm May-Sep) is a hugely impressive 13th-century castle built against invading Hungarians and Turks; today it houses a **Hexenmuseum** on witchcraft and the **Burgmuseum** featuring the history of the Liechtenstein family, who acquired it in 1822. A **war memorial** is a reminder of fierce fighting in 1945, when Germans occupying the castle were attacked by Russian troops.

A cable car on the north side whisks you up in 90 seconds (one-way €2).

For more information on the Schloss or activities, contact the **tourist office** (☎ 86 70; tourismus@rieggersburg.com; Riegersburg 4).

If you have your own transport, consider stopping in at **Schloss Kapfenstein** (☎ 03157-300 30-0; www.schloss-kapfenstein.at; Kapfenstein 1; s €91-113, d €122-196; mains €13-18; ☎), a hotel-restaurant 17km south of Riegersburg. Weekdays rooms cost significantly less and can be booked for one night or more, but on weekends only Friday to Sunday packages are possible. The restaurant serves delightful Styrian cuisine in its outer courtyard overlooking the valley; a four-course meal as half-board costs €30.

Getting There & Away

Frequent trains run from Graz to nearby Feldbach and from there five weekday buses head for Riegersburg (€1.70, 20 minutes).

NORTHERN STYRIA

Heading north from Graz the landscape of Styria begins to change; gentle hills and flat pastures are replaced by jagged mountains, virgin forests, deep valleys and cold, clear mountain streams. This is also the region's industrial heartland, home to the *Steirische Eisenstrasse* (Styrian Iron Road), where for centuries iron mining was the backbone of the economy and in places, such as Eisenerz, left the landscape scarred.

Huddled beneath the soaring peaks are the towns of northern Styria, home to impressive churches; the best are the pilgrimage church of Mariazell and the abbey of Admont.

MARIAZELL

☎ 03882 / pop 1720

Situated on the slopes of the lower reaches of the eastern Alps, the pretty town of Mariazell is one of Austria's icons. It offers opportunities for hiking, mountain biking and skiing, but what makes Mariazell so well known is its status as Austria's most important pilgrimage site. Its basilica, founded in 1157, holds a sacred statue of the Virgin, and busloads of Austrians flock to the site on weekends and on 15 August (Assumption) and 8 September (Mary's 'name day').

Orientation

Hauptplatz and the basilica comprise the centre of Mariazell. The train station is in St Sebastian, 1km north of Hauptplatz.

Information

Mariazell's **tourist office** (☎ 23 66; www.mariazell.at; Hauptplatz 13; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat, to 12.30pm Sun May-Oct, to 5pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr) has a town map-cum-brochure with walking trails marked; it doesn't book rooms but can help with accommodation listings.

The **post office** (Ludwig Leber Strasse; 7am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8.30-10am Sat) is located just west of Hauptplatz next to the bus station. **Hotel Magnus Klaus** (☎ 417 67; Hauptplatz 7) has free internet access if you buy a drink. There are a few ATMs around town.

Sights

Most people come to Mariazell to visit the **Basilika** (☎ 25 95; Kardinal Eugen Tisserant Platz 1; admission free; ☎ 8am-8pm), the town's most important attraction. Originally Romanesque, the basilica underwent a Gothic conversion in the 14th century and then received a massive baroque facelift in the 17th century. The result from the outside is a strange clash of styles, with the original Gothic steeple bursting like a wayward skeletal limb from between two baroque onion domes. The interior works better, with Gothic ribs on the ceiling combining well with baroque frescoes and lavish stuccowork. Both Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach and his son Josef Emmanuel had a hand in the baroque features; the crucifixion group sculpture (1715) on the high altar is by Lorenzo Mattielli.

Unusually, the church is centred on a small but exquisite chapel, known as the **Gnadenkapelle** (Chapel of Grace). This gold and silver edifice houses the Romanesque

statue of the Madonna, whose healing powers reputedly helped King Louis of Hungary defeat the Turks in 1377. In the upper galleries, the **Schatzkammer** (treasury; ☎ 25 95; Kardinal Eugen Tisserant Platz 1; adult/student/child €3/1.50/0.50; ☎ 10am-3pm Tue-Sat, 11am-4pm Sun & holidays May-Oct) contains votive offerings spanning six centuries, mainly naive-style paintings.

Activities

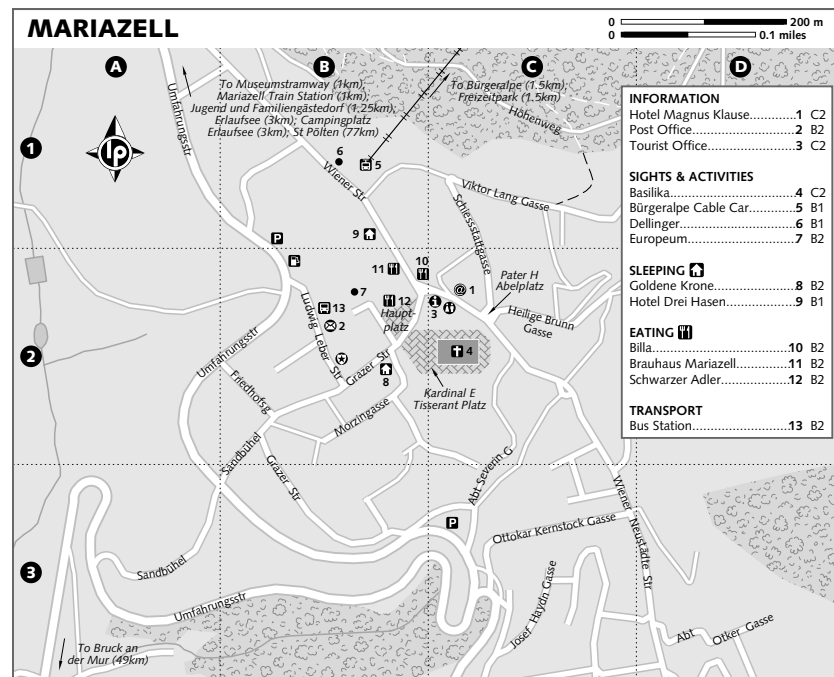
Another aspect to Mariazell is its rolling countryside. **Bürgeralpe** (1270m) is a great starting or finishing point for hiking and mountain biking in the summer months, and also has skiing in winter. The **cable car** (☎ 2508; www.mariazell-buergeralpe.at; adult/child return €10.80/6.80) operates year-round. Another way to get there is by mountain bike along one of the trails. **Dellinger** (☎ 2453; www.sport-dellinger.at; Wiener Strasse 30), alongside the cable car, hires out and services ski equipment in winter, and rents mountain bikes in summer (€15 per day). Pick up the tourist office's good hiking/city map (two major mountain bike trails are marked) and ask Dellinger to point you in the right direction for trail heads leading south or to Bürgeralpe.

Bürgeralpe has an artificial lake that feeds snow canons when snow conditions are poor and is used as a lakeside setting for special events. Also up here are two restaurants and the **Freizeitpark** (Erlebniswelt Holzmechtland; entry & cable car adult/child €13.60/8; ☎ 9am-5pm May-Oct) – a small museum devoted to wood and all its wonderful uses. During winter, adult daily/weekly ski passes cost around €25/123.

The **Erlaufsee**, a small lake a few kilometres to the northwest of the town, reaches about 22 degrees in summer and, apart from swimming, it offers good opportunities for windsurfing and scuba diving; contact addresses for water sports are listed in the booklet *Mariazellerland von A-Z*, available at the tourist office.

An easy four-hour Rundwanderweg (circuit trail; A) runs past the lake and south through forest back into Mariazell; alternatively, you can take a steam **Museumstramway** (one-way/return €5/8), which runs at weekends and holidays between July and September. It leaves from the Museumstramway Bahnhof.

A cultural centre with a wellness complex, known as the **Europeum** and planned to showcase one EU country and its culture each year, is currently being built off Wiener Strasse.



Sleeping

The only problem times for finding a room in Mariazell are around the pilgrimage days. Aside from hotels and pensions, there is a smattering of private rooms.

Campingplatz Erlaufsee (☎ 49 37; www.st-sebastian.steiermark.at; campsite per adult/tent €4/3; ☎ May-mid-Sep; P) At the southeastern end of Erlaufsee, this small camping ground has a pretty location and is flanked by pine trees.

Jugend und Familiengästehaus (☎ 26 69; stsebastian@jfhg.at; Erlaufseestrasse 49; s/d €26.50/59; P) Located halfway between Mariazell and Erlaufsee, this HI hostel is quite new and has loads of facilities, including a café, sauna, solarium, fitness room and sports areas.

Goldene Krone (☎ 2583; www.mariazell.at/krone, in German; Grazer Strasse 1; s €34-68, d €68-76; mains €8-13) Goldene Krone has a homely feel in its big and bright rooms. The ground floor has an excellent restaurant, with traditional Austrian cuisine, toys for the kids and street-side seating.

Hotel Drei Hasen (☎ 2410; www.dreihasen.at; Wiener Strasse 11; s €67, d €108, ste €160; mains €7-14; closed Mar & Nov; P) When the new Europeum is finished a passage will connect this hotel with

the wellness facilities, adding another plus to what is currently a very good hotel with a first-class restaurant (specialising in seasonal game dishes).

Eating & Drinking

Among the hotel eating options, Hotel Drei Hasen is the most interesting and varied; there are also plenty of places to eat on and around Hauptplatz.

Schwarzer Adler (☎ 28 63-0; Hauptplatz 1; mains €7-15; ☎ 9am-11pm) With an outside terrace that overlooks the basilica, the Schwarzer Adler serves very decent classics at one of the best locations in the town centre.

Brauhaus Mariazell (☎ 25 23-0; Wiener Strasse 5; r from €57 per person, ste €104 per person, mains €8-15; ☎ 10am-11pm Mon-Wed, to midnight Fri & Sat, lunch Sun) This lovely, rustic microbrewery does one light and one dark beer, both unfiltered (with a shelf life of four weeks); the food is also some of the best Styrian cuisine in these parts and there's a garden out back and a few rooms upstairs.

You'll find a Billa supermarket just north of the tourist office.

Getting There & Away

A narrow-gauge train departs from St Pölten, 77km to the north, every two to three hours. It's a slow trip (€14.50, 2½ hours), but the scenery is good for the last hour approaching Mariazell. Bus is the only option for further travel into Styria; four direct buses run from Bruck an der Mur (€9.50, 1½ hours), where trains go to Graz (€20, 2½ hours).

There are also one to two direct buses daily from Vienna (€18, three hours).

BRUCK AN DER MUR

☎ 03862 / pop 13,430

Bruck, at the confluence of the Mur and Mürz rivers, is the Mur valley's first real town and an important railway junction for Styria. Although its attractions are limited, it's quite a pleasant town once you let it work on you, and you may find yourself enjoying an extended stopover here between trains and buses.

Orientation & Information

The train station and a post office are at the eastern end of Bahnhofstrasse; there's a Bankomat in the station. Koloman-Wallis-

Platz, Bruck's main square, is home to the Rathaus, which in turn houses the town's **tourist office** (☎ 890-121; www.bruckmur-tourismus.at, in German; Koloman-Wallis-Platz 1; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri). There's another post office on the square.

Sights

Several paths wind up to **Schloss Landskron**, where local nobility ruled the roost until fire ravaged this castle – along with the rest of town – in 1792. The population helped itself to the stone to rebuild their houses, and today all that remains is a clock tower and a couple of canons captured from the French. On the way, drop by Bauernmarkt, where there's a **food and flower market** (☎ Wed & Sat), and the 15th-century Gothic **Pfarrkirche** (Kirchplatz; admission free; ☎ dawn-dusk).

Back on Koloman-Wallis-Platz, the **Rathaus** has an attractive arcaded courtyard, while the **Kornmesserhaus** (1499) symbolises the wealth of Austrian burghers in the late 15th century. It brings together Gothic and some Renaissance features and was based on the design of a Venetian palace. Other historic highlights on the square include the **Art**

Nouveau façade above the ice cream shop at No 10 and the fine Renaissance-style **wrought-iron well** created by Hans Prasser in 1626.

Sleeping & Eating

Jugend und Familiengästedorf (☎ 584 48; www.jfgh.at/bruck.php; Stadtwaldstrasse 1; dm/s/d €27/37/59; ☎ ☑) This family-friendly HI hostel, 10 minutes' walk south of the centre, is in the heart of Weitental, Bruck's woodland playground.

Landskron (☎ 58 458; www.hotel-landskron.at, in German; Am Schiffertor 3; s/d €73/98, ste per person €65; ☎ ☑) Value is best on weekends in this business hotel directly on the Mur River. Here you can loll about in large, tastefully furnished rooms, and in some you can even hear the river gurgling below the window. It has a sauna and good midrange restaurant.

Fleck's Brauhaus (☎ 520 85; Am Grazer Tor; snacks €3-8; 11am-midnight Tue-Sat, to 6pm Sun) This boutique brewery is Bruck's prime spot for a light meal washed down by a local brew. Three house styles are on offer, including a dark wheat beer and a *Rot* (red) with barley.

Gasthof Zur Post Riegler (☎ 549 04; Koloman-Wallis-Platz 11; mains €7-17; ☎ 9am-midnight Tue-Sun) There's something for everyone among the mixed bag of culinary offerings here, not least a well-prepared classic schnitzel.

Billa (Herzog Ernstgasse 6) is the place to stock up on provisions.

Getting There & Away

Bruck is the region's main rail hub; all fast trains to Graz (€11, 45 minutes, hourly) pass through here. Other direct trains go hourly to Klagenfurt (€25, 2¼ hours) and hourly to Vienna's Südbahnhof (€23, two hours).

By road, the main autobahns intersect southeast of town. If you're planning to cycle in the region, the tourist office has useful maps.

Postbus services arrive and depart next to the train station.

LEOBEN

☎ 03842 / pop 25,800

Leoben is another of those unprepossessing towns that reveal a few surprises once you dig down into its modest urban soul. A revamped museum quarter is one very good reason to prolong a flying visit here between trains. Leoben is also a centre for metallurgical industries and home to Gösser beer, and achieved ultimate fame with the peace treaty

signed here in 1797 by Napoleon and Emperor Franz II.

Stadt Information Leoben (☎ 440 18; www.leoben.at; Hauptplatz 12; ☎ 7am-5pm Mon, 7am-6.30pm Tue-Thu, 7am-1pm & 3-6.30pm Fri, 9am-12.30pm Sat) has a *Gast in Leoben* booklet with useful listings; if you're in town when it's closed, ask at the MuseumsCenter Leoben – they keep a good supply of city material. The city's Leoben map also includes a great environs map with hiking trails.

A second **Tourismusverband Leoben** (☎ 481 48; Peter Tunner-Strasse 2; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) has information and organises tours for Leoben's Stiftkirche, with a 1000-year-old crypt and paintings in its chapel, and the nearby Göss brewery.

Sights & Activities

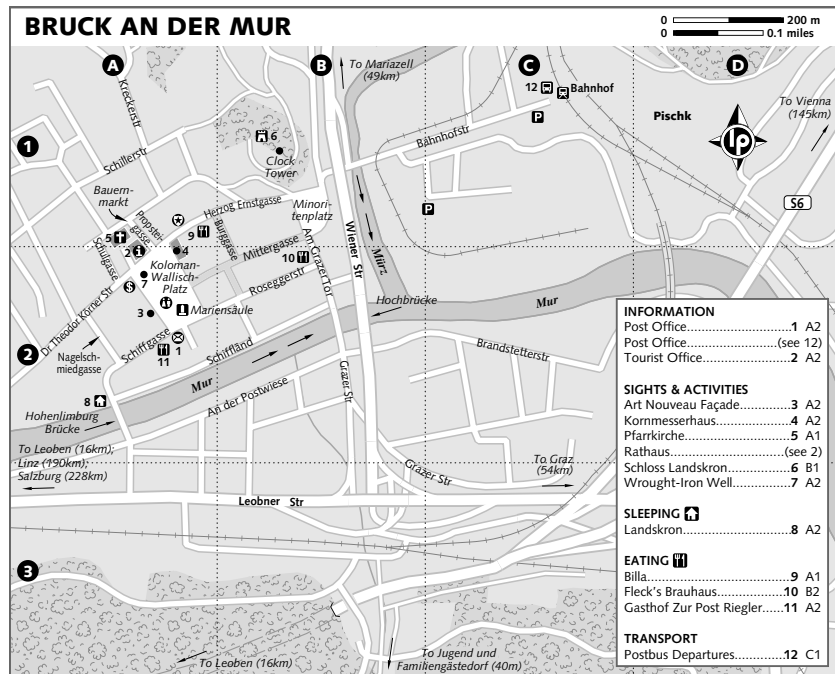
Hauptplatz is lined with elegant 17th-century façades, including the baroque **Hacklhaus** (Hauptplatz 9), while Leoben's connection with the iron industry is seen in the curious town motif displayed on the **Altes Rathaus** (Hauptplatz 1) façade, which shows an ostrich eating horseshoes.

Nearby, the dreary exterior of **Pfarrkirche St Xavier** (☎ 432 36; Kirchplatz 1; ☎ 8am-7pm) belies an interesting interior of white walls and black-and-gold baroque altars. The church's **Museum Sacrum** (☎ 10am-5pm) is linked by a walkway to the **MuseumsCenter Leoben** (☎ 4062-408; Kirchgasse 6; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Fri) which is the cultural heart of Leoben. This new museum complex has an interesting *Schienen der Vergangenheit* (Tracks of the Past) section telling the history of Leoben and its industries, starting with the present and working back in time, and a large section with changing exhibitions. The standard is very high, so check the town's website for information on current exhibitions.

For tours of the **Stiftkirche** and the **brewery**, ask at the Tourismusverband Leoben.

Sleeping & Eating

Among the hotels in the centre, **Pension Jahrbacher** (☎ 436 00; jahrbacher.gmbh@gmx.at; Kirchgasse 14; s/d €43/85) is one pleasant option. If no one answers the door bell, drop into the adjacent **Cafe am Schwammerlturm** (☎ 43 600; Homanngasse 11; ☎ 11am-8pm) and check in there. This tiny café is a visual treat – it has wonderful outdoor seating on top of the circular city tower and breathtaking views over the town and countryside. The stairs are not



for the faint-hearted, but it has a (glass) lift. Spectacular for its arcades, the **Arkadenhof** (☎ 42 074; Hauptplatz; mains €6-17; ☞ 10am-11pm), is a good choice for a full traditional meal.

Getting There & Away

Leoben is 16km west of Bruck (€4.40, 15 minutes) and is on the main rail route from there to Klagenfurt or Linz. The town centre is 10 minutes' walk from Leoben **Hauptbahnhof**: cross the Mur River and bear right.

EISENERZ

☎ 03848 / pop 6430

Eisenerz is one of the important stops along the **Steirische Eisenstrasse** (Styrian Iron Road), and lies at the foot of the extraordinary Erzberg (Iron Mountain), a mine that chomps into the mountains. While the town has certainly seen better days, it's still a fine place to stop by, with narrow, cobblestone streets, solid houses and the gurgle of alpine streams combining to create a relaxed mood.

The **tourist office** (☎ 37 00; www.eisenerz-heute.at, in German; Dr Theodor Körner Platz 1; ☞ 9am-noon & 3-5pm Mon-Fri May-Oct, to noon Sat Jun-Sep, 10am-noon & 3-5pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr) is in the centre of the town.

Sights

The main reason to come to Eisenerz is **Erzberg** (☎ 32 00; info@abenteuer-erzberg.at; Erzberg 1; separate tour adult/child & student €13/6.50, combined tour adult/student/child €22/19/11; ☞ tours 10am-3pm May-Oct, advance booking required), a peak that has been completely denuded by opencast stope mining and now resembles a step pyramid. The outcome is eerie and surprisingly beautiful, with its orange and purple shades contrasting with the lush greenery and grey crags of surrounding mountains. The ironworks can be seen up-close and personal in two ways; with a 90-minute 'Schaubergwerk' tour which burrows into the mountain to the underground mines, abandoned in 1986, or with a 60-minute 'Hauly Abenteuerfahrt' tour, which explores the surface works aboard an enormous truck, with fine views along the way. Both tours are usually in German, with English-language notes available. The departure point is a 10-minute walk from the centre, following the course of the river.

A walk around the sleepy old town reveals some interesting sgraffito murals, especially around Bergmannsplatz. Also interesting is to stroll up to the **Wehrkirche St Oswald** (☎ 22 67;

Kirchenstiege 4; admission free; ☞ 9am-7pm summer, to 5pm winter), more a fortress than a Gothic church, which gained its heavy walls in 1532 as protection against the Turks. The town is surrounded by **hiking trails**. The tourist office has a free *city & environs* map with trails marked, including to the idyllic **Leopoldsteiner See**, only 3km north on the road towards Admont. This small lake has a wall of granite rising to 1649m as a backdrop; you can hire boats in summer – it's a very chilly swim, though.

Sleeping & Eating

There are several good pensions and hotels in the old town, but fewer good eating options.

Jugend & Familiengästehaus (☎ 605 60; eisenerz@jfg.h.at; Ramsau 1; s/d €25.50/51; ☐ ☞) This lovely HI hostel is 5km south of Eisenerz; it's situated at an altitude of 1000m and has a sauna, and indoor and outdoor climbing walls. Each room has its own bathroom and there's a restaurant on site.

Gästehaus Tegelhofer (☎ 20 86; www.gaestehaus-tegelhofer.at; Lindmoserstrasse 8; s/d €29/48; ☐) This modern guesthouse is comfortable and offers great value, with spacious and clean rooms spiced with a free sauna and fitness room; there's also an inexpensive apartment for two to six people.

Gästehaus Weninger (☎ 22 580; www.gaestehaus-weninger.at; Krumpentalerstrasse 8; s €33-38, d €54-62; ☐) Another very comfortable guesthouse with fitness room and sauna, Weninger aims at those staying for a few days, but does take guests for one night at very short notice.

Braüstüberl (☎ 23 35; Flutergasse 5; mains €5-12; ☐ ☞) ☞ Lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun) Braüstüberl has the local classics and a filling grill platter that's best enjoyed in the beer garden. Rooms are available (single/double €24/32).

If the tourist office is closed when you visit, consider a coffee and cake at **Barbarastub'n** (☎ 51 10; Bergmannplatz 2; €1.50-2.60; ☞ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Sat, 2-6pm Sun), which has some brochures and maps of town.

Getting There & Away

Direct buses run from Leoben to Eisenerz (€6.50, one hour) every two to three hours. Several daily connect Eisenerz and Hieflau (€3.40, 25 minutes), where there are train connections to Selzthal (€7.60, 40 minutes) via Admont and Nationalpark Gesäuse (opposite).

Trains no longer operate to Eisenerz, except for the special Vordernberg–Eisenerz **Nostalgie**

(nostalgic train; ☎ 03849-832; www.erzbergbahn.at, in German; adult/child/family €9/4.50/22.50), which runs at 10.30am and 2.30pm Sunday from July to mid-October.

NATIONALPARK GESÄUSE

Only established in 2003, Gesäuse is Austria's newest national park in a pristine region of jagged mountain ridges, rock towers, deep valleys, alpine pastures and dense spruce forests. Unusually for a protected landscape, traditional farming is still allowed on selected meadows.

Dividing the park in two uneven halves is the Enns, a fast-flowing alpine river that eventually spills into the Danube near Mauthausen in Upper Austria. It's a favourite of rafting connoisseurs, and a number of companies offer rafting trips during the summer months. Hiking and mountain climbing, and to a lesser extent mountain biking, also feature among the park's outdoor activities; of the six peaks over 2000m within the park, **Hocktor** (2369m) rises above them all and is the destination of many hikers. The occasional spelunking excursion is also available; around 150 caves burrow under the high limestone mountains, the deepest of which descends 600m below the surface.

More information on activities in the park can be found at the **Nationalpark Gesäuse Information Centre** (☎ 03613-21 000; www.nationalpark.co.at, in German; Weng 2, Weng im Gesäuse; ☞ 8am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Fri). The staffed **national park pavilion** (☎ 03611-21101-20; Gstatterboden 25; ☞ 10am-6pm May-Oct) is a useful source of information, and the park itself is best reached with one to six trains daily to Gstatterboden (€6, 30 minutes) and Johnsbach im Nationalpark (€6, 30 minutes).

ADMONT

☎ 03613 / pop 2770

In a country where the sugary grandeur of baroque abbeys reaches queasy heights, Admont's **Benedictine Abbey** (☎ 23 12-601; www.stiftadmont.at; Admont 1; adult/student & child €9/5; ☞ 10am-5pm Apr-Oct, by arrangement Nov-Mar) pips St Florian's Augustinian Abbey at the post for the title of Austria's most elegant. It brings together museums, religious art, contemporary art and baroque architecture in a delightful whole – which is why a few years back it won an award for Austria's best museum.

The centrepiece of the abbey is its **Stiftsbibliothek** (abbey library), the largest abbey library in the world. Survivor of a fire in 1865 that severely damaged the rest of the abbey, it displays about 70,000 volumes of the abbey's 200,000 strong collection, and is decorated with heavenly ceiling frescoes by Bartolomeo Altomonte (1694–1783) and statues (in wood, but painted to look like bronze) by Josef Stammel (1695–1765). The restorers have been busily at work on the library lately and in 2008 will complete the work.

The abbey is also home to the **Kunsthistorisches Museum** (Art History Museum), featuring some unusual and rare pieces, such as its tiny portable altar from 1375, made from amethyst quartz and edged with gilt-silver plates, some Gerhard Mercator globes from 1541 and 1551, and a Festival Monstrance from 1747 set with 2175 gems. An innovative **multimedia show** retells the story of St Benedict and the abbey through video, slides and a spacey mirror room whose effect is similar to Dr Who's Tardis.

Another museum, the **Museum für Gegenwartkunst** (Museum for Contemporary Art) contains works by about 100 mainly Austrian artists, and has a section for the vision-impaired, with works you can explore with your hands. The **Naturhistorisches Museum** (Natural History Museum) began in 1674 with a small collection and today includes rooms devoted to flying bugs (one of the largest collections in the world), butterflies, stuffed animals, wax fruits (bizarrely) and reptiles. From the glass stairway and **Herb Garden** there are views to the Gesäuse National Park.

The **tourist office** (☎ 21 160; www.xeis.at, in German; Hauptstrasse 35; ☞ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun May-Oct, 8am-5pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr) is opposite the Rathaus and near the abbey church. It doubles as a national park office.

The HI hostel **Admont-Jugendgästehaus** (☎ 2432; admont@jfg.h.at; Schulstrasse 446; s €32.50, d €51) is situated on the edge of town, a few minutes' walk from the centre. The stunning **Jugend & Familiengästehaus Schloss Röthelstein** (☎ 26 196; roethelstein@jfg.h.at; Aigen 32; s/d €44/64) is where the monks from the abbey used to stay in summer.

Admont has several central guesthouses, some with restaurants. **Hotel Gasthof Traube** (☎ 24 40; www.hotel-traube.info; Hauptstrasse 3; s €38-42, d €62-68; ☐) is a comfortable one with outdoor seating.

Admont is 15km to the east of Selzthal, on the train route to Hieflau; three or more direct trains (€4.40, 15 minutes) run daily.

WEST STYRIA

Like northern Styria, west Styria is a mountainous region divided by jagged ranges and alpine streams which gather speed and volume as they head east. It's an area for enjoying Austria's natural splendour and escaping crowds.

Murau, high up in the Mur valley, is a picturesque town well placed for hikes and cycle trips into the surrounding forests. If you're heading this way from Graz, consider a detour to **Seckau** or **Oberzeiring**. The former is famous for its **Benedictine Abbey** (☎ 03514-5234; Seckau 1; basilica admission free; tours adult/child/family €4.50/free/10; 🕒 10am-8pm May-Oct, tours 10am & 2pm May-Oct), a stunning Romanesque basilica and mausoleum of Karl II, while the latter is known for its old **silver mine** (☎ 03571-2387; www.silbergruben.at; adult/child/family €6/3.50/12; 🕒 tours 9.45am, 1.45pm & 3pm May-Oct, 4pm Wed Nov-Apr), now resurrected as a small health resort for sufferers of respiratory diseases.

MURAU

☎ 03532 / pop 2330

Murau, in the western reaches of the Mur valley, is an attractive town filled with pastel-coloured houses and surrounded by forested hills and alpine meadows. Its close proximity to Stolzalpe to the north and Metnitz mountains to the south makes it an excellent base for hiking and cycling during the summer months.

The **tourist office** (☎ 27 20-0; www.stadtmurau.at; Bundesstrasse 13a; 🕒 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, telephone information service 🕒 8am-9pm) has loads of brochures on the town and its surrounds, including hiking trails and bicycle ways.

The Liechtenstein family once dominated the region and they built **Schloss Obermurau** (☎ 230 258; Schlossberg 1; tours adult/child €3/2; 🕒 3pm Wed & Fri mid-Jun-mid-Sep) in 1250. Given a Renaissance makeover by the Schwarzenberg family in the 17th century, today it's often used as a film location.

Just below the castle is the restored **Stadtpfarrkirche St Matthäus** (St Matthew's Church; ☎ 24 89, Schlossberg 8; 🕒 dawn-dusk), a Gothic church remodelled in baroque style. Both elements work surprisingly well together, especially in the combination of the Gothic crucifixion group (1500) and the baroque high altar (1655). The beautiful frescoes date from the 14th to 16th centuries.

Murau is also famous for its Brauerei Murau, which has a **brewery museum** (☎ 32 66; Raffaltplatz 19-23; adult/child €3/free; 🕒 3-5pm Fri May, Jun & Oct, 3-5.30pm Wed & Fri Jul-Sep). Entry includes a glass of the local brew. The brewery won a pan-European environmental management award in 2005 for its environmental practices.

Bike rental is available from **Intersport Pintar** (☎ 23 97; Bundesstrasse 7a; per day €10), near the tourist office.

Sleeping & Eating

Jugend & Familiengästehaus (☎ 23 95; murau@jfg.h.at; St Leonhard Platz 4; dm €17.80, s €22.10, d €44.20) This HI hostel is situated in four historic buildings near the train station and has bike hire, a sauna and a peaceful inner courtyard.

The lovely **Gasthof Ferner** (☎ 23 18; www.hotel-ferner.at; Rosseggerstr 9; s/d €42/76, mains €8-18, 🕒 lunch & dinner; 📍 📍), on the northern fringe of town, has a restaurant offering trout in summer; the four-star **Hotel Lercher** (☎ 24 31; www.lercher.com; Schwarzenbergstrasse 10; s €61-85, d €92-140; gourmet mains €20-30, Wirsthaus mains €12-16; 🕒 gourmet dinner Tue-Sat, Wirsthaus lunch & dinner; 📍 📍) has two restaurants: the small and highly rated Panorama (book ahead), and the Wirsthaus for simpler cuisine.

Getting There & Away

If you're coming from Salzburgerland, the most pleasant mode of transport is the **Murtalbahn** (☎ 22 31; www.stlb.at, in German; return €16.80), a steam train that chugs its way between Tamsweg and Murau once every Tuesday and Wednesday in July and August, on a private narrow-gauge line.

Fairly frequent direct ÖBB trains connect Murau with Tamsweg (€6.60, one hour) going west. Regular trains to Leoben (€17, 1½ hours) require a change in Unzmarkt.

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